

Auk's fate?

The Urth list — 24 messages, 14 voices, 29 Mar 2007

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4802>

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Fred — 29 Mar 2007, 21:09

I'm new to all of this, and I've been searching these archives for a while now. I've not been able to find much discussion on Auk, especially in the short sun books. In RTTW, Horn/Silk says, "I struck Jahlee with my fists, and when she fell I kicked her like Auk. A day may come when I can forgive myself of that."

Why did he kick Auk (or did he mean he kicked her like Auk might have or something?)? One of the most frustrating things about these books was waiting to hear about Auk, and then when he's mentioned, he gets only a passing mention in an earlier chapter with Hide and his village. What happened with Auk?

Thank you very much.

Transient — 30 Mar 2007, 03:06 · in reply to Fred

I think when I read that, I just imagined Auk kicking a whore. I think he did mean the he kicked Jahlee_in the same fashion_ as Auk would have, but there may be a reference to a specific occurrence that I don't remember. Interesting.

On Mar 29, 2007, at 5:09 PM, Fred wrote:

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Why did he kick Auk (or did he mean he kicked her like Auk might have or something?)? One of the most frustrating things about these books was waiting to hear about Auk, and then when he's mentioned, he gets only a passing mention in an earlier chapter with Hide and his village. What happened with Auk?

Thank you very much.

Matthew Groves — 31 Mar 2007, 14:44 · follows Transient

It's been a little while since I read the books, but in The Book of the Long Sun, (Horn and Nettle write that) Patera Silk shrives Auk, and the content of his shriving is, among other things, that he struck and kicked Chenille when she spurned his gift (I forget what the gift was). I seem to recall he had already been shriven for this by Silk's predecessor, Patera Pike, but his guilt is so great that he confesses again to Silk. Anyway, after Silk/Horn kills Jahlee, he also is unable to forgive himself. I suppose the gift Jahlee spurns is Silk/Horn's forgiveness. He invites her into his family in spite of the attack that nearly killed Sinew, and she tries to kill Horn's wife.

I like Auk too, especially in that pair of scenes surrounding Silk's caper at Blood's villa -- his

shriving beforehand and his laughter at Silk's adventure afterward. He's a great foil for Silk. As for what happened to him, we're just not given that much information.

Charles Reed — 31 Mar 2007, 16:14 · in reply to Matthew Groves

It's been a while since I read the books too (although I'm currently re-reading Long Sun and am enjoying it so much that I'll most likely follow that up with Short Sun), but I think I remember reading that Auk and Chenille wound up on Green where they were survived for several years before being killed. I don't have a reference to point to, though, and the way the the books are written makes it difficult to look things up unless you already know where they are.

Does anybody else recall what I'm recalling, or am I completely off base?

Charles

Matthew Groves wrote:

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Chris — 31 Mar 2007, 20:53 · in reply to Charles Reed

Auk is still alive when Horn runs into him on Green. I don't recall any direct reference to his demise.

It's been a while since I read the books too (although I'm currently re-reading Long Sun and am enjoying it so much that I'll most likely follow that up with Short Sun), but I think I remember reading that Auk and Chenille wound up on Green where they were survived for several years before being killed. I don't have a reference to point to, though, and the way the the books are written makes it difficult to look things up unless you already know where they are.

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thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 02 Apr 2007, 06:50 · follows Chris

On Fri, 30 Mar 2007 07:09:35 +1000 Fred <lucidprevention at gmail.com> wrote:

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a while

now. I've not been able to find much discussion on Auk, especially

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Why did he kick Auk (or did he mean he kicked her like Auk might
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Somewhere early on in Long Sun, we learn that Auk once kicked a man to death.

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waiting to hear about Auk, and then when he's mentioned, he gets
only a
passing mention in an earlier chapter with Hide and his village.
What
happened with Auk?

It is very frustrating. SilkHorn meets Chenille (and Auk? can't rememebr) in the cellar of Sinew's house on green, but we learn absolutely nothing about what they said to each other.

