

?Tracking Song? (and other stories)

The Urth list — 8 messages, 7 voices, 06 Jun 2007

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4837>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

Solomon, Joshua — 06 Jun 2007, 09:15

Matthew Groves wrote:

Wolfe's underworld type-scene: Where does it come from, and what is its significance? We have it in "Tracking Song" (with the Min), in the mine at Saltus in BotNS (with the ape men), in "The Eyeflash Miracles" (Little Tib dreams of a cave with gnomes and a Gnome King. Here, the reference is also to Munchkinland from The Wizard of Oz, but they are in a *cave*, and the Gnome King made me think of Mantru from "Tracking Song".) I'm sure shows up in other places I haven't noticed or don't remember.

You may be onto something here, Matty. Caves also pop up in Fifth Head. My memory of Fifth Head has degraded somewhat, but I think that the mythological abo (Sandwalker?) made a pilgrimage to one in "A Story." This cave is a thematical doppleganger of Aunt Jeanine's basement room in the first novella.

j

Joshua A. Solomon
<http://www.staff.city.ac.uk/~solomon>

Transentient — 06 Jun 2007, 11:55 · in reply to Solomon, Joshua

On Jun 6, 2007, at 5:15 AM, Solomon, Joshua wrote:

Matthew Groves wrote:

Wolfe's underworld type-scene: Where does it come from, and what is its significance? We have it in "Tracking Song" (with the Min), in the mine at Saltus in BotNS (with the ape men), in "The Eyeflash Miracles" (Little Tib dreams of a cave with gnomes and a Gnome King. Here, the reference is also to Munchkinland from The Wizard of Oz, but they are in a *cave*, and the Gnome King made me think of Mantru from "Tracking Song".) I'm sure shows up in other places I haven't noticed or don't remember.

You may be onto something here, Matty. Caves also pop up in Fifth Head. My memory of Fifth Head has degraded somewhat, but I think that the mythological abo (Sandwalker?) made a pilgrimage to one in "A Story." This cave is a thematical doppleganger of Aunt Jeanine's basement room in the first novella.

Wolfe often has his characters grope around in complete darkness.

A significant portion of one of the books in Long Sun is spent by a motley assortment of characters wandering around in completely lightless caves. One of them naked the entire time.

Matthew Knight — 06 Jun 2007, 20:39 · in reply to Solomon, Joshua

Yes, Sandwalker travels to a cave on pilgrimage to meet some sort of wise man. Cave scenes also show up in Peace (Weer, his aunt, and Professor Peacock rappel down to a cave with some ancient remains) and TWK book one (the griffin etc., preceding the fight with the dragon). I don't have any answers on this, but I have noted a number of other common themes throughout Wolfe's stories, particularly the inclusion of demonic/vampiric/shapeshifting women who are occasional but not completely trustworthy allies.

I believe this is my first post to the board, though I have lurked for some time. Hello, everyone!

Matt

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 06 Jun 2007, 21:03 · in reply to Matthew Knight

Hello Matthew!

Yes, there are quite a few running images and themes in GW's work, aside from the obvious genes, wolves, roses, and rosemary, which are almost more signatures than thematics. (How cool to have a name you can do that with! I can't figure out how to work a dan'l or a danehyoakes into my attempts at fiction...)

Another that appears frequently is a communion feast, which can be either sacramental or blasphemous, or, sometimes, both. (I think, for example, that the feast of the Liege of Leaves is generally a blasphemy but becomes a sacrament on the occasion of Severian's presence.)

Another that gets some discussion at times >kaff, kaff< is the recurrent image of blue-green world pairs: Ste.Anne/St.Croix, Urth/Lune, Blue/Green. Probably others, but those are the most significant.

One I push at that nobody else seems to see or agree with: the embedding of non-Christian cosmologies into a larger Christian cosmology, which itself is frequently ambiguous.

Cheers,

--Dan'l

On 6/6/07, Matthew Knight <jacobeiserman at gmail.com> wrote:
Yes, Sandwalker travels to a cave on pilgrimage to meet some sort of wise man. Cave scenes also show up in Peace (Weer, his aunt, and Professor Peacock rappel down to a cave with some ancient remains) and TWK book one (the griffin etc., preceding the fight with the dragon). I don't have any answers on this, but I have noted a number of other common themes throughout Wolfe's stories, particularly the inclusion of demonic/vampiric/shapeshifting women who are occasional but not completely trustworthy allies.

