

Tracking mud

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

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m.driussi — 04 Aug 1997, 21:23

Reply: Item #0311931 from URTH at LISTS.BEST.COM@INET02#

alga,

By "Pamiguka" as gophers, I believe you are thinking of "Pummanga" the burrowing animal who is only seen or referred to as dead. The Pamigaka don't live underground, they live in a brush lodge. Their interest in wisdom is another detail that makes me think of foxes--and prairie dogs, while they might fit North American eco-sense, aren't tundra animals. (Actually, now I think the Pamigaka are probably boars. Another sacred animal, you know, like the one that gets Adonis?) But this is quibble kibble.

Mimmunka as a lynx, yes, I'm sure you are right on that one (though his role is like that of He Who Laughs, aka hyena, in "The Tale of the Boy Called Frog"). Ties into Agia's holdout weapon that she uses to scar Severian's cheek in Vodalus's presence--'member?

(Hoo boy, I feel another essay erupting . . . "Guardians of the Threshold" . . . down, down! Down, damn you!)

Now then, no more looking back--on to directions you dictate!

In the middle. This really does seem to be a naturalist's observation: animals stick to the sides (hiding), humans go to the middle (increase visual range, increase visibility, avoid the dangerous animals lurking in the bushes).

The whole Min underground empire. This is =very= interesting. In terms of TBOTNS we have the mine at Saltus, Mount Typhon, Vodalus, the averns, the dwarfish tallman riders of Ascia and Ceryx the Necromancer of URTH all at once. (Plus, as you say, hints of Long Sun--"Min" might very well be short for "mineral." Note the stone flowers Cutthroat sees underground are "kluy," the name of his wolf-mother, "Red Kluy"; and that Marble/Rose ain't much different.)

(I think the communion-like ration cubes are bullion.)

Paul Duggan's analysis of the tallman riders as dwarfs standing on the shoulders of blind giants is definitely on target here. Mantru (what a Lindsayan name!) is a fat dwarf who wants to resurrect true man or at least be on hand when the humans return. Vodalus as Doctor Talos.

One parallel that struck me in particular: the robot giant (later named "Roller"), who seizes hero, a journey to the head (in this case, riding on top of Roller's head), food denied . . . this is very much like Severian's first encounter with Typhon. First there are robot giants; then there is big Typhon who grabs Sev and jumps into boat; they ride up into Mount Typhon's head; where Severian sees food behind glass but cannot get at it (Tantalos motif).

Those staffs you call Elric-like (good point, but I took them as Lindsay-like, along with the weird bow weapons, the chair weapon, and the endieve wands). They are also like rod of aaron vs. pharoah's staff, fwiw. Like Lindsay's hero, Cutthroat leaves these weird weapons behind at every stage. (Of course it also reminds me of John Crowley's work in this vein, particularly BEASTS and ENGINE SUMMER, but I know you haven't read these.)

(Moorcock is so vehemently anti-Catholic/anti-Christian that I find it quite interesting how his work intersects with Wolfe and Crowley via what we might loosely term the Gnostic Vector. Though in Moorcock's case it is probably more Theosophical. It's quite touching, in a way--you won't see Jack Vance doing that, for example, and ERB shied away from it as well.)

I insist that the story is rather dream-like. Unless you know of Lapplanders who rig leather sails to ice-running catamarans and go sailing across snowpack! (Sure, the =shaman= rides his leather-skin drum through the sky . . .) But yes, it seems to be the Planet of Moreau in one reading. (Hey, are you gonna write up something for NYRSF? You could even do it without mentioning Cordwainer Smith, I betcha!)

I'd bet that Wolfe wrote this specifically for IN THE WAKE OF MAN based upon that title, rather than just turning in something he had already written. With "wake" being used as trail of ship and funeral, of course. (The ear to ear "birthmark" of Cutthroat is not necessarily a cut but more likely imho a rope burn. Mark of Cain? Cane of Mark? Lucifer? Tarot Card No. 12? Well anyhow, recollect how they strangled ol' Apu Punchau just to keep him from leaving.)

=mantis=