



El Mundo Fortaleza

James E. Gunn

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William Dane conoce un secreto. El mayor y más desagradable secreto de toda la galaxia. Quizá por eso lo persiguen todos los asesinos que habitan entre las estrellas.

Obligado a huir y a esconderse siempre de las distintas facciones que lo quieren muerto, Dane ha aprendido a fundirse en las sombras y a usar las identidades de otros como máscaras para pasar desapercibido.

Pero ha llegado el momento en el que Dane no puede seguir huyendo, y ha de enfrentarse a las amenazas y la muerte usando para ello el secreto que posee: la clave para gobernar toda la galaxia.

“El Mundo Fortaleza” es una de las obra maestra de la ciencia ficción clásica, llena de aventuras e intrigas, escrita por el Gran Maestro de la Ciencia Ficción, James E. Gunn.

El Mundo Fortaleza Details

Date : Published March 17th 2016 by Moai Ediciones (first published 1955)

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Author : James E. Gunn

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From Reader Review El Mundo Fortaleza for online ebook

John says

Grade F. 1984
Ace Double Novel D223

Gridcube says

Well, this was a nice book, not too dense, not too smart, not too boring. It was just good.

In some parts it made me say "wait, how does that even work", like in the beginning of the book, the main character has lived in a monastery for all of his life, and then in the next chapter he learns to fight like a pro in two days of training... like... ok? I guess, if it had been more days, weeks, even months, it would have been believable, but just two sessions and he is a perfect shooter? ok

Of course later in the book we learn some things about the character that put him a little away from what we would call a "standard human", but even he himself points out "he isn't one of the people", I mean, he almost is, but not yet, maybe a few generations down the road. Still the book doesn't go out of its way to explain the achievements he reached during the story.

But I think that's just me being a complainer, the story is acceptable and all in all makes sense, the mysteries are mysterious and what's revealed is revelatory.

good book

DaughterDaDa says

Excellent, engaging story. Written cleanly, clearly, and concisely. Provides food for thought.

Charles Dee Mitchell says

This is James Gunn's first published novel, although that same year, 1955, he co-wrote a novel with Jack Williamson. To say, at this almost sixty year remove, that *Fortress World* is of mostly historical interest may sound like damning with faint praise, but the story and style are very much of their time. I read it with curiosity and interest rather than enthusiasm and never got involved with the story or characters. It is almost as much a noirish exercise as it is SF, and I imagined its scenes played out in the grainy black and white of early TV dramas.

Several novels I have read from this period have to do with whether or not the humanity is ready to join the league of advanced alien races that populate the universe, Gunn takes the opposite approach. Humankind has filled the universe but established fortress worlds with little connection to one another. Their shared

humanity has been forgotten, but an alien artifact that sets the plot in motion may offer a way home.

It is a good chase novel, that owes as much to works like *The Thirty Nine Steps* and *Rogue Males* as it does to science fiction. Our unlikely hero is a young religious acolyte who proves he has the chops to do what needs to get done to save the artifact and himself in a world of intrigue and criminal violence. Towards the end, the story resolves into some long-winded discussions about humanity and the future that have the earnestness of midnight dorm room discussions; but, given the plethora of dystopian novels currently making the rounds, there's nothing wrong with the occasional ray of hope getting beamed our way from the distant past of the mid-twentieth century.

Eero says

Future dark ages

The rating is more like 3.5 stars rounded up. There is a kind of freshness to the writing that I liked, but it can also read as a bit naive and even pretentious. Every character the protagonist comes in contact with seems initially to serve as a means of exposition on different views on politics; and thus they are left somewhat thin and their motivation subject to the needs of the author. Yet this kind of simple storytelling has its charms. In the preface the author says that his view of a galactic empire is based on the Middle Ages; knowledge has stagnated and the bulk of planetary populations live in dire conditions, held in check by the rulers, and the church, which also serves to preserve past knowledge.

The story follows the familiar pattern where an innocent is accidentally given an object of mystery and great significance, which makes him suddenly a target for various factions. This forces him to grow into a hero and an instrument of social change. I could and should take exception to the convenient way he always happens to run into the people who are important to the story and call it lazy plotting, but in a short book like this shortcuts happen.

tENTATIVELY, cONVENIENCE says

review of

James E. Gunn's [This Fortress World](#)

by tENTATIVELY, a cONVENIENCE - December 25, 2014

Somewhat to my surprise, this is the SEVENTH bk I've read by Gunn, the earliest, & my least favorite so far. Of these 7, I've reviewed 4: [Future Imperfect](#) (<http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/62...>), [The Listeners](#) (<http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/10...>), [The Magicians](#) (<http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/30...>), & [Kampus](#) (<http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/21...>).

The "PROLOGUE" sets the tone:

"The Second Empire. Say it aloud. Let it inflame the imagination. Let its meaning sink into the soul.

"An empire. Within it the numberless worlds of the inhabited galaxy united, working together, living together, trading together. The name alone tells us that much. But how did it work? How was it held

together? How were disputes decided, wars avoided? We don't know. We will never know. Only the name comes down to us. We remember it, and we remember, dimly, a golden time, a time of freedom and peace and plenty, and we weep sometimes for what is gone and will not come again." - p 1

Empire.. a double-edged sword. Don't all empires have centers from wch war is constantly waged to feed these centers? Empires are like robber barons, they have visions, they steal so that they can give back on their own terms. The Roman Empire enforced an international language, Latin. The Roman Empire spread advanced knowledge of sanitation, mining, building.

