



The Heat Death of the Universe and Other Stories

Pamela Zoline , Thomas M. Disch (Introduction)

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The Heat Death of the Universe and Other Stories Details

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From Reader Review The Heat Death of the Universe and Other Stories for online ebook

Maggie Gordon says

Review for Heat Death of the Universe:

As I read about the history of feminist science fiction, Zoline's Heat Death of the Universe keeps popping up as part of the established canon for this area of writing. The story is very in line with the era of The Feminine Mystique, but as if voiced by a woman knowledgeable in science, comparing her situation to entropy. It's an emotional piece where readers can feel the slow build of futility in the narrator's life, and understand why her daily activities feel like a never-ending attempt to combat chaos with an increasingly smaller energy load. It's a clever, low-sf story that probably made quite an impression in the sf community when it came out for being so different and domestic. Definitely an insightful read with historical significance.

Mark says

okay this is something I actually wrote back in 1982 *[I found some old college notebooks]*...my apologies for all the grammatical errors but I will just copy my review word for word.

"the problem with this story is that it has no purpose other to vent the authors purposelessness.

the story has no moral, nor a message of hope. One wonders if the author wrote this for sympathy, to expound on the drab, dull trivial existence of suburban living, in the hopes that a reader can agree that in a world of Sugar Frosted Flakes and cancer is a lot of frustration. This piece, being written in 1967, was a caricature coinciding of the immense changes occurring in the world at that time, On a general social level, people were beginning to become a more integrated, ecological animal with their world. Books such as the Greening of America were written examining the so-called Counter-Culture with its emphasis on natural holistic foods, communing with nature and breaking away from the sterility of the world of Sarah Boyle who has so little meaning in her life she can't even remember how many kids she has and is so bored she labels and numbers the separate objects and items with her own household. This story is "jump-on-the-bandwagon" of how aware people thought they were by recognizing the lifelessness of a TV dominated, pre-packaged, Instant-Everything society. Sarah Boyle is so out of touch with what she could or might be she buys every available cleaning antisepticory [sic] device in the market, a manic depressant compulsion to belong to a schizophrenic world that caused her disunity between mind and body.

It is a story of helplessness and a faint detection that something is not quite right in life, children eating food that only mostly causes tooth decay while choking on plastic toys [unseen as gifts] amongst the food. It is a world of routine, of paralysis towards the life force. Sarah's pet turtle is dying but all she can do is watch it die as she writes "HELP help help help" on her modern day appliances, totally impotent to change.

Essentially Zoline's antiseptic life world is the scapegoat for the purposelessness of the victims of that world. With no solutions or alternatives to that drudgery but hysterical violent destruction of it, Zoline's approach to a solution is only ~~infantile and base~~ adolescent. Need is apparent for change out of the life-style but the only hope Zoline can offer is death and destruction. This view is very pessimistic and childish, and is indicative of a lack of insight and power of a foresightful visionistic mind on the part of Zoline. Accordingly, destruction

is one course of action to change the course of an existence of a frustrated Sarah Boyle-type character but it is only a reflection of the lack of purpose, hope and meaning that the author imparts to us. Recognition of a malady is the first step towards recovery and cure, but spitefulness towards the sickness will never remove it, only remedies will. And until there are remedies, or even quests or searches for remedies [and Zoline doesn't even give us a glint of those] we will only be presented with despair, futility, anxiety and purposelessness which is the essence of the short story The Heat Death of the Universe by P.A. Zoline"

Benjamin Lerner says

only for the Heat Death of the Universe

Thom Dunn says

The title story is a classic, but I recall Brian Aldiss said she was exceptional in general. (1/19/10)

Ian says

Zoline is pretty much known solely for 'The Heat Death of the Universe', a 1967 story which appeared in New Worlds and which is often seen as emblematic of the New Wave. In fact, lists of classic New Wave sf short fiction often place it in the top ten, if not the top three; although such lists with wider remits just as frequently omit it all together. And while yes, that last may in part be due to the fact Zoline is female, it's also symptomatic of a genre-wide rejection of the New Wave and what it produced. Whether it was that rejection, or a later rejection of feminist sf, which effectively wrote women authors out of science fiction's history, the end result is the same. Having said that, it's difficult to describe Zoline as one of this revisioned history's casualties as she was far from prolific – in fact, Busy About the Tree of Life contains Zoline's only writing output. Between 1967 and 1988, Zoline published five stories – and one of those, the title story of this collection, was written specifically for this book.

The rest of the review is on SF Mistressworks: <http://sfmistressworks.wordpress.com/...>

Lena B says

*only "The Heat Death of the Universe"

m raye says

The Heat Death of the Universe is one of my very favorite short stories.

Nikhitha says

for The Heat Death of the Universe
