

Crowley and mystery

The Urth list — 21 messages, 11 voices, 17 Dec 2008

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5282>

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Zvi Gilbert — 17 Dec 2008, 22:38

It's just probably not the sort of stuff that inspires me to get online and try to hash out what the hell is going on with some other readers.

For that, I would recommend John Crowley, especially `_Engine Summer_` and `_Little, Big_`.

I don't find either of those books particularly confusing. Wonderful, brilliant, and exquisite, yes; but they're not New Sun-like. I suspect a discussion of it for me would devolve into quoting favorite lines and swooning.

However, Crowley's long and complex four novel series Aegypt (The Solitudes, Love & Sleep, Daemonomania, Endless Things) is something that I would love to hash over with interested parties. As many of its characters and situations are drawn from history (John Dee, Giordano Bruno, and so forth), I would just like some particularly erudite person to lecture at me about the source material -- I suspect I would learn a lot that way.

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Tim Walters — 17 Dec 2008, 23:17 · in reply to Zvi Gilbert

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I agree that their surface is less confusing than Wolfe's, but I get something new every time I read them; and I would love to see the fine spelunkers of this list unleashed on them (or, as you say, `_Aegypt_`) to dig up the many things I'm sure I missed.

Tim Walters | <http://doubtfulpalace.com>

Son of Witz — 17 Dec 2008, 23:19 · follows Tim Walters

anyone read Edward Whittmore's Sinai Tapestry.

that's a strange sort of puzzle. Odd book. One of those ones where I didn't like it until about a month later, when, not having thought about it since closing the pages, the symbols jumped out and started making sense.

very curious work. I'm not sure if it's scifi or not. The cover would lead you to believe it, and many elements. I suppose New Sun fans might find a lot worth pondering. Jerusalem, repeating Anchors in history, time paradoxes. I just found out it's the first of the Jerusalem Quartet. I suppose I should read the others. very strange. the blurb on the cover compared it to LOTR, which left me scratching my head big time.

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

From: Zvi Gilbert [mailto:zvi at vex.net]
Sent: Wednesday, December 17, 2008 02:38 PM
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Subject: (urth) Crowley and mystery

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hammstu at sbcglobal.net — 18 Dec 2008, 00:01 · follows Son of Witz

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ReplyTo: The Urth Mailing List
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Dave Lebling — 18 Dec 2008, 00:08 · in reply to Son of Witz

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Son of Witz — 18 Dec 2008, 00:12 · follows Dave Lebling

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Adam Thornton — 18 Dec 2008, 00:13 · in reply to Zvi Gilbert

On Dec 17, 2008, at 4:38 PM, Zvi Gilbert wrote:

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It's all a bit fuzzy now, of course, but the main point is: read Frances Yates. She *did* look rather like the White Queen. I don't know if her sister looked like the Red Queen. Anyway, most of what you need to know about Dee and Bruno (at least for the purposes of reading Crowley) you can get out of Yates.

Adam

Son of Witz — 18 Dec 2008, 00:15 · follows Adam Thornton

Witz....you gotta slug your way through long and short sun....

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I'm itchy for them though.

anyone know if the Short Sun stuff is out of print? Borders never has them on the shelf.

Myspace me willya...you around?

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ok. Haven't been around Myspace. I can barely stomach it in there, but I try to pimp my shit to bands, you know, so one does what one must.

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From: Son of Witz

Sender: urth-bounces at lists.urth.net

To: The Urth Mailing List

ReplyTo: The Urth Mailing List

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hammstu at sbcglobal.net — 18 Dec 2008, 00:16 · in reply to Son of Witz

Witz...just have a wee bit of holiday cheer to pass your way...address? Hook up??? S Sent from my BlackBerry? smartphone with SprintSpeed

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From: "Son of Witz" <sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org>
Date: Thu, 18 Dec 2008 00:15:00
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brunians at brunians.org — 18 Dec 2008, 00:27 · in reply to Adam Thornton
Indeed.

I don't believe Crowley has read Dee or Bruno except as excerpted in Yates.

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Allan Anderson — 18 Dec 2008, 01:00 · in reply to Son of Witz

J. Crowley sounds great! thanks for another book recommendation, folks.

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brunians at brunians.org — 18 Dec 2008, 01:54 · in reply to Allan Anderson

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David Duffy — 18 Dec 2008, 02:11 · in reply to Tim Walters

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dig up the many things I'm sure I missed.

You might know that a number of former list members put together
Snake's Hands: The Fiction of John Crowley

Recently read _Lord Byron's Novel_, which was enjoyable too. Perhaps not quite as dab a
pastiche as the voice that Susanna Clarke uses

David Duffy.

| David Duffy (MBBS PhD) ,_-_\|
| email: davidD at qimr.edu.au ph: INT+61+7+3362-0217 fax: -0101 / *
| Epidemiology Unit, Queensland Institute of Medical Research _-_-/_
| 300 Herston Rd, Brisbane, Queensland 4029, Australia GPG 4D0B994A v

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James Wynn — 18 Dec 2008, 02:31 · in reply to Son of Witz

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They're in print, but that's the way it is with Wolfe.

