

Tracking...clear as mud but it covah de groun'

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 04 Aug 1997

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Alice Turner — 04 Aug 1997, 12:26

mantis,

Ohhhhh! Thank you! I don't know how I missed the orbiting solar mirror, which is perfectly clearly described. And no, you're wrong about the change in direction, though I see how you slipped (you don't often!). On the fourth day, the wind is, as you say, from the west---which makes it a good wind for him to tack north (or is it south?) to the trail. There he turns west, sliding easily downhill "despite the contrary wind." He always goes west, which is psychologically and theologically right, whereas the (presumed) new life comes from the east. It truly is circumnavigation.

When I refered to John Carter, I didn't mean to imply that this was literally Mars! I meant simply a reference to the type of material, especially in the Min cave. But it's okay by me if you want it to be Mars!

Perhaps I flatter myself, but I was nearly halfway to the animals. I'd got to the point where I was grumbling, "Why are there so many giants in this tale?...too many giants." And I was about to go back and read the descriptions carefully, and I think the clue would have been the description of Mimmunka plus the fact that he talks just like Kipling's Shere Khan. Still, it's a tremendous help not to have to work it all out.

May I differ with you on some of the animals? Nashwonk probably is a great elk or reindeer or moose, as you say. The Lenizee are deer or antelope. The Wiggikki are certainly wolves. The Pamiguka are gophers or prairie dogs or some other kind of social rodent that lives underground and bears naked children (you can tell by the weapons or tools they carry, as you can with nearly all the other animals). Mimmunka is a lynx or bobcat. And Cim Glowing is a dog! Carrying a stick! (Other clues: the collar and chain; the fact that she says "I love you" when she leaves---only a tame animal would do that. And bears don't run as she does.) Ketin and Ketincha are certainly lions.

Which leaves the Min. Who are partly Men. I guess.

Whew! Luckily, there's lots more to discuss in this story. I don't buy the Ishi theory, here, though the connection to Le Guin is clear ("Buffalo Gal," for one, though it was written later). I too thought of VOYAGE TO ARCTURUS, but rejected it first on the grounds that this is survival killing, not pointless savagery, as there (and this is before I got the point of the animals) and second, this story seems to operate on real logic, not dream logic.

I'm going to assume that Cutthroat is definitely from the Great Sleigh. And I incline toward the fact that he has fallen, not that he has been thrown out, which jibes with the Nutriative ending. Arguments against that: (1) What if, instead of a welcoming angel, this is Harold Bloom's "covering cherub," the angel with a sword who keeps Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden? (2) What if, due to Cutthroat's habit of being in the middle of the road rather than off to one side

(we need to discuss that), the Great Sleigh is going to ride right over him and squash him like a bug?

I wouldn't swear to it, but I don't think he is dead, even though he is on a journey west. Though I sure agree about the "shamanistic death-voyage tone." What I was thinking of when I brought up Kafka---which I now retract. That was before I twigged to the animals.

Did you notice that in the Peaceable Kingdom scenario just before the GS arrives, the bear has a human face? (Like the bats---)?

What I'd like to talk about in future: the whole Min underground thing, complete with those Elric-like staffs; the discussions of what man is; the middle-of-the-road thing.

Actually, with regard to the last, what Cim could be saying could be, "You walk in the middle of the road because you are the hero (or the human), we on the side because we're sidekicks."

Enough!

-alga-