

Science Fiction and Fantasy Question

The Urth list — 16 messages, 6 voices, 14 Apr 2012

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6231>

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Nathan C. Tresch — 14 Apr 2012, 21:27

I posted this question to this site, and I was wondering if anyone here had any input?

Is the Whorl also the Universal Transport in the Solar Cycle by Gene Wolfe?

<http://scifi.stackexchange.com/q/14856/5828?sem=2>

Gerry Quinn — 14 Apr 2012, 21:37 · in reply to Nathan C. Tresch

From: Nathan C. Tresch

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It can't really be. The Whorl is a hollowed out asteroid, and has no sails. The Ship has symmetric decks and sails. And the interior descriptions do not match at all.

Also the Whorl's life is limited. After 300 years it is still functional but not in great condition.

- Gerry Quinn

António Pedro Marques — 15 Apr 2012, 00:31 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

No dia 14/04/2012, ?s 22:37, "Gerry Quinn" <gerry at bindweed.com> escreveu:

From: Nathan C. Tresch

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And the Whorl is earthly tech. Not so with the Ship.

Didn't know there was a literary SE!

Sergei SOLOVIEV — 15 Apr 2012, 11:47 · in reply to Nathan C. Tresch

IMHO, the answer is "no" -

my reasons

- it seems that there is on this list a (culturally determined) drive to identify almost everything

with almost everything else, I do not share it;

- the description - a beautiful spaceship with sails - in case of Severian's ship - is very different, the captain is Tsadkiel, a king of angelic creature, the ship is a sort of messenger of a higher world;

- it may be unique, but the story seems to be a sort of persistent legend among the sailors, it is presented as such;

- by the way, why should we believe Purn? As far as I remember, she was sent by one of the monsters who are enemies of Severian and tried to kill him;

- last, but not least, the attempt to identify the Whorl with Tsadkiel's ship will destroy one of important dramatic oppositions in the Solar cycle, where Typhon (Pas) who built it, is a kind of Luciferian or Antichrist figure - it will destroy the opposition between the ship created by a human ruler who wants to be god, and messengers of higher universes.

One extra remark - to me, from the point of view of literary evolution of Gene Wolfe, the Tsadkiel ship seems a possible development of the idea of the ship in "Silhouette".

Regards

Sergei Soloviev

Nathan C. Tresch wrote:

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Is the Whorl also the Universal Transport in the Solar Cycle by Gene Wolfe?

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Gerry Quinn — 15 Apr 2012, 12:07 · in reply to Sergei SOLOVIEV

From: Sergei SOLOVIEV

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Tsadkiel ship seems a possible development of the idea of the ship in "Silhouette".

I would rather place the Whorl as an evolution of the ship in Silhouette. Both are human-constructed, and both have been subject to mission-creep (although in Silhouette the crew have only been aboard about twenty years ship time). In both cases there are Sleepers who, when woken, feel they have come on board yesterday.

There are other echoes of future work: the enhanced height of the Captain is reminiscent of exultants, for example.

- Gerry Quinn

Sergei SOLOVIEV — 15 Apr 2012, 12:25 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

I meant that the ship in the "Silhouette" looked like a sketch for future work. For example, there is a mutiny and mutineers, affiliated with cults, and that reminds the mutiny when Severian is on the Tsadkiel's ship. The ship in "Silhouette" is a modular, loopy construction, and overmonitor remodels it all the time. Maybe indirectly it is an argument for many ships in Solar cycle. By the way, recently I asked myself, maybe the silhouette in the story is a cousin of notules?

Sergei Soloviev

Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: Sergei SOLOVIEV <mailto:soloviev at irit.fr>

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- Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn — 15 Apr 2012, 13:14 · in reply to Sergei SOLOVIEV

From: Sergei SOLOVIEV

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True, it is only in its crew that it resembles the Whorl.

By the way, recently I asked myself, maybe the silhouette in the story is a cousin of notules?

Maybe — but if so it is a much nicer and friendlier cousin! I don't think so, really, though — apart from being black and shadowy, it has mostly distinct characteristics. The notule is a monster that flies and seeks heat; the silhouette is an intelligent alien that teleports, seems less substantial than the notule, and does not prey on humans even though it is interested in them.

Of course there is foreshadowing here too of many instances when two very different beings combine to achieve something that neither could alone; it is quite reminiscent of SilkHorn's inhumai-aided astral travel, in fact.

- Gerry Quinn

- Gerry Quinn

David Stockhoff — 15 Apr 2012, 13:16 · in reply to Sergei SOLOVIEV

On 4/15/2012 7:47 AM, Sergei SOLOVIEV wrote:

One extra remark - to me, from the point of view of literary evolution of Gene Wolfe, the Tsadkiel ship seems a possible development of the idea of the ship in "Silhouette".

In the way it changes its structure?

Nathan C. Tresch — 15 Apr 2012, 19:03 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

It can't really be. The Whorl is a hollowed out asteroid, and has no sails. The Ship has symmetric decks and sails. And the interior descriptions do not match at all.

If the Whorl is The Ship in its infancy, all of the Whorl could have been converted into one off the vast storage modules or even the interior of the main ship body.

Also the Whorl's life is limited. After 300 years it is still functional but not in great condition.

We don't really know the extent of the repairs made before the Whorl left, nor do we know where it went. Maybe it left to go and undergo a transformation into something closer to what The Ship became by the time Severian was being transported.

