

Wombat on TBOTSS and fanfic

The Whorl list — 5 messages, 3 voices, 21 Jun 2001

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/1457>

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 21 Jun 2001, 12:15

Wombat, he quoted and wrote:

At 05:26 PM 6/20/01 -0700, Mantis wrote:

So the writing by H & H, while buttressed by interviews, snatches of conversation, and editorial consensus, amounts to a patch written by fans, which is rather like a fan fiction in the broad sense (rather than the specific sense of "slash" or "Mary Sue").

"Fanfic" is not the same thing as "fiction written by fans"; "fan" is not the same thing as "admirer of"; "biography" is not the same as "fiction".

Ah. Okay.

Apparently I'm being so sloppy with terms that I'm nearly incomprehensible.

SHORT/LONG SUN EARTH

biography fiction

autobiography fiction

biography masked as autobiography fiction

autobiography masked as biography fiction

docudrama fiction

based on a true story fiction

In TBOTSS, the power of the text is important: the text being TBOTLS.

Many people on Blue have read TBOTLS, a biography in novel form * (rather like the Little House on the Prairie series, come to think of it). People who have never met Silk in the flesh are huge "admirers of" him, to the point that, for example, Gaon launches an expedition to get Silk from the Whorl, just as New Viron does.

Now then, the Little House books are not exactly "biography" or "autobiography," (in the shelving sense for libraries and bookstores) but they are close, since they were written by a participant (Laura) and/or her daughter (Rose). (Contrast with THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN, which claims to be biography, and may have some basis in the childhood experiences of "Mark Twain," but is understood to be fiction unencumbered by biography.)

The Little House series proved popular, and more books have been written (to fill in the gaps before and behind) by people further removed: the Little Farm in the Ozarks books, if I got the title right, are presumably more reliant upon texts (historical texts, the Little House books, diaries, etc.) than direct personal experience of the life and times of Laura. So the Ozarks books are a species of fiction, written "in the tradition of" and "continuing the saga of" an earlier series of fiction-based-on-autobiography books; but the autobiographical/first person pov has dropped out and been replaced with the fabrication (within limits set by historical facts and the flavors established by the master text) of huge "admirers of" who have read all the other books, know all the relevant history, and can generate an esthetically competent text (semi-pastiche?).

Whatever.

Funny, I don't recall all this definition gaming/term policing when people were calling Robert Borski's work "fanfic"--I guess I must've dozed and missed all of his slash and Mary Sue stuff! (I could've sworn that others used this term, but who knows, perhaps I started misusing it even then!)

But yes, on another topic (or is it? hmmm), I did enjoy PALE FIRE greatly. More than ADA. About as much as LOLITA, I guess.

* If you are going to argue that TBOTLS is, within its universe, strict BIOGRAPHY as opposed to BIOGRAPHY IN NOVEL FORM (`"biography" is not the same as "fiction") then by all means, make your argument.

=mantis=

Sirius Fiction
Has Moved To
<http://www.siriusfiction.com/>

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

Kevin J. Maroney — 21 Jun 2001, 16:32 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

At 12:15 PM 6/21/01 -0700, Mantis wrote:
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I'm not sure what point this table is making. You're being too compressed again.

Many people on Blue have read TBOTLS, a biography in novel form *

Actually, they've read _The Book of Silk_, but I mostly agree with your characterization of it as "a biography in novel form".

People
who have never met Silk in the flesh are huge "admirers of" him...

Yes. But they're not "fans" of Silk any more than the author of "Acts of the Apostles" was a "fan" of Jesus, Paul, and Peter. They're historians writing historical narrative for a didactic purpose.

Funny, I don't recall all this definition gaming/term policing when people were calling Robert Borski's work "fanfic"--I guess I must've dozed and missed all of his slash and Mary Sue stuff! (I could've sworn that others used this term, but who knows, perhaps I started misusing it even then!)

I missed the initial discussion and only noticed it when Blattid put "fanfic" in the subject line. Checking the archives, I can't find anyone using the term "fanfic" to describe Borski's pieces.

The term was introduced into the discussion to describe *Wolfe's* work as being fanfic-like--"wouldn't it be neat if Silk met Severian?" is the type of impulse which drives fanfic. But it makes no sense to apply the term to what Hoof and Hide (or any other unnamed

redactors) are doing, because they're not writing fiction about fictional characters.

Wombat, a.k.a. Kevin Maroney kmaroney at ungames.com
Kitchen Staff Supervisor, New York Review of Science Fiction
<http://www.nyrsf.com>

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

Michael Andre-Driussi — 21 Jun 2001, 15:13 · follows Kevin J. Maroney

Wombat wrote

I'm not sure what point this table is making. You're being too compressed again.

Something we can agree on.

Many people on Blue have read TBOTLS, a biography in novel form *

Actually, they've read The Book of Silk, but I mostly agree with your characterization of it as "a biography in novel form".

Sorry, you are wrong! <g> Unless what you really meant to write was: "the author Horn thought of the title as being (or even planned to name it) BOOK OF SILK, but it became known as THE BOOK OF THE LONG SUN" (see EXODUS p. 371).

Or do you mean that they read that other guy's book (the "other book" mentioned in the text)?

People
who have never met Silk in the flesh are huge "admirers of" him...

Yes. But they're not "fans" of Silk any more than the author of "Acts of the Apostles" was a "fan" of Jesus, Paul, and Peter. They're historians writing historical narrative for a didactic purpose.

Why do you seem to be arguing with me when I'm using the terms you want me to use? I didn't write "fans," I wrote "admirers of."

I should take you to task for saying they are "historians." Good grief!

=mantis=

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

Kevin J. Maroney — 21 Jun 2001, 18:44 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

At 03:13 PM 6/21/01 -0700, Mantis wrote:
Sorry, you are wrong! <g>

Oops. You're right.

People
who have never met Silk in the flesh are huge "admirers of" him...

Yes. But they're not "fans" of Silk any more than the author of "Acts of the Apostles" was a "fan" of Jesus, Paul, and Peter. They're historians writing historical narrative for a didactic purpose.

Why do you seem to be arguing with me when I'm using the terms you want me to use? I didn't write "fans," I wrote "admirers of."

Because you seem to be veering towards using "admirers of" as a five-syllable perfect synonym of "fan", which it isn't. That's why I said "yes"--they are admirers --but went on to restate that they are not "fans".

I should take you to task for saying they are "historians." Good grief!

They're historians but not in a modern sense; they're historians in the sense that the author of the Book of Kings was a historian, or, as I said, "Luke", the author of Acts of the Apostles was a historian. I've just spent too long reading *_Surpassing Wonder_* and the term stuck in my mind.

Skimming the archives, I think the comparison between the third-person portions of Hoof & Hide's book (*) and *_The Killer Angels_* is spot-on.

*Do we know what *_The Book of the Short Sun_* is called among its readers?

Wombat, a.k.a. Kevin Maroney kmaroney at ungames.com
Kitchen Staff Supervisor, New York Review of Science Fiction
<http://www.nyrsf.com>

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Adam Stephanides — 21 Jun 2001, 18:09 · follows Kevin J. Maroney

on 6/21/01 5:44 PM, Kevin J. Maroney at kmaroney at ungames.com wrote:
Skimming the archives, I think the comparison between the third-person portions of Hoof & Hide's book (*) and *_The Killer Angels_* is spot-on.

Thanks.

*Do we know what *_The Book of the Short Sun_* is called among its readers?

We know what the editors called it: *_Book of the Short Sun_* (RttW, 410).

--Adam

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