

Digest urth.v030.n185

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 20 Sep 2001

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/2826>

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Alice Turner — 20 Sep 2001, 21:04

----- Original Message -----

From: <urth-errors at lists1.ba.best.com>
To: <urth at lists1.ba.best.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 18, 2001 11:53 AM
Subject: Digest urth.v030.n185

----- BEGIN urth.v030.n185 -----

001 - "Matthew Davis" <matthew@ - "Love's Labour's Lost" in John Crowley's AEgypt
002 - James Jordan <jbjordan4@h - Re: (urth) In Glory Like Their Star (SPOILERS) F&SF Mag story

URTH Digest -- for discussion of Gene Wolfe's New Sun and other works

----- MESSAGE urth.v030.n185.1 -----

From: "Matthew Davis" <matthew at michaelscycles.freemove.co.uk>
Subject: "Love's Labour's Lost" in John Crowley's AEgypt
Date: Mon, 17 Sep 2001 16:42:35 +0100
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: multipart/alternative;
boundary="-----_NextPart_000_0009_01C13F97.C133E5E0"

This is a multi-part message in MIME format.

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Content-Type: text/plain;
charset="iso-8859-1"
Content-Transfer-Encoding: quoted-printable

I know this is primarily a space for discussion of Gene Wolfe, but since > John Crowley does seem to pop up quite regularly I thought it might be a > worthwhile space to test out the observations below. I don't know if > anyone else has discussed the relationship of "Love's Labour's Lost"

to > John Crowley's "Aegypt" - it seems obvious to me but I haven't seen it

mentioned in any of the reviews or essays - so if all of the below is well known then I apologise for wasting your time.

On the surface, Crowley's only use of LLL is for the title of Kraft's autobiography and to acknowledge the origins of that title. This all > occurs within the consciousness of Rosie, and the only things they evoke > for her are own depression, forlornness and sense of solitude. If you didn't otherwise know you might think LLL is a tragedy, from such a > deliberate misreading of what

is actually a comedy. Although a comedy that is almost very nearly a problem play.

I

If we look at the plot, we can see a use similar to that Crowley makes of "the Solitudes" as an organising principle: a group of > scholars/knights retreat from the world, makes vows of celibacy and > forswear love so that they may concentrate on their studies that will bring them fame and triumph over death and time. Of course the real > world breaks in upon when they fall in love, and their experience at the > hands of the objects of their desire leaves them compromised and their vaunted intellectualism humiliated. Sounds a little like Pierce, yes? Most commentators point out that that the movement of the play is about > leaving off self-deceptions in a world of enclosed artificiality to > enter into wider perspective of reality. Of course, this is a > fundamental narrative pattern, and since in its philosophical form as "gnosis" this is what "Aegypt" is all about I can't really argue that Crowley is drawing particularly upon this. But it's certainly more > advanced than what one would expect to find in a comedy. And that it is > a comedy is important, with its connotations of spring time and the > pastoral. In his treatment of Blackbury Jams and the Faraway Hills it is evident that Crowley is imbuing these locations with the qualities of > Elizabethan pastoral. LLL for a pastoral comedy has an advanced quality > of knowingness, where the obvious literary artificiality of its plot and > the characters conceptions of themselves is transcended by acknowledging > genuine mortification and introducing a cyclicity into the lives of its protagonists - the vows that lead to farce repeat themselves as, if not tragedy, then as an experience of some pain - tying its > protagonists' development into the forthcoming year with a more > complicated and emotionally resonant reality. In his final lecture, > Crowley uses Barr to make it quite explicit that he is drawing upon Elizabethan storytelling techniques of repetition to induce meaning.

Of > all Shakespeare's plays, LLL has probably the least action - it is a > comedy of contemplation in set pieces progressing by its protagonists

appearances and reappearances in different but very formal combinations. > We know from "Novelty" Crowley conceives of "Aegypt" in terms influenced > by "Euphes" (LLL is certainly a satire on Euphuism), and indeed without > its very formal elements of themes, scenes, characters and their > thoughts repeating the whole novel would be impenetrable.

Finally, the last third of the play revolves around how each of the > suitors is fooled into wooing the wrong woman. The breaking of their > vows and quibbling over their consciences is made rather ridiculous

when > they are fooled into making suits to the wrong women, although there is > still pathos in their predicament. Just as Pierce's debates of > conscience are still valid even though he has confused the two Roses.

And the play ends uncertain as to whether the suitors will win their > women.