However I think it's pretty easy to guess what happened afterwards. This meeting happens shortly after SilkHorn and his little army of astral-travelling mercenaries have cleared the old city on green of inhum. These inhum were holding A & C's children hostage. SilkHorn would have reconciled Sinew's villagers with Chenille, and she & her colleagues would have gone back to the city to claim back her children, and to claim the city for humans, guarding it against the return of inhum. This would have fulfilled the hope of the Neighbor when he set Horn the task of clearing the sewer, that by doing so the sewer might be cleared forever.

I think you can guess other things about Auk. It must have been Auk with his preternatural mechanical insight who reprogrammed his lander so that it would fly between Green & Blue under inhum control.

Less certainly, I feel pretty sure that Pas gave Auk this insight and sent him from the Whorl just in order that Auk would build a new Mainframe for Pas & the others to dwell in & rule from. In a sense the inhum performed a valuable service in taking Auk prisoner before he could do this.

Matthew Groves — 03 Apr 2007, 00:01 · follows thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

*thalassocrat wrote: *Somewhere early on in Long Sun, we learn that Auk once kicked a man to death.

That's right -- I said earlier he kicked Chenille, but that's wrong. During the shriving, Auk says: "I was going to kick her. I didn't, but if I had I'd probably have killed her. I kicked a man to death, once. That was part of what I told Patera Pike."

James B. Jordan — 04 Apr 2007, 13:51 · in reply to thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

I've been away so much that I may have missed it, but have we discussed "Memorare" here yet?

Spoiler space

I was struck by the fact that Wolfe makes himself the godplaying dead man. It would be easy to have the statue be that of "Richard Nixon" or "Hitler" or someone else, but Wolfe takes upon

himself the role of god-playing tyrant. He seems to be saying that he's as potentially evil as anyone else. Salvation is only by grace, as the prayers and title indicate.

Which raised to me another question/dimension of the story: the persons sent back to earth by the Wolfegod. Are these the readers of the story? Is Wolfe suggesting that his own readers move back into the world to do good (he hopes), but that any anti-Wolfe would also be sending readers back into the world for evil purposes?

Anyway, I thought this was excellent vintage-Wolfe novella, multidimensional and fully textured. Anybody want to talk about it?

Nutria

James B. Jordan
Director, Biblical Horizons
Box 1096
Niceville, FL 32588
<http://www.biblicalhorizons.com>

brunians at brunians.org — 04 Apr 2007, 14:33 · in reply to James B. Jordan

James B. Jordan
Director, Biblical Horizons
Box 1096
Niceville, FL 32588
<http://www.biblicalhorizons.com>

Neat website, James.

I especially liked this:

<http://www.biblicalhorizons.com/miscellaneous/the-menace-of-chinese-food/>

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Matthew King — 04 Apr 2007, 15:20 · in reply to James B. Jordan

On Apr 4, 2007, at 8:51 AM, James B. Jordan wrote:
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Spoiler space

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I wondered if anyone else would think the statue was of Wolfe. Is the GW in Memorare the first head of Cerberus? That seems like too much of a closed circle.

Matthew

Gwern Branwen — 04 Apr 2007, 15:37 · in reply to James B. Jordan

"James B. Jordan" <bjordan4@cox.net> writes:

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Nutria

James B. Jordan

To be facetious for a moment, doesn't it make perfect sense for the godplaying dead man to be Wolfe, the author of the story? After all, the story will be read long after he's dead; the author has the power of a god (sort of); and there is no acceptable theodicy for the inhabitants of a story - any evil done to them is fully purposed, thought through, and carried out by the author.

Gwern
Inquiring minds want to know.

James B. Jordan — 04 Apr 2007, 16:18 · in reply to Matthew King

At 10:20 AM 4/4/2007, you wrote:

On Apr 4, 2007, at 8:51 AM, James B. Jordan wrote:

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Matthew

I guess one would put the Wolfe identification into the category of a mcguffin (?), something we don't have to know to get the story. But the statue looks just like Wolfe, and Wolfe has appeared in other stories by describing himself. Also, the main character (I don't have the story before me) says that identifying the dead man will be difficult for him -- being a character, how can he identify the author? I have not yet reread the story to see if there be other clues.

