

Grist!

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 25 Jun 1997

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m.driussi — 25 Jun 1997, 16:51

Reply: Item #5927412 from URTN at LISTS.BEST.COM@INET03#

Nutria,

Wow, that =is= a lot of grist there!

Re: Witches' Keep as perverse convent of nuns. Possible, of course, but since they are called witches right up front I tend more to think of the witches of Endor being formally incorporated into the physical and political structure of Solomon's temple/kingdom complex. ("I'm getting tired of going all the way over to Endor when I have a tough question--let's just rewrite the laws and invite them in.")

(I am =still= delighted that witches and torturers are paired at the Old Citadel. This is such a fine paradox. Sure, on the surface it might seem as easy as anything on Gor. But both groups were hated in earlier times; witches were outside the law and torturers were inside the law; yet witches (ancient and modern) have risen to "victims" (i.e., secular saints <g>) innocent or pagan, while torturers (ancient) have sunken deeper into villainy; torturers worked on alleged witches . . . it is like that line from "Ghostbusters" talking about disaster of Biblical proportions, ending with "Cats and dogs, living together!")

Re: Bear Tower as perverse Franciscians. Hey, I =like= that! We don't know who the beast handlers' patron saint is, fwiw.

Re: St. Catherine playing an important role in any of the monastic orders of Earth. Good question. I don't know the answer. Her relics were translated to Mount Sinai by some monks who were later erroneously referred to as "angels"; so there's a first group right off the bat.

(Don't forget the pelerine connection. Catherine, mother of Severian, was a pelerine who fell . . . uh oh, I'm suddenly beset by layered visions--I'll ignore the Gnostic Sophia to focus on the pelerines as possibly being, in addition to everything else, a social device for exultants to vent off khaibits no longer needed. That is to say, we wonder what happens to khaibits when their originals die--"get thee to a nunnery" sounds good. Whoops, unless they've been pillow girls for the Autarch . . . yeah, well, and how many of those girls are actually pillowed, anyway, especially in the reign immediately before Severian's? In addition, all exultants need khaibits, but not all exultants are bound to send hostages to House Absolute, so there's plenty of loose khaibits around. Which brings us 'round to those cloneish soldiers at the front--the solution for all those released-from-estate male khaibits, perhaps?)

I really like that Fish stuff, predictably. Makes little sparks in my brain. Just to give you a hard time <g>, I'll quibble weakly that Inire's Fish is being drawn not from Nothing (Ain Soph, et al.) but from Yesod ("hyperspace" for the fundamentalist sfans). This is a very weak one, easily parried. You should take that little fish appetizer and work it up

into a main course essay!

Re: "Gene Wolfe at the Lake of Birds" (aka "essay on the Garden of Endless Sleep"). I'm pleased that you enjoyed it! To answer your question, yes, I do think that there is a strong bit of Eden there, but when you make the logical extension that the avern is the Tree of Eden, I'm both surprised (that I didn't think of that before) and a bit resistant (perhaps due to being surprised?): it is hard for me to see the "Good" or even "Neutral" in the avern--it is a deadly, deadly thing. In this light I would tend to think of it more as the "Tree of Life and Death" or "Tree of (Knowledge of) Death," or by following this reasoning a little further, the Cross upon which Jesus was raised.

True, in credit to your theory, after they "know" the plant they leave the garden (visions of curator Michael muttering as he locks the gate behind them); but then I get some points a few chapters later as avern provides Severian with his first public self-resurrection opportunity.

We're =both= right--Yay!

But we're neither of us "Wright"--and I'll agree with you, he is on to something.

So while three of us are right, one is still undeniably Wright and the others are not.

(Dreaming of the day when we will have a Wolfe scholar named Wong . . .)

=mantis=

Rory McIntyre — 25 Jun 1997, 20:26 · follows m.driussi

Michael--

As this is my first posting to the list, I'll keep it short & sweet. Also, please forgive any mistakes.

I wanted to add a little to your point regarding the pelerines being "...a social device for exultants to vent off khaibits no longer needed. That is to say, we wonder what happens to khaibits when their originals die--'get thee to a nunnery' sounds good." Specifically, I wanted to point out that, in a discussion of Hamlet I had in a class many years ago, our professor pointed out that "nunnery" was a 17th century slang term for a whorehouse, makes Hamlet's line to Ophelia more of an insult than mere condescension. Back to the point at hand, it ties then into the pelerines and the House Azure.

Rory