

The Beast from Severian's dream

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 01 Aug 2014

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6591>

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marcobadie at katamail.com — 01 Aug 2014, 11:42

My first
post to the Urth list.

I'm a
italian reader of Gene Wolfe, starting from the '80.

For many
years I have lurked this list acquiring from others large knowledge.

Now I would
like to add at this list a little bit of wolfian lore from me, hoping it is something original, new...

I have posted
on Facebook an image from a cover of Le Scienze (italian version of Scientific American),
painting the winged beast depicted at Chapter XV of The Shadow of the Torturer: Baldanders.
It's for an article on pterosaurs; please, note that the largest of pterosaurs was QUETZALCOATLUS
northropi: wingspan 10'11 m (33'36 ft).

This is the
link: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=498029966987233&set=a.498029900320573.1073741827.100003407033067&type=1&theater>

That is the
relevant text (Severian is dreaming):

I bestrode
a great, leather-winged being under a lowering sky. Just equipoised between the rack of cloud
and a twilight land we slid down a hill of air. Hardly once, it seemed to me, the finger-winged
soarer flapped her long pinions. The dying sun was before us, and it seemed we matched the
speed of Urth, for it stood unmoving at the horizon, though we flew on and on.

At last I
saw a change in the land, and at first I thought it a desert. Far off, no cities or farms or woods or
fields appeared, but only a level waste, a blackened purple in color, featureless and nearly
static. The leathern-winged one observed it as well, or perhaps snatched some odor from the
air. I felt iron muscles beneath me grow tense, and there were three wing strokes together. The
purple waste showed flecks of white. After a time I became aware that its seeming stillness was
a sham born of uniformity - it was the same everywhere, but everywhere in motion - the sea -
the World-River Uroboros - cradling Urth. Then for the first time I looked behind me, seeing all
the country of humankind swallowed in the night.

When it was

gone, and there was everywhere beneath us the waste of rolling water and nothing more, the beast turned her head to regard me. Her beak was the beak of an ibis, her face the face of a hag; on her head was a miter of bone. For an instant we regarded each other, and I seemed to know her thought: You dream; but were you to wake from your waking, I would be there.

Her motion

changed as a lugger's does when the sailors make it to come about on the opposite tack. One pinion? dipped, the? other? rose? until? it? pointed? toward? the? sky, and? I? scrabbled? at? the? scaled? hide? and plummeted into the sea. The shock of the impact woke me.

Please note

the magazine's date: Avril 1981!

First

edition of The Shadow of the Torturer: 1980!

The

corridors of time, of course!

Last but

not least, thanks to Marc Aramini for his wonderful posts!!!

Da: "Urth" urth-bounces at lists.urth.net

A: urth at lists.urth.net

Cc:

Data: Fri, 01 Aug 2014 01:00:25 -0700

Oggetto: Urth Digest, Vol 120, Issue 1

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When replying, please edit your Subject line so it is more specific
than "Re: Contents of Urth digest..."

Today's Topics:

1. Re: short story project so far (Greg Bates)
2. Re: short story project so far (Marc Aramini)
3. Question about Books of the Short Sun - the (atrocious)
Kindle edition (Akimon Azuki)
4. Re: short story project so far (Mo Holkar)

Message: 1

Date: Thu, 31 Jul 2014 21:03:36 -0400
From: Greg Bates
To: The Urth Mailing List
Subject: Re: (urth) short story project so far
Message-ID:

Content-Type: text/plain; charset="utf-8"

All I can say is that I've really enjoyed reading this series so far, and I'd be all for putting it in a book format!

On Thu, Jul 31, 2014 at 1:36 PM, Marc Aramini wrote:

Well, I am about 33 percent done with Wolfe's published stories after this next one, "The Doctor of Death Island" ... I plan on skipping two numbers and returning to "The Eyeflash Miracles" and "Seven American Nights" after I consider them a bit more.

I would really like to tear through the 80s more quickly than the 70s, and it should be possible since Wolfe's time on long novels and series vastly reduced the length and allusive depth of his short fiction. ... However, I feel that 7 American Nights and probably Cabin on the Coast in the early 80s marked a shift away from SF tropes to more fantastic ones, which are a bit less easy to mark "objectively" - some stories might actually have unresolvable mysteries, though I don't think anything written before 1980 actually does.

The write-ups I feel are least satisfactory are "The Green Wall Said", "The Blue Mouse", "Paul's Treehouse" - though I think the garment district uprising in "A Criminal Proceeding" and mentioned briefly in "Operation ARES" can explain who is actually rioting in that story, "Hour of Trust" (what is the name of the company running everything, whose symbol is gold stamped instruments? That write up gave me more problems than you would think) "The Island of Doctor Death and Other Stories", and perhaps the Thag stories.

I am most satisfied with "The Changeling", "Many Mansions" - (those houses are luring people in and are merely dressed up as familiar, tempting human houses with mimicry, and might even be planting something, human-alien symbiotic style, inside people through the strong drink), "The HORARS of War", and "Trip, Trap" write ups.

I already know exactly what type of essays I will be finishing up on Long Sun, Latro, and Home Fires, but the rest will take some time and I might not return to New Sun until the majority of the short fiction and shorter novels are done.

All considered the project might be close to 2,000 pages or so when I am done.

Of course it would need hefty revision and citation, but lately I have considered perhaps trying to publish it upon completion - short essays on the long fiction in front which would be my own thesis based developments, not comprehensive looks at all, and the story analysis section after that. A traditional publisher would never touch it, I imagine, and it would be far too big for a small or university press, but perhaps an ebook would work. Anyone think that would be viable? Should I even, say, try to split it in half? Just thought I would see what you guys thought, as this has

been a WHOLE lot of work, even though I love it.

Lee — 01 Aug 2014, 21:24 · follows marcobadie at katamail.com

From: severiansola at hotmail.com
To: urth at urth.net
Subject: The Beast from Severian's dream
Date: Fri, 1 Aug 2014 17:18:36 -0400

Marco Badie: I bestrode
a great, leather-winged being under a lowering sky. Just equipoised between the
rack of cloud and a twilit land we slid down a hill of air. Hardly once, it
seemed to me, the finger-winged soarer flapped her long pinions.

I would want to note that Severian also dreams of undines and later encounters a
real one. He also encounters such pterodon creatures that he rides in his dream in
his encounter with Hethor and Agia as they take him from the battlefield.

The corridors of time, of course!

Absolutely! Wolfe meant us to understand these corridors from such passages in the
first four books of BotNS, but mostly we didn't. So he had to explain it better and
and clearer in Urth Of The New Sun.

What I want to ask is how Hethor, who brings the pterodons, might be related to the
corridors of time?

He, like Father Inire, is a mirror master who can summon strange creatures. He, like
Father Inire is of alien origin. He, like Father Inire, is a twisted little guy....

From his mumblings, we can determine that Hethor was a crewman who rose to First Mate
status on a certain ship but was expelled for mutiny.

On Tzadkiel's ship, we find a group of mutineers named "jibbers" and someone who looks
like Hethor is found among them.

Tzadkiel is a archangel. Would an expelled mutineer who found himself on Urth be
considered as a "fallen angel"?

Famulimus and Barbatus are aliens but are highly likened to angels who visit Urth

but do not reside there.

What status might this give Father Inire and The Cumaean who are aliens but do
reside on Urth?

Gerry Quinn — 02 Aug 2014, 11:43 · in reply to marcobadie at katamail.com

On 01/08/2014 12:42, marcobadie at katamail.com wrote:

I have posted on Facebook an image from a cover of Le Scienze (italian version of Scientific American), painting the winged beast depicted at Chapter XV of The Shadow of the Torturer: Baldanders. It's for an article on pterosaurs; please, note that the largest of pterosaurs was*_QUETZAL*_coatlus northropi: wingspan 10--11 m (33--36 ft).

This is the link:

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The scene definitely has a Wolfean look to it!

- Gerry Quinn