

Mother Godspeak

The Whorl list — 6 messages, 4 voices, 12 Mar 2001

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/1268>

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Robert Borski — 12 Mar 2001, 23:39

Adam S., in a non-confused mode, professing:

<I may be missing something again, but I don't see the problem here. The Mother is a goddess of the Neighbors; why wouldn't she have been able to learn their language and teach it to Seawrack? And Seawrack could have taught Horn enough to translate the few lines he does (there's no need to assume it's an impromptu translation; he could have heard the same song in the boat with Seawrack).>

How then do you reconcile this with Horn stating, "I asked the Greater Scylla on the Red Sun Whorl how I could find Seawrack again. She told me how to communicate with her sister here."

In other words, if I understand you properly, Horn has to go all the way back to Urth and find out from the "Greater" Scylla how to communicate with her "sister," the Mother? So the Greater Scylla can speak Neighborese? Where the hell did she learn it? The Berlitz Teach-Yourself-Neighbor in 10 Days or Less? (I tried ordering a copy from Amazon.com, but they're currently out.)

Sorry, but I still don't understand how the Mother, Silk or Seawrack comprehends the language of the Vanished People.

Robert Borski

*This is WHORL, for discussion of Gene Wolfe's Book of the Long Sun.

Adam Stephanides — 13 Mar 2001, 22:06 · follows Robert Borski

on 3/12/01 11:39 PM, Robert Borski at rborski at charter.net wrote:

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I'm not quite clear what your point is. It seems you either believe that the Mother only speaks the Neighbors' language, so Horn would have to know it to communicate with her, or you think my position implies this. But Mother talks to Horn in OBW, when she "transfers" Seawrack to him. (This is before any possible admixture of Pas, if you were going to argue that Horn has translated the Mother's words from the Neighbors' language without telling us.) What the Greater Scylla taught Horn was how to summon the Mother, as Alex David Gorce says.

Sorry, but I still don't understand how the Mother, Silk or Seawrack comprehends the language of the Vanished People.

The Mother learned it from the Neighbors. She could have learned it from Neighbors she had saved or abducted as she did Seawrack, or from eavesdropping on sailors, to give just two possibilities.

--Adam

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Robert Borski — 14 Mar 2001, 13:53 · follows Adam Stephanides

<What the Greater Scylla taught Horn was how to summon the Mother, as Alex David Groce says.>

Adam and Alex:

All right, let me try to state this as simply as I can.

Call me an ignoramus* by default, but I still do not understand how the Greater Scylla of Urth knows how to summon the Mother of Blue _in any language._

We're all of us a little chagrined, I believe, by the use of coincidences in Wolfe's fiction--e.g., Horn randomly picking to disinter Jahlee, who just happens to be the mother of Krait. Such coincidences seem unnatural and forced when confined to a small enough (relative scale) venue like an entire planet. But to have the Whorl travel over 300 years, put into orbit around twin planets, land colonists, and then learn that one of the indigenous goddesses of Blue can be summoned by a sea monster from the Whorl's original point of destination seems more than a little incredible to me. Ditto for the Mother's matching retinue of sirens, underwater boats, and "feignings." Is she, like the Scylla of Urth, plotting to take over Blue? Seems like rather a poor choice given the the Neighbor's abandonment of the planet, and certainly the Whorl colonists do not seem like any rich prize. So why is she still hanging around? Yes, I suppose it's possible that all these various alien beings speak a kind of space esperanto, as Alex suggests, but this seems to me a little bit like Star Trek, where everybody except the Klingons speak English. And I don't really see any evidence for it.

Now if Horn had employed his ring to summon up a few of his Neighbor friends, and they told him how to summon the Mother, that I would buy; but to have Horn make the astral journey back to Urth, however many light-or-dream years away it is, and then be told by Greater Scylla how to summon up sister-of-convenience-the-Mother seems more far fetched than I'm ever going to be willing to accept. But I guess that's just me, apparently.

*Any of you Christian scholars know who once claimed that ignoramus was the Latin word for agnostic? I've forgotten.

Robert Borski

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Adam Stephanides — 15 Mar 2001, 10:07 · follows Robert Borski

on 3/14/01 1:53 PM, Robert Borski at rborski at charter.net wrote:
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It may not be a coincidence. We know that Cilinia had pledged herself to the Greater Scylla, who undoubtedly knew of her sister's presence on Blue. Cilinia could have somehow convinced or tricked Typhon into choosing Blue/Green as the Whorl's destination.

In any case, this has nothing to do with my original point that Typhon doesn't need to have been a Neighbor for Horn to be able to translate Seawrack's song.

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What, then, is your interpretation of Horn's statement "I asked the Greater Scylla on the Red Sun Whorl how I could find Seawrack again. She taught me how to communicate with her sister here"? It can't be that Scylla taught Horn to speak the Neighbors' language, as your earlier post seemed to imply, because:

- 1) Horn doesn't need to speak the Neighbors' language to communicate with the Mother;
- 2) According to your reading Horn already knew the Neighbors' language (and in any case the translation scene was prior to the meeting with Greater Scylla).

--Adam

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George Terry — 15 Mar 2001, 08:24 · follows Adam Stephanides

*Any of you Christian scholars know who once claimed that ignoramus was the Latin word for agnostic? I've forgotten.

C.H. Spurgeon, I think.

***** George Terry
Computer Resource Specialist Center for Engineering Plants for Resistance Against Pathogens
(CEPRAP) University of California, Davis (530)752-6531 gmterry at ucdavis.edu

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Alex David Groce — 15 Mar 2001, 12:59 · follows George Terry

George Terry wrote:

*Any of you Christian scholars know who once claimed that ignoramus was the Latin word for agnostic? I've forgotten.

C.H. Spurgeon, I think.

A quick google for "ignoramus and agnostic" confirms that George is almost certainly right.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32

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Alex David Groce (agroce+ at cs.cmu.edu)
Ph.D. Student, Carnegie Mellon University - Computer Science Department
8112 Wean Hall (412)-268-3066
<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~agroce>

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