

The Book of the Short Sun

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 10 Apr 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/1510>

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Nicholas Gevers — 10 Apr 1999, 05:23

Thanks to Michael for his introduction and to Robert Borski and Alice Turner for their welcomes. Thanks also to all who've responded to the "Nova Express" article. I've written a sequel article which has yet to find a publisher; if anyone's interested, I can e-mail that to you. Regarding my speculation that the inhumis may be a good deal more sympathetic than most would believe (sorry for discussing this here, but Whorl is inactive these days): first, my gratitude to Michael for calling on the pitchforks to stand down; a speculative spoiler is not a spoiler at all. And Michael, you say you know no more about the content of Short Sun than the publishers do: but don't they have the manuscripts of Volumes One and Two to hand? So what do you know? I don't mind spoilers; you can tell me in private correspondence. Second, the colonialism question: there's a rather useful commentary on Fifth Head in a volume entitled "Science, Myth, and the Fictional Creation of Alien Worlds" by Albert Wendland (Ann Arbor, Mich: UMI Research Press, 1982). Something worth adding to secondary bibliographies. I think it's a reasonable guess that, considering how colonial guilt haunts both Fifth Head and TBotNS, a concern of Short Sun will be the justice of anyone occupying someone else's territory unasked (assuming, of course, that Blue isn't Ushas, in which case the cargo are simply returning home). Wolfe does a masterful job of keeping Quetzal's true intentions and moral nature ambiguous in Long Sun; this is a foundation for SOMETHING remarkable. //----- Nicholas Gevers potto at webmail.co.za

Michael Straight — 10 Apr 1999, 16:27 · follows Nicholas Gevers

On Sat, 10 Apr 1999, Nicholas Gevers wrote:

Regarding my speculation that the inhumis may be a good deal more sympathetic than most would believe (sorry for discussing this here, but Whorl is inactive these days):

I think it's a reasonable guess that, considering how colonial guilt haunts both Fifth Head and TBotNS, a concern of Short Sun will be the justice of anyone occupying someone else's territory unasked (assuming, of course, that Blue isn't Ushas, in which case the cargo are simply returning home). Wolfe does a masterful job of keeping Quetzal's true intentions and moral nature ambiguous in Long Sun; this is a foundation for SOMETHING remarkable.

Speaking of ambiguity, we might remember that the Long Sun books were written by a colonist (Horn) who may not have been entirely impartial in his portrayal of Quetzal and the inhumis. Some of the scenes where we get the most characterization of Quetzal must be somewhat speculative reconstruction on Horn's part, or at best second or third hand accounts (such as the scenes with Quetzal and Remora).

As a colonist, Horn may have reasons (real or imagined, just or unjust) to dislike the inhumis that he projects back into the Long Sun narrative.

-Rostrum

Peter Westlake — 12 Apr 1999, 08:47 · follows Michael Straight

At 07:23 1999-04-10 +0200, Nicholas Gevers wrote:

...(sorry for discussing this here,
but Whorl is inactive these days)

Has it stopped working? It seemed okay last time I posted to it. It wouldn't be inactive if you had posted this to it, and there are quite a lot of spoilers in these messages. Of course, it is a while since tBotLS was published, and most people will have read it by now; so maybe "whorl" could become a list for discussion of the Book of the Short Sun when it is published, to keep messages separate until we all get a chance to read the Book?

SBear.