You can get them off of Amazon or Abebooks.

The Science Fiction Book Club put out a compiled edition of "Short Sun".

David Duffy — 18 Dec 2008, 03:36 · in reply to Tim Walters

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No, here. Michael Andre-Driussi also authored Lexicon

Urthus, you know ;) Alice Turner was Alga, and in the Digest I see is the second message ever.

David Duffy

David Duffy — 18 Dec 2008, 04:36 · in reply to David Duffy

Someone asked before about discussions of Aegypt etc. There is a fair bit in the archives eg
<http://www.urth.net/urth/archives/v0030/0696.shtml> is about the middle of them. It also
answers which books JC read about Dee.

Apropos of nothing, I have finally started AEG -- yay.

David Duffy.

David Stockhoff — 18 Dec 2008, 14:34 · follows David Duffy

Speaking of the Jerusalem Quartet---I'm not very familiar with it though
I have read reviews. A quick google came up with the following description:

Sinai Tapestry, originally published in 1977, is the first book of Edward Whittemore's Jerusalem Quartet: four novels that make the long, complex history of the Middle East comprehensible as no other books do, and that do so by creating an alternate version of history - part real and part imagined (and what pleasure, while reading, to speculate on what, in the novels, is real and what imagined!) - that begins, in this first book, by telling the story of how early in the nineteenth century, Skanderbeg Wallenstein, a fanatical Trappist monk from Albania, comes upon what is "with out question the oldest Bible in the world" and discovers that "It denied every religious truth ever held by anyone"

What would happen, then, he wonders - in ways not so different from the actual speculations of twentieth century Biblical scholars - "if the world suddenly suspected that Mohammed might well have lived six centuries before Christ" or that Christ had been a minor prophet in the age of Elijah" or "that the virtues of Mary and Fatima and Ruth had been confused in the minds of later chroniclers and freely interchanged among them?"

"Melchizedek must have his City of Peace," Wallenstein. concludes, just as men must have their Jerusalem" Believing that faith must be sustained in the world, Wallenstein also believes that if the cause for faith is absent, then it is his duty to provide it. "The decision he had made in his cell," Whittemore tells us, "was to forge the original Bible."

But this forgery - what has led to it, and what issues from it-becomes, in Sinai Tapestry, an imaginative conceit that informs the entire Quartet: It is Whittemore's way of asking us to consider the many ways in which illusions can give birth to realities, by which realities can be transformed by dreams, and - above all - through which the real and the imagined can conspire to create those events and legends that determine how we live, love, and die.

At a high level of abstraction, this sounds not very different from TBotNS. Wolfe also forges an alternate history but on a vaster scale, a history in which the miraculous truth and mundane deceit are conflated. Note the line about Mary and Fatima and Ruth; after chiliads, the same has occurred on Urth. And the last paragraph especially.

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

From: Dave Lebling [mailto:dlebling at hyraxes.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 17, 2008 04:08 PM

Son of Witz — 18 Dec 2008, 18:53 · follows David Stockhoff

Exactly what I was thinking.

the trappings are not at all similar, nor is the plot, but some of the meta concepts about time, recurrent anchors in history, fraud and veracity in religion are probably closer to BotNS than any other work I've read.

I'll have to read the first again, then the others. Like I said, I had a strong "WTF did I just read?" reaction to the book, then it dawned on my, unbidden, months later in a real Aha moment. There were several complaints I had about it, but once I began to understand it more, everything I thought was sort of stupid became symbolically perfect and apt.

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From: David Stockhoff [mailto:dstockhoff at verizon.net]

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From: Dave Lebling [mailto:dlebling at hyraxes.com]

Sent: Wednesday, December 17, 2008 04:08 PM

David Stockhoff — 18 Dec 2008, 23:08 · follows Son of Witz

Yeah, other than what I quoted, it does sound fairly silly. I have a low tolerance for silly unless it's funny (see Snow Crash: very silly, not funny). Wolfe always disguises his silly.

Message: 5

Date: Thu, 18 Dec 2008 18:53:31 +0000

From: "Son of Witz" <sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org>
Subject: Re: (urth) Crowley and mystery
To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>
Message-ID: <W261571814178091229626411 at webmail45>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="us-ascii"

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From: David Stockhoff [mailto:dstockhoff at verizon.net]

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Son of Witz — 18 Dec 2008, 23:16 · follows David Stockhoff

yeah, it wasn't overtly silly. It was there, but fairly straight faced and highbrow, as in Wolfe. "He mispronounced quite common words: urticate, salpinx, bordereau." LoL.

~witz

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From: David Stockhoff [mailto:dstockhoff at verizon.net]
Sent: Thursday, December 18, 2008 03:08 PM
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