

[Blue notes, spoilers, etc.]

The Whorl list — 6 messages, 4 voices, 03 Oct 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/652>

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 03 Oct 1999, 20:28

Well, what a novel!

My first impressions:

Horn is a Greek hero, mostly Odysseus. How wonderful! I suppose I might have anticipated this, with all the Greco-Roman grounding of the Long Sun, but that series had a gloss of Father Brown modernism. Visiting the witch; insisting upon hearing the song of the siren; feeding cow blood to "the dead" for tricks and treats. Taking an eye from an ancient woman, that's Perseus.

The letter of summons to the lander reminds me quite strongly of the Letter from Prestor John to the Pope. And as in that case, there is much speculation on where the kingdom is located--it has =moved= over the centuries!

(But in the beginning it was thought to be on the . . . Silk Road!)

The inclusion/intrusion of TBOTLS within the tale reminds me strongly of the second part of DON QUIXOTE, where similar things happen. Rather than THE 1001 ARABIAN NIGHTS, where there is tale-within-tale-within-tale, but nobody ever says, hey, I read about you in ARABIAN NIGHTS, or hey, buy my book.

I, too, felt a very Vancean current to ON BLUE'S WATERS; and I, too, felt that it was a different one than the DYING EARTH . . . but what, then? Perhaps it is the more "paranoid" Vancean science fiction, like the Durdane trilogy (which has secret alien invaders and a bad ride in starship to alien world where humans end up as slaves) mixed with a bit of NOPALGARTH (where invisible aliens ride humans like psionic vampires, iirc). I think it is something more than just the fairytale "hero sets out on seemingly doomed quest" thing, which Vance often uses as well; it is something more Vancean than just fairytale logic or plot.

Ah, the Horn who is writing (aka "the Rajan of Gaon") is one eyed and white haired, like Odin. But he also has a hurt ankle, is sometimes confused with Silk by others (just because he's wearing the clothes, walking the walk, talking the talk <g>), often confuses the names of his own twins ("Horn [sic] and Hide") as well as writing of Horn in the third person, and even, in the very end, says that =he= caught the ball (at the beginning of TBOTLS)! He =is= Silk, in some as-yet-unspecified way. Not to mention the intriguing "Passilk"!

(An interesting aside: the twins Hoof and Hide have names that form a semi-canting phrase meaning "run away and conceal yourself"!)

Must read again before too long.

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

Patri10629 — 04 Oct 1999, 12:43 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

In a message dated 10/3/99 11:41:23 PM, mantis at sirius.com writes:

<<

The letter of summons to the lander reminds me quite strongly of the Letter from Prestor John to the Pope. And as in that case, there is much speculation on where the kingdom is located--it has =moved= over the centuries! >>

It struck me on rereading the opening letter that it is a tissue of lies. But we know that. Imagine it is the words of the Inhumans--throwing their voices, as it were, through their human agents--and it becomes an entirely different message altogether. Very creepy.

It also struck me that the initial meeting with the Leaders of the Community was a bit awkward. A clumsy plot device to get the quest rolling. "We need a god--get Silk. We need better seed--back to the whorl. Our businesses are failing, our crops, too--our society is disintegrating, decadent--we need a moral center that everyone can agree on. We need Silk. We need 'fresh blood.'"

But then there was that unspoken agenda which Nettle intuited--"They don't want us to write anymore." Not sure I get that. We're the Powers that be--secular and sacred: Business, Church, Law (not sure about that one)--conspiring to consolidate their earthly power by removing their one true legitimate rival--the man who wrote their history? Whose only authority was the fact that he tried to tell the truth? And had the means to do so--paper? Or are one or more of this group Inhumans collaborators?

Interesting that Horn's most valuable commodity--paper--is stolen almost immediately. He must rely on other resources.

How like TBOTLS--short-sighted agendas which ultimately are futile. As Horn says from the beginning--he failed.

Some of many questions. Amazing that this fragment, this first installment can be so powerful and so incomplete.

best

Patrick O'Leary

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Jim Jordan — 12 Oct 1999, 10:54 · follows Patri10629

At 08:43 AM 10/4/99 EDT, Patrick wrote:

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The book of Silk is the Gospel of Silk. Remember that the narrative follows the gospel narrative rather closely. Silk is the closest to a Christ-figure that Wolfe has ever written. Well, did the

conservative Jews in the book of Acts like it when the apostles preached about Jesus? Did the Roman Emperors? No.

Interesting that Horn's most valuable commodity--paper--is stolen almost immediately. He must rely on other resources.

Yes, and WHO stole it? Surely not the person Horn actually suspected. As you point out, the leaders of the community don't want any more gospels from Horn.

Nutria

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Kevin J. Maroney — 12 Oct 1999, 12:18 · follows Jim Jordan

At 10:54 AM 10/12/99 -0700, Nutria wrote:

At 08:43 AM 10/4/99 EDT, Patrick wrote:

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Yes, and WHO stole it? Surely not the person Horn actually suspected.

As you point out, the leaders of the community don't want any more gospels from Horn.

I don't think it's necessary to assume that the Council (as we might as well call them) stole Horn's paper to stop him from publishing more copies of _The Book of Silk_. Paper is a valuable commodity--Horn is doing quite well for himself--and would be an obvious target for any thief. If they were really interested in supressing Horn, they'd have taken and destroyed his personal copy of _The Book_.

Wombat, a.k.a. Kevin Maroney kmaroney at crossover.com Kitchen Staff Supervisor, New York Review of Science Fiction <http://ebbs.english.vt.edu/olp/nyrsf/nyrsf.html>

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Jim Jordan — 12 Oct 1999, 11:36 · follows Kevin J. Maroney

At 12:18 PM 10/12/99 -0400, you wrote:

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Wombat,

What I meant was that they did not want ANOTHER book. But you're point is well taken -- and you do have inside knowledge!! So, I'll defer to it.

Nutria

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Kevin J. Maroney — 12 Oct 1999, 12:50 · follows Jim Jordan

At 11:36 AM 10/12/99 -0700, Nutria wrote:

What I meant was that they did not want ANOTHER book. But your point is

well taken -- and you do have inside knowledge!! So, I'll defer to it.

I don't have much inside knowlege--just a couple of spoilers leaked to me by David. On this matter, I'm just going by what was printed in _Blue_. Wombat, a.k.a. Kevin Maroney kmaroney at crossover.com Kitchen Staff Supervisor, New York Review of Science Fiction
<http://ebbs.english.vt.edu/olp/nyrsf/nyrsf.html>

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