Setting aside the Wolfe identification, I think we can see that the "heaven" that turns out to be fake and deadly is a symbol for socialism, fascism, and all the other anti-liberty things that Wolfe is against. One is told that everything is fine, and one keeps believing everything is fine, but the reality is that things are not fine at all. It is all one man, one dictator, controlling it all, including controlling the mind. The comments in the story about America no longer being a free country fit with this theme.

Freedom as Wolfe's large thematic interest is, in this story, linked with being realistic about life. Not living in a fantasy world (!). And it would seem that prayer and grace are ways of becoming realistic and being disabused of fantasy and fakery. Just some more observations.

Nutria

Matthew King — 04 Apr 2007, 16:52 · in reply to James B. Jordan

On Apr 4, 2007, at 11:18 AM, James B. Jordan wrote:
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Wolfe is apparently writing a novel in the same "milieu" as Memorare: <http://www.scifi.com/scifiwire/index.php?category=5&id=40135>

An Evil Guest, a novel-in-progress set in the same milieu as "Memorare," also deals with freedom, Wolfe said.

(Mark Lewin previously posted the same link with a snippet about _Pirate Freedom_)

Roy C. Lackey — 05 Apr 2007, 04:37 · follows Matthew King

James B. Jordan wrote:
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Seeing the statue of the "Founder" in a fake paradise as representing Wolfe has an obvious appeal, but . . . what about the larger part of the story, the relationships among the four main characters? The memorials aren't built by those they honor; they are built by the dead person's relatives/followers. If Wolfe is the honored dead, who built the memorial -- and why?

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The fake paradise is shown to be foul and diseased by the neutral eye of the camera. Only the glamour cast over the people who go there, the rose-colored view, permits them to see that world as much better than it really is. If Wolfe sees himself as the giant bronze lord of such a sorry realm, what is he saying about his legacy? More to the point; what is he saying about you and me and the rest of the faithful readers of his fantasies?

March thought that the statue of the Founder looked like his father. Penny (Robin) thought it looked like her grandfather. If Wolfe was the Founder, who are March and Sue/Robin/Penny?

-Roy

James B. Jordan — 05 Apr 2007, 15:49 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

At 11:37 PM 4/4/2007, Roy wrote:

James B. Jordan wrote:

I was struck by the fact that Wolfe makes himself the godplaying dead man. It would be easy to have the statue be that of "Richard Nixon" or "Hitler" or someone else, but Wolfe takes upon himself the role of god-playing tyrant. He seems to be saying that he's as potentially evil as anyone else. Salvation is only by grace, as the prayers and title indicate.

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Is it always the case that memorials are built by others? I'll have to reread this soon -- wanted to let it sit for a couple of weeks first. But if so, then Wolfe is saying something about how a man's work is often perverted by his disciples.

The fake paradise is shown to be foul and diseased by the neutral eye of the camera. Only the glamour cast over the people who go there, the rose-colored view, permits them to see that world as much better than it really is. If Wolfe sees himself as the giant bronze lord of such a sorry realm, what is he saying about his legacy? More to the point; what is he saying about you and me and the rest of the faithful readers of his fantasies?

Given some of the weird misreadings that Wolfe has received, maybe he IS saying something about "us." :-(Or about some of us anyway.

March thought that the statue of the Founder looked like his father. Penny (Robin) thought it looked like her grandfather. If Wolfe was the Founder, who are March and Sue/Robin/Penny?

Assuming Wolfe as Founder (which I've assumed, though of course that's debatable I guess), then they are either characters or else descendants analogous to the Numbered folk in *5th Head.* Or possibly readers.

