

SINGLE Gene Wolfe literature universe?

The Urth list — 19 messages, 11 voices, 10 May 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5601>

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sean ako — 10 May 2010, 13:50

Urthers,

Has anyone come up with/discussed the idea that most (if not ALL)?Gene Wolfe's stories occur in same universe???That all his stories/novels/novellas etc. are just points on the same timeline? There are so many instances of coincidence and synchronicity, similar names, "guess appearances" and the like that that's my interpretation of how all these works interrelate(because they do.)

SEAN

AKO

Milton Jackson — 10 May 2010, 14:12 · in reply to sean ako

I've thought that from time to time. It's entirely possible. I guess Wolfe would be a little like Edgar Rice Burroughs in that regard in that he has multiple series and worlds set in his universe with at best a tangential connection if any at all even though they seem to occupy the same universe. I guess I must be the first person in history ever to compare Wolfe and Burroughs.

On Mon, May 10, 2010 at 9:50 AM, sean ako <geoffreyfourmylepyre at yahoo.com>wrote:
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SEAN

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brunians at brunians.org — 10 May 2010, 14:19 · in reply to Milton Jackson

They are both great.

Burroughs wrote the Book of Gold for me.

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multiple series and worlds set in his universe with at best a tangential connection if any at all even though they seem to occupy the same universe.

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Craig Brewer — 10 May 2010, 16:00 · in reply to sean ako

As I recall, there's an online interview where he addressed this, saying that, in his mind, they weren't all connected, except for the obvious Sun books. I think it may have been specifically about the planets in Fifth Head and Short Sun, where he said they weren't the same and weren't even in the same universe. I specifically remember him saying that they weren't the same planets, but not the bigger point. (Someone with better memory of his interviews could probably provide a link more easily than I could.)

But who knows...maybe given Father Inire's mirrors and the murkiness of time travel and parallel universe speculation, why not? (But perhaps it becomes meaningless at this point since everything is in the same "universe" or "multi-verse" with infinite parallel universes, right?)

From: sean ako <geoffreyfourmylepyre at yahoo.com>
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Sent: Mon, May 10, 2010 8:50:11 AM
Subject: (urth) SINGLE Gene Wolfe literature universe?

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Jeff Wilson — 10 May 2010, 20:39 · in reply to sean ako

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I like to think that GW is a bit more original than that. There are also several multi-world structures in his existing works that seem incompatible like the Yesod-Briah-Abbadon stack in BOTNS vs THE WIZARD KNIGHT's seven-high pile vs the side-by-side arrangement of THERE ARE DOORS. Then there are the obsoleted dystopian stories like "Paul's Treehouse" and "How The Whip Came Back" - well, I suppose that "Whip" could still happen.

Best,
Jeff

Milton Jackson — 10 May 2010, 21:31 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

I don't see how it's unoriginal for Wolfe to set his works in the same universe if indeed that's what he did. It's not as if he's copying other writers if the Book of the New Sun and Soldier of the Mist, Soldier of Arete, and Soldier of Sidon all take place in the same universe at different times.

On Mon, May 10, 2010 at 4:39 PM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:
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Jeff Wilson — 11 May 2010, 01:40 · in reply to Milton Jackson

On 5/10/2010 4:31 PM, Milton Jackson wrote:

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Arete, and Soldier of Sidon all take place in the same universe at different times.

It has become increasingly common for big name SF authors to link together their various works as if they were intended to form a grand design from the beginning, lack of continuity or thematic unity be damned.

Even Heinlein, who really did have a grand design in mind fairly early in his career, went on to hook up stories unrelated to his Future History timeline in his later works, which were generally considered digressive and inferior to his previous actioners. Asimov's later Foundation sequels branched out to explicitly touch his Robot series and some former stand-alone novels, and the unruly vinculum kept growing posthumously, even.