I believe this is my first post to the board, though I have lurked for some time. Hello, everyone!

Matt

Daniel D Jones — 06 Jun 2007, 21:36 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On Wednesday 06 June 2007 17:03, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:
Hello Matthew!

Yes, there are quite a few running images and themes in GW's work, aside from the obvious genes, wolves, roses, and rosemary, which are almost more signatures than thematics. (How cool to have a name you can do that with! I can't figure out how to work a danl or a danehyoakes into my attempts at fiction...)

Don't forget memory! (No pun intended. Honestly!)

Andy Robertson — 06 Jun 2007, 22:08 · in reply to Matthew Knight

Matthew Knight writes:

Yes, Sandwalker travels to a cave on pilgrimage to meet some sort of wise man. Cave scenes also show up in Peace (Weer, his aunt, and Professor Peacock rappel down to a cave with some ancient remains) and TWK book one (the griffin etc., preceding the fight with the dragon). I don't have any answers on this,

Yes, caves = underworld = world/house of the dead, from the old habit of burying everyone in the tribe together in a mound or communal grave. This is an ancient and nearly universal mythical pattern. Most of these caves in Wolfe have the dead in them (the priest Sandwalker meets is a corpse-mummy, the remains in PEACE are human IIRC). Or if not they are underworlds of various sorts. This is a common pattern in Wolfe's writing but I am not sure of its significance - it's a common pattern in nearly all writing.

I believe this is my first post to the board, though I have lurked for some time. Hello, everyone!

Matt

Welcome, Matt

hartshorn

<http://www.thenightland.co.uk>

01273-488272 / 0777-214-9545

Stuart Hamm — 07 Jun 2007, 00:00 · in reply to Matthew Knight

Hello all,

I assume that GW uses events from his life to color his writing, and I'm sure that the Korean War shaped him as a person alot and influenced the battle scenes in BOTNS.

Wondering if there was underground tunnel warfare in Korea as there was in Vietnam?.....

Stuart

Matthew Knight <jacobeiserman at gmail.com> wrote: Yes, Sandwalker travels to a cave on pilgrimage to meet some sort of wise man. Cave scenes also show up in Peace (Weer, his aunt, and Professor Peacock rappel down to a cave with some ancient remains) and TWK book one (the griffin etc., preceding the fight with the dragon). I don't have any answers on this, but I have noted a number of other common themes throughout Wolfe's stories, particularly the

inclusion of demonic/vampiric/shapeshifting women who are occasional but not completely trustworthy allies.

I believe this is my first post to the board, though I have lurked for some time. Hello, everyone!

Matt

Solomon, Joshua — 07 Jun 2007, 06:48 · follows Stuart Hamm

Date: Wed, 06 Jun 2007 10:15:28 +0100

From: "Solomon, Joshua" <J.A.Solomon at city.ac.uk>

Matthew Groves wrote:

Wolfe's underworld type-scene: Where does it come from, and what is its significance? We have it in "Tracking Song" (with the Min), in the mine at Saltus in BotNS (with the ape men), in "The Eyeflash Miracles" (Little Tib dreams of a cave with gnomes and a Gnome King. Here, the reference is also to Munchkinland from *The Wizard of Oz*, but they are in a *cave*, and the Gnome King made me think of Mantru from "Tracking Song".) I'm sure shows up in other places I haven't noticed or don't remember.

You may be onto something here, Matty. Caves also pop up in Fifth Head. My memory of Fifth Head has degraded somewhat, but I think that the mythological abo (Sandwalker?) made a pilgrimage to one in "A Story." This cave is a thematical doppleganger of Aunt Jeanine's basement room in the first novella.

(Answering my own post) Nigel (is he still here?) once pointed out that Wolfe frequently makes reference to Plato's cave and the shadows on its wall. The hospital in TAD was being discussed at the time, IIRC.

bee

Joshua A. Solomon

<http://www.staff.city.ac.uk/~solomon>