

blood and despair

The Whorl list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 11 Jan 1997

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Peter Cash — 11 Jan 1997, 14:47

From: Patri10629 at aol.com (Patrick O'Leary)

2. In the same scene why does Oreb cry out in apparent fear/anxiety at something disturbing that is happening "off screen"? I think he says something like "No! NO!" Huh?

I thought they were fixing the hydraulics in Maytera Marble's hand, and that this looked like "cutting" to Oreb. (He had a thing about "cutting"...)

In this connection, I thought it odd that while the talus factory can fix the hydraulics, the optical fibers that control Marble's hand can only be repaired by a "black mechanic" like Incus. Who were these "black mechanics"? Where did they get their skills? What were they all about?

From: CoxRathvon at aol.com

My answer is--yes, very much so, and I agree with Patrick that Silk's hour of despair atop the airship derives in part from this perception of the largely futile surge of history. It's typical, I think, for Wolfe's stories to take place against a backdrop of war, espionage, and political chaos--all of it absorbing and vital to its participants--which however is ultimately pointless when compared to one's search for self or truth or God. Wolfe's vision seems to be that mankind will *always* be thrashing about in politics and war, and that innocent people will be swept up and killed in these endless, bloody tides. If anything, this inevitable social chaos makes the quest for a deeper meaning more precious--and more difficult. Poor Silk is thrown into the midst of a political storm at the very same time that he's shown a path of redemption. It must tear his heart to realize that so many people will perish in the chaos without sharing his vision.

Yes, I think that's very insightful. I can imagine Christ feeling like this.

I suppose that ultimately it does not matter whether Viron falls to Trivigaunte or not--the larger backdrop makes it all irrelevant.

But of course, Silk has some purely personal sorrows in that hour of despair on the airship, and I'm still trying to understand those. One involves Hyacinth and another involves Maytera Marble, as Patrick points out. Hyacinth, as has been suggested in recent postings here, is almost certain to have done some spying for Crane and Trivigaunte; evidently she and Chenille have not fully divulged to Silk the extent of such activities. But also, it's clear that Kypris used to visit Hyacinth (through the glass at Blood's villa), and is therefore apt to have possessed her and "left a piece" of the goddess with Hyacinth. Does that perhaps explain Hyacinth's ability to overcome a trooper? I'm still not sure and would welcome further suggestions from fellow readers.

I don't think that Kypris' gift would include a facility at hand-to-hand combat. I have become convinced that Hyacinth was a Trivigaunte spy. (When I mentioned this to a friend who as also just read the Long Sun books, he said he thought it was so obvious that he hadn't even

mentioned it to me!)

Hyacinth's covert activities would have gone far beyond simple intelligence-gathering; she may have been the chief Trivigaunte spy in Viron--Crane may have been her subordinate! (Indeed, it's unlikely that the feminist Trivigaunti would trust a man to head their spy network.) Remember Hyacinth's proclivity for bedding the rich and famous--the anonymous army officer, Oosik, Blood...and Silk. There is a strong possibility that her entire relationship with Silk was nothing but an adjunct to her covert activities. She has been exploiting him for political purposes all along, guiding him in a path advantageous to her masters.

This ties in with Silk's despair at the political/military turmoil (which was abetted by Pas' geographical isolation of the Cities). It turns out that Hyacinth herself has been deceiving him on account of such machinations.

Patri10629 — 11 Jan 1997, 21:35 · follows Peter Cash

Well said, Henry Rathvon (regarding human futility versus divine plans) and Peter Cash, esp. re: Hyacinth's probable spying. The list of her bedmates (all high-ranking officials) is convincing enough for me. But the idea that a Matriarchy wouldn't trust a man (Crane) to run the covert ops, sinks it. Poor Silk. Sad Good Silk.

Anyone else get the feeling that there are fathoms of mystery yet unplumbed in these books? Every time I re read I'm stunned by how Wolfe can couch the most startling revelations in a throwaway bit of dialogue. Examples escape me at the moment. Sorry.

How about Oreb? What a strange loveable bird! But his favorite dish is eyes:) Perhaps he, of all the characters, sees most clearly. Not sure what I mean. The switch to his POV in CALDE OF THE LONG SUN, I think, is stunning.

And, sorry, I won't expand on how Wolfe annoys me. I'm sure it's rooted in envy:)

SPOILER WARNING: Tho it's probably too late if you've been reading these posts for a while.

Wasn't that an amazing moment when suddenly in the middle of a tense diplomatic discussion around dinner, the narrator reveals himself?

"Then I walked in."

Christ, my jaw literally dropped.

For what it's worth: I review the Long Sun Books in the next issue of SF EYE--due out, I'm told, "soon". Watch for it. Hope I do these amazing books justice.

And kudos to all who've joined this enlightening discussion. I hope Gene is peeking over our shoulders now. Though, he's probably smirking, thinking--"Dopes. They've missed all the embedded Borges, Kipling, and Chesterton!" As I did:)

Like I said: Annoying:)

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