On Sat, Apr 14, 2012 at 2:37 PM, Gerry Quinn <gerry at bindweed.com> wrote:

From: Nathan C. Tresch <nathanctresch at gmail.com>

> I posted this question to this site, and I was wondering if anyone here had any input?

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- Gerry Quinn

Nathan C. Tresch — 15 Apr 2012, 19:05 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

Didn't know there was a literary SE!

You're welcome, I recently found it myself.

It can't really be. The Whorl is a hollowed out asteroid, and has no sails. The Ship has symmetric decks and sails. And the interior

descriptions do not match at all.

The interior could have been converted, and the exterior could simply be used as one of the modules of The Ship, no?

On Sat, Apr 14, 2012 at 5:31 PM, Antonio Pedro Marques <antonio at gmail.com> wrote:
No dia 14/04/2012, às 22:37, "Gerry Quinn" <gerry at bindweed.com> escreveu:

From: Nathan C. Tresch <nathanctresch at gmail.com>

> I posted this question to this site, and I was wondering if anyone here had any input?

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And the Whorl is earthly tech. Not so with the Ship.

Nathan C. Tresch — 15 Apr 2012, 19:14 · in reply to Sergei SOLOVIEV

On Sun, Apr 15, 2012 at 4:47 AM, Sergei SOLOVIEV <soloviev at irit.fr> wrote:
IMHO, the answer is "no" -

my reasons

- it seems that there is on this list a (culturally determined) drive to identify almost everything with almost everything else, I do not share it;

Noted.

- the description - a beautiful spaceship with sails - in case of Severian's ship - is very different, the captain is Tsadkiel, a king of angelic creature, the ship is a sort of messenger of a higher world;

I understand that at the time Severian was aboard the ship it had evolved to what it was. That doesn't imply that it couldn't have once come from humble beginnings, as a lowly earth vessel, as Severian himself was a lowly torturer.

- it may be unique, but the story seems to be a sort of persistent legend among the sailors, it is presented as such;

- by the way, why should we believe Purn? As far as I remember, she was sent by one of the monsters who are enemies of Severian and tried to kill him;

There are a great many other references to The Ship being one vehicle, I really didn't think that this was something I'd have to document. People were even meeting earlier versions of themselves as they came aboard what they thought was another ship from their own memory, if I recall correctly.

If this is really something I need to support I'll paste more quotes.

- last, but not least, the attempt to identify the Whorl with Tsadkiel's ship will destroy one of important dramatic oppositions in the Solar cycle, where Typhon (Pas) who built it, is a kind of Luciferian or Antichrist figure - it will destroy the opposition between the ship created by a human ruler who wants to be god, and messengers of higher universes.

And my interpretation of the transformation of the Whorl->The Ship isn't incongruous with that. The series embodies transformation and the rebirth of the Christ figure in Severian, why not a transformation over the years from something made to serve a self-worshipping narcissist to its opposite, a self-sacrificing higher being?

One extra remark - to me, from the point of view of literary evolution of Gene Wolfe, the Tsadkiel ship seems a possible development of the idea of the ship in "Silhouette".

Yeah, I think that the ship in Silhouette could also be a stage of development of the Whorl->The Ship.

Regards

Sergei Soloviev

Nathan C. Tresch wrote:

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Gerry Quinn — 15 Apr 2012, 19:23 · in reply to Nathan C. Tresch

From: Nathan C. Tresch

Gerry Quinn:

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But the same argument could be made for any of the millions of spaceships in the universe. There is only one Ship, but it's rather clear that there are numerous interstellar craft — the one Jonas crashed in, the ones Typhon's lieutenants fled in, the ones that were lost in time in Cyriaca's story, the one Barbatus and Co. flit around in...

- Gerry Quinn

Lee Berman — 16 Apr 2012, 12:21 · follows Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn: But the same argument could be made for any of the millions of spaceships in the universe. There is only one Ship, but it's rather clear that there are numerous interstellar craft — the one Jonas crashed in, the ones Typhon's lieutenants fled in, the ones that were lost in time in Cyriaca's story, the one Barbatus and Co. flit around in...

I think there are two different questions being answered here. If the question is whether the Whorl could be a precursor to Tzadkiel's Ship I suppose the answer is yes.

If the question is whether Wolfe intended The Whorl to be a precursor to Tzadkiel's Ship I think the answer is probably not. As has been noted, there is not much structural or functional similarity between these ships. Moreover, if Wolfe had intended to show a progression I would think he would have put some sort of clues in the story to that effect, especially at the end of RTTW. I don't see any.

Sergei SOLOVIEV — 16 Apr 2012, 16:14 · in reply to Lee Berman

I agree, Lee, it is a good way to answer -

Sergei Soloviev

Lee Berman wrote:

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António Pedro Marques — 16 Apr 2012, 16:21 · in reply to Sergei SOLOVIEV

Well, it's an idea. Does it allow for something other than itself? I don't see anything right now, but it's always worth looking.

Sergei SOLOVIEV wrote (16-04-2012 17:14):

I agree, Lee, it is a good way to answer -

Sergei Soloviev

Lee Berman wrote:

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Nathan C. Tresch — 16 Apr 2012, 17:41 · in reply to Lee Berman

Okay, I can't find any more evidence than what I presented, and I tend to agree with you Lee that there would be more.

On Mon, Apr 16, 2012 at 5:21 AM, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:

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