

Digesting urth

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 16 Jan 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/1329>

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m.driussi — 16 Jan 1999, 19:20

Uh-oh, the Log Squad is on to us!

An ultraquick note to bring others up to speed on THE BLACK GRAIL.

This is a book firmly in the tradition of THE DYING EARTH. It was published in 1986, but is really an expansion of an earlier novel, SORCERER'S WORLD (published 1970).

Of particular interest to me--well, as you all know, I've been amassing datapoints hither and yon, trying to create a hard science reading of Severian's narrative (or convince anyone to go along with it). How I have bludgeoned you with tables and charts, energy flows, Urth circuitry, and what not!

Here in THE BLACK GRAIL, at last, I have found somebody who understands--yet he understood in 1986! So by bumping my way through the thorny hedge maze, I have finally managed to catch up with him, in more ways than one.

Look: THE BLACK GRAIL lays out an Urth-type scenario (dying sun, terraformed Earth, remnants of supertek civilizations, quasi-medieval societies, etc.), but the big scale mechanics are all laid out for the reader to grasp immediately. Here are the circuits, here are the energy flows, this is why they are doing it, and here are some other neat astereoengineering stunts not used on Urth. In a sense this means that Mystery and Magic have been stripped away, but I don't know--it is neat to see a different approach to some of the same Stapledonian themes and issues.

Style-wise, THE BLACK GRAIL strikes me as more like Moorcock than like either Wolfe or Vance (this is fine--I like Moorcock). But there is a lot of Vancean stuff going on (easy tracking THE DYING EARTH and THE DEMON PRINCES, for example). It is fun, it is a romp, it is a hoot.

<A-ooo-gah! A-ooo-gah!>

"This is the Log Squad! Put your hands in the air! Away from that keyboard, now!"

Doh!

=mant...