

very strange

The Urth list — 6 messages, 5 voices, 11 Apr 2009

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5404>

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Fernando Q. Gouvea — 11 Apr 2009, 21:57

The latest issue of The Weekly Standard includes a review of a Hungarian novel, first published in 2001 and now translated into English. The book is called "Tranquility". It seems, from what the review says, to be told mostly in flashback, looking back from the funeral of the narrator's mother. The narrator's name is Andor W?er. The review describes the novel as characterized by "sneaky, half-teasing indirection". He adds that "The narrator mentions the most crucial events in passing, then returns to them via circuitous routes full of speculative tangents, remembered dreams, stories within stories, and purposely disorienting chronological lurches...."

I couldn't help but think of "Peace", told mostly in flashback, by Alden Weer, by an author who is also fond of this sort of indirection...

Coincidence, or alien intervention?

Fernando

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Fernando Q. Gouvea
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Stealing a rhinoceros should not be attempted lightly.

brunians at brunians.org — 11 Apr 2009, 22:27 · in reply to Fernando Q. Gouvea

Was this edition of 'The Weekly Standard' dated 1 April?

Another possibility might be that some fool mistook a translation into the Hungarian for an original work in Hungarian.

A third possibility includes a tremendously lucrative lawsuit for Gene Wolfe....

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Gwern Branwen — 11 Apr 2009, 22:56 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

On Sat, Apr 11, 2009 at 6:27 PM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:
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No. It was 9 April; recent enough I couldn't get to it through my library.

But looking through various reviews, it seems quite different from _Peace_; even the name comes from a different source, the Sea of Tranquility.

<http://www.complete-review.com/reviews/magyar/bartisa.htm>

"Tranquility is narrated by a writer, Andor We?r, and is a novel about the three very damaged women in his life and their intertwined relationships. The novel begins with the funeral of his mother, whom he can finally lay to rest. For fifteen years they lived together in the same apartment that she refused to leave, for fifteen years he had to endure here questioning ("Wherehaveyoubeenson?") and general misanthropy.

Andor's sister, Judit, was a very talented and dedicated violinist, a budding star who defected to the West as soon as she could -- to escape Mom more than Communism, defection offering a buffer that she hoped would keep her at a safe distance, so that she would not longer have to try to erase herself, as Bartis nicely has her try to do. Overbearing Mom was a star in her own right, a famous actress, but her career came to an abrupt halt as soon as her daughter betrayed the motherland."

<http://quarterlyconversation.com/tranquility-by-attila-bartis-review>

"It's an especially fitting ending to a book in which there is no light, no redemption, a novel filled with mental illness, madness, suicide, abortion, incest, violence, sex, and hate, a novel which slowly unfolds an exceptionally complex and sad and terrible history of possibly the most dysfunctional family ever: the Weers. The novel is an almost nonstop litany of human misery and degradation, and even when nothing terrible is explicitly or expositionally described, there

are always inferences and suggestions in fact the passages where the awfulness is only tangentially present (as when a six-year-old is asked to sit on a convict's lap) are among the worst and most uncomfortable in the book."

<http://www.rochester.edu/College/translation/threepersent/index.php?id=1595>

"Plot summaries rarely do a book justice, but in short, this novel is about Andor Weer, a thirty-six-year-old writer who lives with his mother (a formerly gorgeous stage actress) who hasn't left the house in fifteen years. She's bitter, a bit deranged, and pretty aggressive, especially towards Andor's girlfriends. The two of them are trapped in an incredibly wicked Oedipal mess. On top of this, Andor's sister Judit defected from Hungary to pursue her music career (this defection brought about the downfall of Rebeka's stage career), leading their mother to literally bury a casket with all of Judit's things in the cemetery. "

There *may* be a connection, but Weer isn't that uncommon a surname; and besides, I don't know that *Peace* was translated into Hungarian (or that the author knows English).

gwer

Jeff Wilson — 12 Apr 2009, 08:52 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

brunians at brunians.org wrote:

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lucrative? a hungarian novelist?

Jeff Wilson - jwilson@io.com

< <http://www.io.com/~jwilson> >

brunians at brunians.org — 12 Apr 2009, 11:45 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

I'm shutting up about this. It gets more bizarre the closer one looks at it.

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brunians at brunians.org wrote:

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Jeff Wilson - jwilson@io.com

< <http://www.io.com/~jwilson> >

Steven — 14 Apr 2009, 00:54 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

On Apr 11, 2009, at 6:27 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:
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into the
Hungarian for an original work in Hungarian.

My vote goes here...

Steven