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Shadows Of The New Sun: Wolfe On Writing/Writers On Wolfe (Liverpool University Press - Liverpool Science Fiction Texts & Studies)



Synopsis

Gene Wolfe is one of the most important American writers to emerge in the latter half of the twentieth century. The fact that he publishes in the field of fantastic literature (which includes horror, science and speculative fiction) has meant that his significance has been largely unacknowledged beyond and, at times, even within the genre. Nevertheless, he remains the author of some of the most stylistically distinct, structurally complex, and intellectually invigorating imaginative fiction of recent years. This collection of interviews and essays places under one cover an amazing selection of difficult-to-find resources for the avid Gene Wolfe reader and scholar. Essays concern the nature of writing, including character, structure and the profession of the writer. Also included are a series of interviews with Wolfe and the holy grail of 'New Sun' aficionados: Books in the Book of the New Sun, previously only available in a rare small-press volume. This collection will inspire fans and scholars alike to commit themselves to debating new interpretations of Wolfe's fiction.

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Customer Reviews

SHADOWS OF THE NEW SUN, edited by Peter Wright, is a collection of interviews with and essays by Gene Wolfe that touch on the science-fiction legend's approach to writing. The interviews are drawn from the 1970s through the early millennium, originally published in science-fiction periodicals and carried out by a range of interviewees. Most deal with Wolfe's first masterpiece THE FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS and his acclaimed tetralogy "The Book of the New Sun", but plenty of

attention is given to his novels and short stories from later decades. Fans will find this a pretty informative volume, although perhaps it's best not to come to this after only a single reading of the "The Book of the New Sun", as Wolfe spoils some of the mysteries that readers can figure out the second time through. There is in-depth discussion of how Wolfe thinks up plots and fashions dialogue. But the author also discusses such mundane aspects of the trade as his daily schedule, publisher bureaucracy and market pressures. The demands of publishers has affected his work more than one would think, and Wolfe explains how his weak first novel OPERATION ARES (which he tries to keep out of print now) was the botched result of heavy editing. I feel that Wolfe's books after "The Book of the New Sun" have been somewhat disappointing as they lack the memorable prose style of his 1970s writing. Here, Wolfe claims that he switched to a "journalistic style" in e.g. "The Book of the Long Sun" because the story demanded it. I disagree with this choice, but it's good to hear an explanation from the author. I also better understand Wolfe's knowledge of the science-fiction canon (and literature in general) and its impact on his own writing. It's not a perfect book, however.

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