

On Blue's Waters (Initial thoughts)

The Urth list — 13 messages, 8 voices, 09 Jan 2012

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6160>

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Antonin Scriabin — 09 Jan 2012, 19:12

I just finished *On Blue's Waters*. It took me a while to really get into it, but I look forward to reading the rest of the Short Sun books. For some reason it didn't capture my imagination like most of the others Wolfe novels I have read; I think I was expecting the very verbose suffusion of description found in the New and Long Suns. I also thought the way some of the characters spoke was uncharacteristically gimmicky for Wolfe (I have in mind the character who helps Horn devise the rough map towards the beginning and spoke a bit like Yoda). By the introduction of Krait, though, I was hooked. Is anyone else just starting out with the New Sun trilogy, or are you all old Wolfe pros? [?]

Daniel Petersen — 09 Jan 2012, 19:30 · in reply to Antonin Scriabin

Yeah, the writing style is different than the earlier Suns. But I really like it. I really like Horn's character developed through the journal entries. It's a mounting trilogy to me. The further you go, the more complex the writing gets and the world becomes. I think OBW clips along a lot more nicely than most of Long Sun. But it is weird and I can understand finding it a bit hard to crack at first. I didn't think the speaking of certain characters in OBW was any more gimmicky than similar tropes in Long Sun.

-DOJP

On Mon, Jan 9, 2012 at 7:12 PM, Antonin Scriabin

<kierkegaurdian at gmail.com>wrote:

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Gerry Quinn — 09 Jan 2012, 19:33 · in reply to Antonin Scriabin

From: Antonin Scriabin

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beginning and spoke a bit like Yoda). By the introduction of Krait, though, I was hooked. Is anyone else just starting out with the New Sun trilogy, or are you all old Wolfe pros?

Just recently finished my re-read of the same book. I actually liked it a lot more second time round.

I think Wolfe did go a bit overboard on the individual dialogue in both Long Sun and Short Sun, but it's liveable-with.

- Gerry Quinn

Antonin Scriabin — 09 Jan 2012, 19:36 · in reply to Daniel Petersen

See, I found the way the thieves and other disreputables spoke in Long Sun to be great; the odd words were carefully selected (like the vocabulary of New Sun) from other places and cleverly used. A lot of the words were actually found in thieves slang from the 1800s (like "dimber" for example). The character on Blue who simply had the order of words in his sentences changed up clearly didn't have the same amount of work put into him.

I can see how it would be a "mounting trilogy" ... I can say I am genuinely excited to "land on Green" and see where the adventure goes ...

On Mon, Jan 9, 2012 at 2:30 PM, Daniel Petersen <danielottojackpetersen at gmail.com> wrote:

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António Pedro Marques — 10 Jan 2012, 02:36 · in reply to Antonin Scriabin

No dia 09/01/2012, às 19:36, Antonin Scriabin <kierkegaardian at gmail.com> escreveu:

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Arrghhhhh!!!! NO, NO, NO, NO! He's DUTCH! It's a masterly rendering of Dutch that Wolfe does there! PLEASE, folks, wait a little before you form your conclusions!

Linguistic individuality is one of the things Wolfe pays a lot of attention to and it's frustrating to see it taken for random seasoning.

And of course the _vironese_ thieves will differ mostly by their lexicon. Speakers of related languages or dialects will have different grammars and phonologies. My only complaint is the amount of h's in a certain part of the book. Since the aitches really are there, one could do without the apostrophes.

Jerry Friedman — 10 Jan 2012, 04:52 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

From: Ant?nio Pedro Marques <antonio at gmail.com>

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My objections in the /Long Sun/ are to Xiphias (every sentence ends in an exclamation point!), Olivine (every sentence gets to the second-last word and then... every sentence gets to the last word and then repeats), and--ah--Remora. (Do Oreb and the catachrest count?) — In the /Short Sun/ we get Pig and the people of Dorp. Wolfe does better, in my opinion, with a lot of the other characters's ways of speaking.

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_language#Word_order

However, the dialect of Dorp has object-subject-verb order, with the conjugated verb never moved that I've noticed. "Another Main you got. Maybe a name it's got."? (OBW, Chapter 4.) I looked at /Ik heb altijd gelijk/, a novel by Willem Federik Hermans, which seems to confirm Wikipedia's description.

""Ik ben bedrogen!? Ik heb mij laten belazeren!? Dat is nog het besten om ervan te zeggen!"" Compare Wijzer's "That I see," "This I hear," "It you must finish," etc. (ibid).

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Gerry Quinn — 10 Jan 2012, 12:09 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

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I know he's supposed to be of Dutch origins (and who knows if Dutch on the Whorl is exactly the same as here anyway) but I agree with Antonin that there seems to be a little bit of Yoda in the mix

- Gerry Quinn

António Pedro Marques — 10 Jan 2012, 14:52 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

Jerry Friedman wrote (10-01-2012 04:52):

From: Ant?nio Pedro Marques<antonio at gmail.com> No dia 09/01/2012, ?s 19:36, Antonin Scriabin<kierkegaudian at gmail.com> escreveu:

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With the possible exception of Pig's 'eye dialect', how can those characters' specific ways of speaking be presented other than as they are? You may say you'd rather they didn't have specific ways of speaking, or that their ways of speaking weren't so conspicuous (like those of thieves, soldiers, councillors, and so on), but there I'd just have to disagree, as I quite like Remora and just love Oreb, for instance. The one I feel is a bit forced is Incus, but that's in character also.