BTW:

Sue, from Susan - Susannah = Hebrew lily vegetable

Robin = bird animal

Penny = mineral

Something's going on there. I can see Penny as the name she has in a realm ruled over by a metal man. Susannah was falsely accused of adultery and defended by Daniel -- I gather Sue was really guilty, she wanted reconciliation.

FWIW.

Nutria

-Roy

Roy C. Lackey — 05 Apr 2007, 21:39 · follows James B. Jordan

James B. Jordan wrote:

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Sue was admittedly guilty, which brings up another point. Male-female relationships, more specifically, marriage, have a lot to do with this story. I mean, March, out in the boondocks, is unexpectedly visited by both his girlfriend and his ex-wife. They are soon followed by his ex-wife's estranged second husband, seeking to get her back. The girlfriend and second husband get killed and March, after the main action of the story, goes back for Robin (breaking a promise made to God in doing so [48]) and marries her again; but this time she takes March's name.

Ms. Applefield, on one of the non-lethal memorials, had admonished Kit that her relationship with March as "close enough" to marriage wasn't good enough (23). Only marriage would do. Wife-beater Jim died nobly defending his woman, but hadn't been above getting naked with Kit. March kept asking Kit to marry him but she refused; he would hinder her career. Kim, the new girl back on Earth who had never even met March, started coming on to him for no good reason that I can see. Neither do I understand why March remarried Robin.

That's a lot to put in one story on one subject. How is it related to the double meaning of the title? How does the misremembered, incorrect conclusion March supplied to the title prayer (76) relate to the correct conclusion?

-Roy

James B. Jordan — 05 Apr 2007, 21:47 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

At 04:39 PM 4/5/2007, Roy wrote:

Kim, the new

girl back on Earth who had never even met March, started coming on to him for no good reason that I can see. Neither do I understand why March remarried Robin.

I think Kim had heard that March was a really nice and honorable, chivalrous guy. She wants to meet this musketeer. I think March's reconciliation with Robin is a back-story in the whole shebang. My take so far, anyway.

That's a lot to put in one story on one subject. How is it related to the double meaning of the title? How does the misremembered, incorrect conclusion March supplied to the title prayer (76) relate to the correct conclusion?

Good question. And it makes you wonder if March has misremembered his former marriage.

Nutria

-Roy

Alan Lewis — 06 Apr 2007, 00:10 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

I absolutely agree with Roy that male/female relationships are one of the main themes of the story. But this story is also a commentary on what we see, vs what actually is, which relates back to the sexes also of course. An important incident to include in the discussion is where March and Kit explore the first tomb, and Kit realizes the woman they meet there is a robot. When March asks her later how she knew, Kit says its because she saw the woman's body was literally perfect, which tipped her off that it was impossible. This relates to the big asteroid where everything seems to be appear as near perfect (as it's Platonic Ideal? -- a reversal of Plato's cave analogy?). The people who live there cannot imagine anyone wanting to leave. These are people who are living on the level of surfaces, and it is telling that they are satisfied with that, even though all along they knew they were signing on for an illusion, since they themselves were changed in appearance. March however does not wish to stay, so he represents the attempt to penetrate beyond surface meanings, which is appropriate as a documentary maker.

This also is applicable to the nature of love. March is at the infatuation stage with his relationship with Kit, where he is enchanted by her physical beauty, and is blind to her faults the way the inhabitants of the asteroid are blind. Conversely, Kit professes her indifference to March's self-described lack of attractiveness. March's true feelings about his ex-wife are enigmatic. He repeatedly denies loving her, and she claims to disdain him, but as he goes over the last sequence in his mind he wonders if she put herself out to save him, and we are told they re-marry. Is this another illusion, or was it their surface feelings that were an illusion?

As for what place the flirtatious exchange between March and Kim plays in this story, I think the idea is to show the sparks that can fly at the beginning of a relationship. In this way we have portrayed in this story many different stages of relationships. In each I think we are meant to

wonder about the tension between surface appearances and deeper feelings/truth.

Anyone else struck by the parallel between this story and Jack Vance's Eyes of the Overworld?

