

Gene Wolfe: Castlevuew

The Usenet list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 02 Jul 1990

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Geoff Alexander Cohen — 02 Jul 1990, 01:39

I just finished Gene Wolfe's latest, _Castlevuew_, which concerns a family moving from Chicago to an old-fashioned town called Castlevuew, in which it is possible to glimpse a castle off in the distance. (Thus the name!) It started off pretty well, and I enjoyed Wolfe's first dealings with modern reality in novel form, and there are some pretty surprisingly enjoyable and yet mainstream-type characters (surprising in the mainstream-ness, not enjoyable.)

Now don't get me wrong, I'm a very big Wolfe fan, and would recommend him almost without reservation as the best science-fiction author today. However, I DIDN'T GET IT!!!! :(Yes, I'm used to him being pretty opaque, for example Fifth Head of Cerberus, as I saw in a recent post. But after a re-reading, I think I got a lot (not all) of what he meant in that. _There Are Doors_ is a little harder, but still excellent, and I was left with a sense of completion, if not closure.

But _Castlevuew_ left me cold, confused, and angry. Could someone out there give some advice as to what happened? In the words of Orson Scott Card himself, "Altogether, one of the most disappointing books I've ever read." It seems he was as confused as I. Card says in another essay, "I wish Gene Wolfe would take pity on his not so smart readers and EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED!" Amen!

Geoff Cohen, Center for Energy and Environmental Studies Princeton University.

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Bob Myers — 05 Jul 1990, 03:23 · in reply to Geoff Alexander Cohen

On 2 Jul 90 01:39:03 GMT, GACOHEN at pucc.Princeton.EDU (Geoff Alexander Cohen) said:

Geoff> I just finished Gene Wolfe's latest, _Castlevuew_, which Geoff> concerns a family moving from Chicago to an old-fashioned town Geoff> called Castlevuew, in which it is possible to glimpse a castle Geoff> off in the distance. (Thus the name!)

Hmmm. I used to live in a town in Illinois, about 35 miles northwest of Chicago, by the name of Fox River Grove. Gene Wolfe lives in Barrington, about 5 miles towards Chicago. Anyway, there _is_ a castle in Fox River Grove, and a restaurant across the street called Castlevuew...

I gotta get this book.

Mark Brown — 05 Jul 1990, 17:17 · in reply to Bob Myers

In article <STSSRAM.90Jul4202311 at toward.unocal.COM>, stssram at unocal.COM (Bob Myers) writes:

|> >>>>> On 2 Jul 90 01:39:03 GMT, GACOHEN at pucc.Princeton.EDU (Geoff Alexander

Cohen) said:

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|> Geoff> I just finished Gene Wolfe's latest, _Castleview_, which

|> Geoff> concerns a family moving from Chicago to an old-fashioned town

|> Geoff> called Castleview, in which it is possible to glimpse a castle

|> Geoff> off in the distance. (Thus the name!)

Geoff, re-read CASTLEVIEW slowly, this time with an eye for Arthurian Legend...you know, Camelot and all that.

I'm lead to understand that it's **very** subtly done, and to get some of the references requires **extensive** knowledge of the Arthur Mythos...

Mark Brown IBM AWD / OSF | "The tricky part is common usage." The Good mbrown at osf.org |