Xiphias can not but remind me of one of The Secret of Monkey Island's characters.

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"Ik ben bedrogen! Ik heb mij laten belazeren! Dat is nog het besten om ervan te zeggen!"

Compare Wijzer's "That I see," "This I hear," "It you must finish," etc. (ibid).

You are right. Dorp's word order is not the same as Dutch. Not only the most usual order isn't the same, Dorp's is quite consistent whereas modern Dutch's is more complex than just SOV/V2. However, to me as someone who's been learning Dutch, Dorp's english evokes just the right feeling of dutchness.

I can't quite explain it, but, for instance, the placement of pronouns in Brazil differs from that in Portugal. However, in some types of clauses, they appear in the same position. Rather than perceiving that as being a similarity, what it feels like is that a very different type of construction is being used - so different that by following the different rules of placement, the pronouns end up in what looks like the same position. Likewise, I don't think the rendition of a foreign grammar in english has to be an exact tranposition of the foreign rules. Well, I said I couldn't quite explain it.

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I have the gravest possible doubts that either the h's or "yer" for "you" are part of the dialect Wolfe seems to be aiming at.

There is no Scotland in the Whorl.

Thomas Bitterman — 11 Jan 2012, 02:46 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

2012/1/10 Ant?nio Pedro Marques <antonio at gmail.com>

Jerry Friedman wrote (10-01-2012 04:52):

From: Ant?nio Pedro Marques<antonio at gmail.com> No dia 09/01/2012, ?s 19:36, Antonin Scriabin<kierkegaurdian at gmail.**com<kierkegaurdian at gmail.com>> escreveu:

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opinion, with a lot of the other characters's ways of speaking.

With the possible exception of Pig's 'eye dialect', how can those characters' specific ways of speaking be presented other than as they are?

Not to put too fine a point on it, but these are all fictional characters. If Wolfe wanted them to speak differently, they would. Wolfe is not presenting how somebody who actually exists talks. The whole thing is an artistic choice by Wolfe.

There is no Scotland in the Whorl.

How would we know?

Jerry Friedman — 11 Jan 2012, 06:04 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

From: Ant?nio Pedro Marques <antonio at gmail.com>

Jerry Friedman wrote (10-01-2012 04:52):

From: Ant?nio Pedro Marques<antonio at gmail.com> No dia 09/01/2012, ?s

19:36, Antonin Scriabin<kierkegaardian at gmail.com> escreveu:

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(Characters'.)

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I haven't played it, but permit me to say "Arrrrr..."

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I'm glad it works for you as a student of Dutch, but... well, I've said it already.

I can't quite explain it, but, for instance, the placement of pronouns in Brazil differs from that in Portugal. However, in some types of clauses, they appear in the same position. Rather than perceiving that as being a similarity, what it feels like is that a very different type of construction is being used - so different that by following the different rules of placement, the pronouns end up in what looks like the same position. Likewise, I don't think the rendition of a foreign grammar in english has to be an exact tranposition of the foreign rules. Well, I said I couldn't quite explain it.

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There is no Scotland in the Whorl.

Okay, why wouldn't it be better to use one's best imitation of a real Scots dialect (or literary Scots) than a combination of Scots with a feature from Classical Cockney? Or just let the simple sentences and third-person self-references characterize Pig's speech? On the other hand, maybe few people beside me were annoyed that they didn't know whether Pig pronounced the "r" in "yer" and "ter".

Jerry Friedman

---- Original Message -----

António Pedro Marques — 11 Jan 2012, 14:11 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

Jerry Friedman wrote (11-01-2012 06:04):

From: António Pedro Marques<antonio at gmail.com>

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Well, my point is that the characters you mention are done that way on purpose. Wolfe could have made them distinctive in ways more similar to the ones you like, but he chose to do it that way for those. And I can't believe I'm the only one who likes the result. The reason I somewhat dislike Pig's speech is that it does get in the way of comprehension for me, and while that is also true of that of thieves, there it's just my ignorance of English, whereas with Pig it's really a graphical thing.

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I think my answer is that it could have been done that way, but it wasn't, so it was a matter of choice, not ignorance or hastiness (this can also be my reply to Thomas, I think). Far from me to suggest that any human work is perfect, but still I don't feel equipped to complain about the choices made by the author of the BSS and OTOH it doesn't get on my nerves - except for the <'>, that is.

Getting back to Thomas's point: I personally know people who talk like Remora. How can one express the way they talk if not as Wolfe does? Sure, one may hint - but at some point it isn't the same thing.

And I think Olivine's speech is an important part of her characterisation, one I don't see achievable by other means.

Sergei SOLOVIEV — 11 Jan 2012, 14:15 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

I agree with Antonio

Sergei Soloviev

António Pedro Marques wrote:

Jerry Friedman wrote (11-01-2012 06:04):

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David Stockhoff — 13 Jan 2012, 02:46 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

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Sounds to me more like Pennsylvania Dutch. Which is to say some kind of German attempt to speak English.