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Let's look at the only obvious Crowley makes of LLL. Kraft's > autobiography is titled "Sit Down, Sorrow" later in the book we are > given the actual passage in LLL from which it originates:

"Welcome the sour cup of prosperity!
Affliction may one day smile again: and until then,
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However, this is wrong. The proper quote , in its fullness, should be:

"I suffer for the truth, sir: for true it is I was taken with > Jaquenetta, and Jaquenetta is a true girl; and therefore welcome the > sour cup of prosperity! Affliction may one day smile again; and till > then, sit THEE down, sorrow." - act I, sc.1, the final speech, since > line numbering varies for prose. (CAPS - my own)

So: the original passage is prose and the quotation is wrong. The only instance I can find of "Sit down, sorrow" is accompanied by the same > cod-versification, and it is here: > <http://www.johndee.org/charlotte/Chapter14/14p1.html> as an epigraph used > in Charlotte Fell Smith's "John Dee" (1909). The assumption we may make > is that in his researches Kraft/Crowley has taken this particular quote > from this particular biography of Dee, where this particular chapter > relates Dee's and Talbot's time in Bohemia. Of course it may be Crowley > and Smith are using the same edition of LLL, but a quick browse through > various editions and their editorial commentary in my local library > (which holds a lot of reserve stock for the RSC) didn't turn up a single > instance of this particular version.

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One of the foundations of LLL criticism is that the character of > "Holofernes" represents John Florio, and since then other characters and > dialogue have been identified as various Elizabethan notables and > touching upon current events with the entire play as a satire on the > school of Walter Raleigh. In particular, the play is a locus for

people > trying to connect Shakespeare to Giordano Bruno. Florio was an associate > of Bruno's when he was in England and the character of "Berowne" has > often been identified as being in some degree based upon Bruno - the > extensive use of celestial imagery, the celebration of a vivifying > divine love, the extensive use of eye and visualisation imagery that may > be derived from Bruno's art of Memory. Personally, I think this is all

extremely tenuous at best - given that Francis A. Yates wrote a study of > LLL I'm sure that she has at some point examined these connections and come to a more definitive conclusion - but the point is not whether it is true, accurate, or even faintly provable but that this series of > Bruno-LLL associations is sufficiently long-standing to merit > consideration and therefore have influence.

How convincing any of the above is is debatable, but I thought it was interesting how on even brief examination LLL kept touching upon > important scenes, themes and characters in "Aegypt" and vice versa.

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charset="iso-8859-1"

Content-Transfer-Encoding: quoted-printable

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<BODY bgColor=#ffffff>

<DIV>

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-----=_NextPart_000_0009_01C13F97.C133E5E0--

----- MESSAGE urth.v030.n185.2 -----

From: James Jordan <jbjordan4 at home.com>

Subject: Re: (urth) In Glory Like Their Star (SPOILERS) F&SF Mag story

Date: Mon, 17 Sep 2001 12:24:17 -0500

MIME-Version: 1.0

Content-Type: text/plain; charset="us-ascii"; format=flowed

In-Reply-To: <200109010031.f810VRc48532 at lists1.ba.best.com>

Only one thought, and it's probably wrong:

At 07:28 PM 8/31/2001 -0500, you wrote:

Just read this in the Oct/Nov issue of Fantasy & Science Fiction magazine I

got in the mail yesterday. Always excited to see a new Wolfe story anywhere.

Once again the more Wolfe stories that come out the less chance there is of me *thinking* I fully understand them. I doubt I've had that feeling since the early 80s.

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I felt shock when within the first page I had figured out that this was a story of aliens (misinterpreted as gods) visiting earth, so I knew Gene was giving that away and the real mysteries were to come.

And once again I have mostly questions that I hope others here can shed light on for me (smile).

1. Any idea what the passage on p.110 means? "Our long voyage through space impressed them. I doubt they grasped its length, for their concepts of the five they call "time" are muddled, and so erroneous that they cannot be termed primitive with any precision. They will be primitive, perhaps, when the sunlight reaches them on this place."

I don't understand the word "five" compared to time.

I don't understand where this place that sunlight will reach is to try to determine when he thinks earthlings will reach primitive status.

The light from his own home sun, which he has outrun? Or are we in a nuclear winter?

2. What is the deal about the earth not being a sphere because the desert is a flat spot where gravity works differently? Is the desert the mysterious hidden "Eden" man is still searching for? Something on a

different plane where gravity, time, etc. work differently that the
alien
could see but man can't?

Is the "flat" area the site of a nuclear detonation?

Nutria

----- END urth.v030.n185 -----

other works