

Editors

The Whorl list — 4 messages, 2 voices, 09 Jun 2001

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/1432>

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Adam Stephanides — 09 Jun 2001, 17:26

on 6/4/01 4:49 PM, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes at ddanehy at siebel.com wrote:
we know that the
editors do not object to inserting a few obvious editorial
comments into the text; have they made any less obvious
comments? Any fictionalizing? Any tonings-down or deletions?
Can we even begin to guess?

The editors tell us in their afterword "These [Horn's narrative] we have left as he composed them, save for correction of obvious errors, division into chapters, and titling those chapters and his volumes." (409) Which raises the (unanswerable) questions: what did the editors consider to be "obvious errors," and how frequent were they?

--Adam

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

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 10 Jun 2001, 11:40 · follows Adam Stephanides

The editors tell us in their afterword "These [Horn's narrative] we have left as he composed them, save for correction of obvious errors, division into chapters, and titling those chapters and his volumes." (409) Which raises the (unanswerable) questions: what did the editors consider to be "obvious errors," and how frequent were they?

"Unanswerable" is, of course, moot; we can have no definitive answers, but we can have answers which satisfy us, individually if not collectively.

Actually, at least one question is raised prior to that: "do you believe this statement (on the part of the editors)?" It's worth noting that there are a few cases where they don't correct some extremely obvious errors, or simply add a "[sic]" to them -- such as "Horn and Hide."

So there's this spectrum of possibility, ranging from their having made the whole thing up out of their heads to the possibility that their statement of editorial principles is strictly accurate. Neither of these extreme cases is either interesting or likely, but they pretty much define the boundaries -- aside from the meta- cases, like "someone else made the whole thing up" (well, of course, someone did, and his name is Gene Wolfe, but I mean someone inside Wolfe's head), or "yes, this is a (more or less) true statement on the editors' part, but what we're dealing with here is an nth-generation hand-copied manuscript, with the usual amount of error and editorial intrusion by later copyists" -- the latter case being, in fact, a very plausible description of the ms we read in LONG SUN; the Narr several times in the course of SHORT SUN mentions that the Book of Silk has been copied, not always accurately, and dispersed far beyond New Viron.

I'm beginning to wonder just what Wolfe's point is with all this. "Time of Telling" is kind of fun in the LONG SUN and SOLDIER books, vital to PEACE and NEW SUN, but with SHORT SUN it's reached the point where it makes it bloody well difficult to do the first-order reading thing and

just "enjoy the story," because everything about the story tends to vanish under the smoke and mirrors.

Totally inapropos of which. I avoided Terry Pratchett for years, then NYRSF gave me HOGFATHER to review -- for which I was utterly unprepared, and which sent me out digging up old copies of previous Pratchett books. Recently I picked up a copy of his PYRAMIDS: lo and behold; part three is called, of all things, THE BOOK OF THE NEW SON. No, it has nothing else particularly Lupine about it, but I just thought it was amusing.

--D

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Adam Stephanides — 11 Jun 2001, 10:51 · follows Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:

The editors tell us in their afterword "These [Horn's narrative] we have left as he composed them, save for correction of obvious errors, division into chapters, and titling those chapters and his volumes." (409) Which raises the (unanswerable) questions: what did the editors consider to be "obvious errors," and how frequent were they?

"Unanswerable" is, of course, moot; we can have no definitive answers, but we can have answers which satisfy us, individually if not collectively.

Theoretically, yes. In practice, I don't see how we can reach satisfactory answers. Of course, we can know what they don't consider to be obvious errors--what they've left stand (though with the caveat in your following paragraph). And we can guess that, had they found Narr's narrative too error-ridden, they wouldn't have bothered to publish it. But given how little we know about the editors, I don't see how we can go much beyond this.

Actually, at least one question is raised prior to that: "do you believe this statement (on the part of the editors)?" It's worth noting that there are a few cases where they don't correct some extremely obvious errors, or simply add a "[sic]" to them -- such as "Horn and Hide."

So there's this spectrum of possibility, ranging from their having made the whole thing up out of their heads to the possibility that their statement of editorial principles is strictly accurate. Neither of these extreme cases is either interesting or likely,

When you say that it is unlikely that their statement of editorial principles is strictly accurate, are you referring to the probability that they introduced inadvertent errors while copying the text? Or are you saying that it is almost certain they deliberately made more substantial changes than they admit? If the latter, I don't see the grounds for it.

As to interest, I admit that, for those who love these sorts of wheels-within-wheels, the idea that the editors have added an extra layer of distortion to Narr's narrative must be irresistible. Personally, I can do without it.

--Adam

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 11 Jun 2001, 09:19 · follows Adam Stephanides

To my:

... spectrum of possibility, ranging from their having made the whole thing up out of their heads to the possibility that their statement of editorial principles is strictly accurate. Neither of these extreme cases is either interesting or likely,

Adam S. asked,

When you say that it is unlikely that their statement of editorial principles is strictly accurate, are you referring to the probability that they introduced inadvertent errors while copying the text? Or are you saying that it is almost certain they deliberately made more substantial changes than they admit? If the latter, I don't see the grounds for it.

Neither; I refer to (1) the fact that they simply do not correct some errors that they themselves seem to think are obvious, instead marking them with "sic" and so on; and (2) their having missed or ignored some errors which seem obvious to us reading the text "later."

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