

STL spoilers

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 03 May 1999

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 03 May 1999, 20:33

Al and Rostrum,

Thanks for the notes. (I greatly enjoyed A FIRE UPON THE DEEP and look forward to reading A DEEPNESS IN THE SKY.)

Re: seedships, another anonymous informant mentions Williamson's MANSEED. Maybe I should take a look at it--but as I say, the very concept of a seedship strikes me as so flawed . . . even the notion of a robotic terraforming flotilla (which is a near cousin) is based upon the premise that robots are disposable slaves! "Thanks for the planet, Tinman--now go rust someplace else, you are staining the lawn." Has there been a story or novel where the humans arrive and have to make a deal with the robotic "natives" as to how much of the planet can be granted to the human representatives of the civilization that sent the robots out to begin with?

"Yeah, for a handful of vacuum tubes I let the squishies squat on the Manhattan Project Landfill!"

SPOILER ALERT!<<

BETWEEN THE STROKES OF MIDNIGHT
ORPHANS OF THE SKY
CAPTIVE UNIVERSE
THE STAR SEEKERS
A WORLD BETWEEN

Re: longevity, immortality strategies. Charles Sheffield's BETWEEN THE STROKES OF MIDNIGHT did a pretty good job of that--not only setting up a non-sleeper slowship system (ships limited to 0.1 c), but also showing a colony world, showing Earth, hinting at other colony worlds, and showing how the interstellar government (such as it was) would develop. (No FTL communications, no FTL of any kind; Earth badly messed up by nuclear war, but ultimately a nature preserve world.)

The longevity technique was two degrees of "slowness," one slow and the other hibernation. In slow mode people still walk around the ship, but in slowed perception, motion, etc. Aided by robots who move so fast by comparison that they are invisible servants. (This has been done before, but I don't think in as detailed a fashion.)

The interstellar government amounts to an open caste of illuminati. The colony worlds have games ala the Olympics/games of Null-A, the top performers of which are invited to join the offworld brotherhood at the lowest level, etc.

Castes come up with great frequency in generation starship stories. Usually they evolve over the course of the voyage as people forget "the Mission"--this is the case in ORPHANS OF THE SKY and THE STAR SEEKERS--but sometimes the castes are planned as part of the program, as in CAPTIVE UNIVERSE (and TBOTLS) where it is portrayed as a stabilizing institution to keep the

cargo docile and in the dark.

Another scenario I enjoy is that in Spinrad's *A WORLD BETWEEN*. No FTL, an interstellar "internet" sort of deal (looong before *A FIRE UPON THE DEEP*, too!), an interstellar information-exchange economy (the world Pacifica exports movies, a "Hollywood" of space), and two factions from Earth (the victors and the vanquished) come out in ships to try and win hearts and minds as the fight spreads beyond the homeworld. The ships are NAFAL, no specifics that I recall.

=mantis=

*This is *WHORL*, for discussion of Gene Wolfe's *Book of the Long Sun*.