Alan

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Apr 2007, 01:11 · in reply to Alan Lewis

So this story can be found where?

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Rex Lycanthrosaurus — 06 Apr 2007, 02:21 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Seeing the statue of the "Founder" in a fake paradise as representing Wolfe
has an obvious appeal,

The notion of Wolfe being the Founder is interesting, but the name that went through my head was L. Ron Hubbard, who loved statues of himself (they're ubiquitous in Scientology centers) and preached a rose-colored philosophy. He was overweight toward the end of his life, but probably no "fatter" than stout GW.

Curiously as well, Hubbard's son, L. Ron Jr., disavowed his father and changed his last name to DeWolf. So could this be why the Founder reminds March Wildpring of his father?

Rex Lycanthrosaurus
lycanthrosaurus at fastmail.fm

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<http://www.fastmail.fm> - The way an email service should be

Roy C. Lackey — 06 Apr 2007, 06:30 · follows Rex Lycanthrosaurus

A key to understanding this story is the exact nature of the glamour cast over the people in asteroid memorial #19. It causes people to look better than they really look; the very young to look older, old people to look younger. But it's only new arrivals who simply look better than they did on arrival; those who have been there a while are shown by the camera to be, in fact, sick and getting sicker by the day, soon to die. But it isn't just people. A dank cavern looks like a pastoral heaven; a rickety shed like a quaint cottage; sewage like tea, etc. How may this glamour be categorized?

March has an often repeated habit of rubbing his lantern jaw. Was this the habit of some character from (pulp?) fiction I can't recall?

With the pointed exception of "The Last Thrilling Wonder Story", "Memorare" is the only other thing I have read by Wolfe that reminded me of Heinlein. The near-future simplicity of the plot, the practical science, the dialogue, Kit's characterization, all combined to give me that impression. Anyone else see that?

-Roy

Matthew King — 06 Apr 2007, 14:46 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

On Apr 5, 2007, at 8:11 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:
So this story can be found where?

It is in the Wolfe-devoted April issue of Fantasy and Science Fiction Magazine.

All of the other Wolfe material is available online, but you have to purchase the mag for the story. Worth it.

<http://www.sfsite.com/fsf/toc0704.htm>

Geoffrey — 06 Apr 2007, 22:31 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Insightful points, Roy. This story stands out to me, an aging Ph.D. in English and an avid reader of Heinlein.

The idea of a glamour goes back to medieval times and was a precursor of demonic possession. Shakespeare knew this when he has Macbeth envision a dagger before him. Wolfe is at his subtle-yet-obvious best in Memorare, and the religious element is evident as I write this on Good Friday: Memorare Remember, O Most Gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to Thy protection, implored Thy help or sought Thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto Thee, O Virgin of Virgins, my Mother; to Thee do we come, before thee we kneel, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in Thy clemency, hear and answer me. Amen.

Geoffrey

On Apr 6, 2007, at 2:30 AM, Roy C. Lackey wrote:
A key to understanding this story is the exact nature of the glamour cast over the people in asteroid memorial #19. It causes people to look better than they really look; the very young to look older, old people to look younger. But it's only new arrivals who simply look better than they did on arrival; those who have been there a while are shown by the camera to be, in fact, sick and getting sicker by the day, soon to die. But it isn't just people. A dank cavern looks like a pastoral heaven; a rickety shed like a quaint cottage; sewage like tea, etc. How may this glamour be categorized?

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-Roy

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Apr 2007, 23:32 · in reply to Geoffrey

Memorare

Remember, O Most Gracious Virgin Mary,
that never was it known that anyone who fled to Thy protection,
implored Thy help or sought Thy intercession, was left unaided.
Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto Thee, O Virgin of Virgins, my
Mother;
to Thee do we come, before thee we kneel, sinful and sorrowful.
O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions,
but in Thy clemency, hear and answer me. Amen.

On that note, some of you might enjoy this:

<http://www.youtube.com/v/OPN-GlwtHwg>

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