

Home Fires: Wolfe doing Heinlein?

The Urth list — 5 messages, 5 voices, 12 Aug 2013

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6409>

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Brian Doherty — 12 Aug 2013, 01:18

Don't know if this is either an overdone or an absurd observation, but did anyone else feel that the character/scenario/tone of Home Fires (I'm only about 130 pages in) feels like a Wolfean take on Heinleinian themes/characters/situations?

Brian Doherty

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 12 Aug 2013, 15:13 · in reply to Brian Doherty

I didn't feel that at the time, but looking back at it, yeah, I think so.

On Sun, Aug 11, 2013 at 6:18 PM, Brian Doherty <brianmdoherty at gmail.com> wrote:
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Brian Doherty

DAVID STOCKHOFF — 12 Aug 2013, 15:43 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

By a random coincidence, I was just thinking this very thought the other day about Haldeman's The Forever War and Heinlein's Starship Troopers.

Yes, there is a mixed dystopian/utopian libertarian feel to Home Fires (mostly dyst, but great for rich people) that is Heinleinian, not to mention the largely unexplained---and unjustified by the narrator---war with the Os. One thing that nagged me about HF is the way the war is simply taken for granted as a war like any old "land war in Asia."

(I'm now a sophisticated enough reader of SF to imagine any real interstellar war as largely a matter for engineers/scientists (especially robotics), not soldiers or even pilots. But no mere political excuse for a war could possibly survive long enough for an attacking starship to reach its destination. Not even Athens' war with Syracuse could serve as a model, let alone WW2, Korea, or Vietnam. Perpetual interspecies extermination might justify it, but only if both species desperately need the same resources in a vast universe, in which case any fighting for resources would probably be far more wasteful than simple competitive resource extraction. Then again, I just saw Europa Report, which is fantastic if flawed, so my hopes are raised for more hard SF films in the future.)

Brian, are you thinking in particular of Lazarus Long?

From: Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danl do at gmail.com>
To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
Sent: Monday, August 12, 2013 11:13 AM
Subject: Re: (urth) Home Fires: Wolfe doing Heinlein?

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Fernando Gouvea — 12 Aug 2013, 16:27 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

I agree. There are clear links to the war in Starship Troopers (with a nod to Haldeman's Forever War as well, of course). But there's also the "nothing is as it seems" note that crept into late Heinlein (as in The Cat Who Walks Through Walls). Though without quite the same level of nihilism.

I think there may also be a sort of slantwise commentary on us, who investigate Wolfe's work with a view to finding out all the hidden secrets. After all, the narrator of Home Fires keeps trying to figure things out, and in so doing he keeps getting himself and those around him in trouble. You can almost see the book as a commentary on the vice of curiosity.

But, being Wolfe, the book also has something to say about love, marriage, and the connection (if any) between the two. I particularly like the way he lets the narrator convince us (as he has convinced himself) that his fling with that girl 20 years ago was the great romance of his life. The girl, for whom it has been much less time, has constructed no such a myth for herself.

Fernando

On 8/12/2013 11:13 AM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

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Marc Aramini — 12 Aug 2013, 17:51 · in reply to Fernando Gouvea

Wolfe outside the text doesn't portray that attitude very much? - it's more like, if you were paying attention, there are no secrets. (Our vice is failure to observe what is important? - but I suppose that actually is a vice of his narrators in general.)?

From: Fernando Gouvea

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