

Flying Saucers Rock and Roll

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 13 Jul 1998

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/971>

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Dan Parmenter — 13 Jul 1998, 08:20

From: m.driussi at genie.com

The saucer, otoh, is just a time rover they are using to explore Urth. They came in on the big ship Tzadkiel, after all. (This idea of flying saucers as time machines from our future rather than space machines from alien worlds is straight from Jacques Vallee, I believe.)

Thanks for reminding me about Vallee. This idea is also given some ink by Strieber, but he tends to avoid giving too much credence to any one hypothesis (much to his credit).

Okay, so the saucers are just time rovers, but I still like the idea of it being a specific instance of the future or present influencing the past, and since this is one of the central points being made by the incident with the Hierodules at Baldander's castle, it must be intentional. More of Wolfe's magnificent riffing on "standard" skiffy devices.

Another question about ships:

How does one sign on to the ship Tzadkiel? Somehow the idea of Hierodule pressgangs appeals to me; you don't sign on, they come and get you. Gunnie and the other sailors are rather vague on this point, unless I've missed something. Alternately, given the confusion between sea and star-going vessels and the fact that Wolfe tells us that the basic qualifications (tolerance of long stretches of boredom and an ability to work with rope), perhaps the recruiters simply talk as if they're recruiting for Urthly ships and then get vague and wave their hands when asked about specifics.

Finally, one last question about a particular sailor: I think we've touched on this before, but I've become increasingly convinced in the "how obvious" sense that Jonas is based on Pinnochio. Jonas = Jonah, i.e. someone swallowed by a whale - like Pinocchio. His father was a craftsman and he desires to "be whole", much as Pinocchio desires to be a real little boy.

I wonder if Wolfe is at all familiar with the work of the late Japanese cartoonist/ animator Osamu Tezuka who touched on some interesting variations on this theme in a couple of his comics/animated series. The most obvious of course is Tetsuwan Atom (Mighty Atom), or Astro Boy as he was called here, a robot boy built by a scientist to replace his own son who had been killed. He is rejected by his father because he doesn't grow up like a real little boy. A lesser-known Tezuka series is called "Dororo" about a Pinocchio-like wooden boy in ancient Japan who goes around beating the tar out of bad guys and is rewarded by gradually having his artificial parts replaced by living human ones.

For pictures, point your browser at:

<http://www.ilinx.co.jp/~takayama/manga/toreo/tezuka.html#5>

I have no idea if this is anything out of Japanese folklore or just something that Dr. Tezuka came

up with as a variation on Pinocchio (the latter seems quite likely actually) and I doubt very much that Wolfe was or is aware of these things (it's conceivable that he remembers Astro Boy from American television - anybody whose memory goes back that far might also recall "Kimba the White Lion", another Tezuka project that Disney ripped-off for "The Lion King").

D