Robber Barons, like Frick & Carnegie, monopolize industry, depress wages, create museums & libraries & parks. Would the workers have created such a huge steel industry w/o these greedy visionaries? Maybe not. Would the workers have set up museums & libraries & parks? Maybe, maybe not. There are impressive union halls, impressive whole bldgs for unions.

The British Empire renounced slavery long before the USA did & set up anti-slaving blockades off the coast of Africa to try to stop it. But, of course, they built their empire using slaves & conquering - they imposed opium on China. Nonetheless, I'm grateful that English is an international language to the extent that it is - but one shdn't forget that it, & its predecessor Latin, were *imposed*.

I have little faith in 'human nature' - w/ or w/o empire humans will be cruel & brutal. I don't think that the Taliban left to their own devices are going to create a better society for those around them than the USA World Cup - far from it. Let's hope these aren't the only 2 choices. I'll choose Fair Trade over 'Free' Trade anyday - every little bit helps - but I'm not optimistic or naive enuf to believe in a unified humanity working peacefully together for mutual benefit or in a visionary dictator imposing some facsimile thereof that keeps the more monstrous in check.

The story takes place on an Earth-like planet w/ slight differences: "six hours of study, research, and exercise; evening prayers beside the bed at twenty-five; sleep." (p 13): there are at least 25 hrs in the day.

There's a somewhat amateurish youthfulness to the writing:

""The solution?" I said.

""A simultaneous revolution all over the galaxy," Siller said quietly. "No power will be able to take advantage of the confusion. Afterwards, a confederation of worlds which will gradually develop into full union." - p 53

This Fortress World was published in 1955. I didn't remember when Gunn was born. It occurred to me that this might've been his 1st novel, maybe even written by a precocious teenager, a young fantasist. Then I researched his birthdate & found it to be July 12, 1923. I was a bit surprised to realize that he wd've been 31 or 32 when this came out, maybe it was written much earlier. Don't get me wrong, I admire most things I cdn't've done myself - I cdn't've written such a novel when I was 31, I cdn't write it now - but that doesn't mean I wasn't doing things much more sophisticated at that age - so the admiration doesn't run that deep. The writing still seems pretty consistently corny & amateur:

""Wait for me," Laurie had said. *Wait? Wait here to bring death to you? Wait here like death to draw you close with bony arms and press your face with fleshless lips? Wait? No. Laurie. There may be peace and quiet here, but you are better off back there. Death is peace, too; death is quietness.*" - p 78

"Riches and poverty, I thought, here they meet in the court of justice where all are equal. And why, I asked myself, are there no nobles here or Peddlers? I remember an old saying, "The law is for the poor; it is the only thing they can afford." - p 174

OR, as I like to say:

When Money's God
Poor People
are the Human Sacrifices

&

We are all UNEQUAL
under the LAW
& THAT is its PURPOSE

In other words, juvenile or not, I tend to agree w/ some of the sentiments of the bk:

""The basic necessity of the fortress is the ignorance of the people. An intelligent, educated people can't be kept inside a fortress. Knowledge is a physical force which would burst the walls from within. The rulers know that. the first principle of their political philosophy is to keep their subjects weak; the second is to keep them ignorant. One is physical, the other is mental;" - p 193

"[...]They never quite starve. They have their free teevee theaters. And we can't reach them. The rulers control every method of communication except one. And they've blocked that very effectively."

""Books?" I asked.

"He nodded gloomily. "there's only one way to stop the people from reading, and they've done it. They've kept them ignorant and illiterate. If the people could read, they would have words and ideas to think with. We could educate them, organize them.["]" - p 53

& I reckon many of us here at GoodReads agree w/ that, eh?!

Stephen Robertson says

one word on this story: whimsical

Bob Rust says

This Fortress World (1955) pits its protagonist against a repressive future Religion.

David Olier says

Me debato entre 3* y 4*.

La verdad es que es corto y sin florituras. Va directo al grano.

Se lee fácil, hace reflexionar y es medianamente original.

Sin embargo hay muchas cosas que suceden "por arte de magia" y sin explicación lógica aparente, además de que tiene un aroma religioso a lo largo de sus páginas que lo deslucen un poco.

Y lo que más desluce este libro (que he leído en su versión digital) es el total desastre de puntuación de diálogos y errores de traducción y ortografía que hay.

El uso de guiones para empezar y cerrar las distintas voces y encerrar las acotaciones de los diálogos... a veces están y a veces no están.

Nawfal says

The first chapters are engaging and interesting. Then the middle of the book gets, by degrees, more bizarre and weird. Every once in awhile, a line is dropped - and though it has a good sense to it, it doesn't mesh with the plot. Finally, the last three chapters are engaging and curious and the resolution is "something to think about."

Also, I was grumpy with the author for what I thought he was doing with a particular group on the book - then the ending was a complete 180°. Not sure if that is good, but it's better than what I assumed he was gonna do.

Tony says

Both typical of its time and not. There's violence aplenty, and cruelty, in the nonstop action. Although the love interest uses sex/prostitution to get what she wants, she's basically good at heart (as she must be), yet the references to her "bad" behavior are so coy it's hard to tell at first what the narrator is hinting at.

I was surprised that the protagonist's eventual goal is achieving peace by breaking down barriers to communication.

Craig Russo says

Pretty good. Depressing, though.
