

On Blue's Races

The Whorl list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 12 Oct 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/682>

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David_Lebling — 12 Oct 1999, 16:25

Jim Jordan wrote about Blue's Races. I thought I'd add a few more of my cents to the pile.

I agree: given the spelling of "Wijzer" and the use of the word "Dorp", the inhabitants of Dorp are obviously Dutch. This is close enough to the German speech style Wijzer exhibits to be enough for me. (To paraphrase Twain, "The German dives into a sentence and comes up on the other side of the Atlantic with a verb in his mouth."). Wouldn't "Wijzer" in Dutch be pronounced like "Wiser" in English?

On the question of whether these are "really" Dutch, or Indian, or Arab, or whatever, didn't Mamelta tell Silk that the Cargo was brainwashed (by the same reprogramming technology that possession uses) to believe in their parts in the drama of the _Whorl_? I recall some speculation here on the list that the Cargo were the losers when Typhon conquered the Urth. Typhon could have given them Chinese or Indian cultural downloads for the sheer Evil Overlord fun of it. (What was the L. