

Palgrave History of Science Fiction

The Urth list — 9 messages, 4 voices, 06 Mar 2018

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6780>

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Ab de Vos — 06 Mar 2018, 22:46

Adam Roberts is a literature professor as well as a science fiction writer.

In his "The History of Science Fiction" he devotes a short chapter to Wolfe which he concludes by relating Wolfe to his (Roberts) main thesis throughout the book: "Wolfe not only revisits many of the conventions of 20th-century SF, he goes further back than that, tapping into the deep roots of the genre, interrogating the many ways in which notions of salvation are inflected by our much broader materialist understanding of the cosmos."(page 439)

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Marc Aramini — 06 Mar 2018, 23:41 · in reply to Ab de Vos

I don't want to start a round of Short Sun stuff (please, please, please) but here is my take on what he may or may not be talking about: some time after Horn falls into the pit on Blue, a Vanished Person who also calls himself Horn appears to speak to our narrator. That's the only new speciation that might have anything to do with Horn - the rest Roberts refers to are the false clues Wolfe is giving us that Silkhorn might be inhumani: (light, doesn't have a good appetite - is he truly a normal man with his ability to walk through the woods without being touched? (yes, he has made a deal with the vanished gods, who are trees)

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But hey anyone can believe what they want - I have zero interest in arguing this one at all. Just trying to address what he might be talking about.

On Tue, Mar 6, 2018 at 2:46 PM, Ab de Vos <foxyab at casema.nl> wrote:
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Ab de Vos — 07 Mar 2018, 00:19 · in reply to Marc Aramini

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Op 7-3-2018 om 00:41 schreef Marc Aramini:

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Marc Aramini — 07 Mar 2018, 16:14 · in reply to Ab de Vos

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Eric Bourland — 07 Mar 2018, 16:20 · in reply to Marc Aramini

For what it's worth, *An Evil Guest* is one of my favorite of his books. For a few years maybe it was my favorite. I've got a whole disquisition about it, which inevitably prompts vigorous eye-rolling, so I'll spare you. ;-) Looking forward to vol. 2. Eric

On 3/7/2018 11:14 AM, Marc Aramini wrote:

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Marc Aramini — 07 Mar 2018, 16:37 · in reply to Eric Bourland

Eric, I wouldn't mind hearing it if you wouldn't mind being quoted by name, unless you didn't want it repeated. In which case I still wouldn't mind hearing it. Robert Pirkola wrote a very large draft of exegesis on it - I still haven't made up my mind on what to write about that one. I know that There Are Doors and The Ziggurat eventually revealed a pattern that pierced the unreliable third person which I feel is the least justified of Wolfe's techniques because it lacks a clear narrative reason save for hovering near its main characters flawed perceptions.

Paul Rydeen — 08 Mar 2018, 01:11 · in reply to Marc Aramini

Yes, let's hear it! AEG is one of my favorites, too.

From: Urth [mailto:urth-bounces at lists.urth.net] On Behalf Of Marc Aramini Sent: Wednesday, March 07, 2018 10:37 AM

Eric Bourland — 08 Mar 2018, 03:34 · in reply to Paul Rydeen

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And while I'm at it I'll add in a werewolf. Hee! And it will eat the guy.

* Maybe I like this story because I can tell that GW had a lot of fun writing it. His joy is infectious. The reader always knows when you're having a good time, and when you're struggling, or if you're bored or stuck. When I read this book I get a dumb grin on my face.

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Chase is Wolfe . . . it took me a while to understand this. I think after I did understand, Chase made more sense to me. He's slightly sinister and we never really know about him. But also a magic man, and omniscient, but with those gifts comes uncertainty of intent.

Chase is yet another GW character that gets a leg injury. So many GW characters have injured legs. Silk - Severian - Chase - probably a bunch more I am not thinking of.

Crippled character usually = GW. It's a signal.

There's a better way to say that. Like any writer, GW puts some of his own ideals into characters he cares about. And he sends a characteristic signal to inform the thoughtful reader, hey, if you're interested, there's a lot of me in this fellow. I'm telling you by means of the crippled leg.

When Maugham wrote *Of Human Bondage* -- lovely, moving, wise book and I recommend it -- he gave his main character Philip a club foot. Some backstory: Maugham had a stutter. He wanted to identify Philip with himself, but he thought it might be hamhanded to just give Philip a stutter. So Philip got a club foot, as the kind of socially devastating discomfort and block that a stutter can be. A stutter really interferes with you, making even brief and simple, everyday interactions into events of hideous awkwardness, which in turn can lead to a lot of isolation. I would imagine that having an untreated club foot might mean, for some, a lot of isolation too.

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And this is neither here nor there. I just thought it was well-done.

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Cassie:

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I reply with the usual arguments: she spears fish! Stands up to goons! Coped with the Storm God assassin! Takes a lot of initiative throughout the entire book! She's got a lot of pure bravery. And she really has a heart of gold.

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(I am paraphrasing, with customary clumsiness, the cogent thoughts of my wife, who has been a careful reader of thousands of books, including a few Wolfe books I have shared with her. When we discussed Cassie, she gave convincing examples, which I'm not relating here in any way nearly as convincing as her own words. I respect my wife as a reader. She is a wonderful wife, too. =) No, she does not read this Urth list, except for very rare occasions when I point out

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Aramini
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Paul Rydeen — 08 Mar 2018, 21:47 · in reply to Eric Bourland

Thanks for sharing. This is one I'll read again at some point.

I like how Wolfe handled Cassie's behavior changing after she makes her deal, and how Margaret just drops out of the plot.

And how the ending leaves the reader having to figure out just a little bit, even if they'll never

dig into all the deeper stuff that Marc is so good at ferreting out.

From: Urth [mailto:urth-bounces at lists.urth.net] On Behalf Of Eric Bourland Sent: Wednesday, March 07, 2018 9:34 PM To: urth at lists.urth.net Subject: Re: (urth) Palgrave History of Science Fiction

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