GW certainly has thematic unity enough, but what's the point of hooking it all together? It's not like the stories aren't deep enough as it is.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

Milton Jackson — 11 May 2010, 02:49 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Well, what of that? Robert Howard tangentially linked his Kull, Bran Mak Morn, and Conan series and by extension much of his other work, but each was an independent series reflecting in a different way the author's ideas. In a similar fashion, Edgar Rice Burroughs tangentially linked his Barsoom, Amtor, Tarzan, Caspak, Moon Maid, and Pellucidar series. Having multiple series set in the same universe at different times that explore the author's ideas in different ways is not something that makes the author's work clichéd. If the Book of the New Sun is set in the same universe as The Sorcerer's House or An Evil Guest or Pirate's Freedom or even Shields of Mars, the stories themselves have nothing in common except maybe a common universe. That detracts nothing from Wolfe's vision as an author or his originality in the conception of his literary worlds.

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Jeff Wilson — 11 May 2010, 03:27 · in reply to Milton Jackson

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You agree it adds nothing, subtracts nothing, and needs nothing in common. How then can we tell a linkage exists, and why should we even bother to check? We could more profitably devote our time to arguing about which Wolfe heroine is the hottest, or which poster is the most facetious? (Besides Brunians, I mean. :P)

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IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

O'Donnell, Tim BOSI — 11 May 2010, 08:26 · follows Jeff Wilson

Hi Craig,

There was a Q&A session arranged by Mantis with Gene Wolfe back in 1997 in which the following exchange took place:

25. "Does Green/Blue have anything to do with THE FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS?" No.

<http://www.urth.net/whorl/archives/v0007/0511.shtml>

Is this what you were thinking of?

Best wishes,
Tim

John Smith — 11 May 2010, 11:09 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

--- On Mon, 5/10/10, Jeff Wilson <[jwilson at io.com](mailto:jwilson@io.com)> wrote:

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Finally a topic worthy of discussion. Hyacinth is definitely the hottest. — Anyone who disagrees is superficial, illiterate, and, in all probability, perverse.

Best wishes,
Jack

John Watkins — 11 May 2010, 11:12 · in reply to John Smith

Hyacinth, or star-powered Cassie?

On Tue, May 11, 2010 at 7:09 AM, John Smith <jsmith2627 at att.net> wrote:

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Stuart Hamm — 11 May 2010, 14:07 · in reply to John Smith

I gotta put in a vote for Dsiri..(sp?) from Wizard...but I have issues.....

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From: John Smith <jsmith2627 at att.net>

Subject: Re: (urth) SINGLE Gene Wolfe literature universe? To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net> Date: Tuesday, May 11, 2010, 4:09 AM

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Craig Brewer — 11 May 2010, 14:20 · in reply to Stuart Hamm

What, grandmothers who've been dead under fetid water for the odd decade or so don't turn you on?

John Watkins — 11 May 2010, 14:21 · in reply to Craig Brewer

Honestly, "creepiest Wolfe love interest" might be a better thread.

On Tue, May 11, 2010 at 10:20 AM, Craig Brewer <cnbrewer at yahoo.com> wrote:
What, grandmothers who've been dead under fetid water for the odd decade
or so don't turn you on?

From: Stuart Hamm <hammstu at sbcglobal.net>

To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>

Sent: Tue, May 11, 2010 9:07:17 AM

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Milton Jackson — 11 May 2010, 14:25 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Well, it's as legitimate a point of speculation as anything else. Personally I don't care either way, and I don't read the books and stories wondering if they all mesh into the same universe. I just don't think it means Wolfe is unoriginal if they are. You are right though about its being an academic exercise by and large. More interesting to me by far than whether the stories all exist on the same timeline in some metauniverse is how Wolfe develops his ideas in each and how compelling he makes the presentation.

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Stuart Hamm — 11 May 2010, 16:10 · in reply to Craig Brewer

See,,,that's why I play instrumental music...words can be misinterpreted... I? NEVER said that grandmothers who've been dead under fetid water for the odd decade or so don't turn me on....

Just raising a flag for for Dsiri (SP?)...jet lagged in Tokyo....no brain at the moment

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Rob Thornton — 11 May 2010, 16:24 · in reply to Stuart Hamm

Well, hypothetically, if a youthful grandma had been resurrected I would definitely take a second look. :)

Rob

On Tue, May 11, 2010 at 12:10 PM, Stuart Hamm <hammstu at sbcglobal.net> wrote:
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From: John Smith <jsmith2627 at att.net>
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Allan Anderson — 11 May 2010, 20:52 · in reply to Stuart Hamm

Heh, you people.

But no, "are these stories set in the same universe" has interesting implications: mainly, are the rules the same.

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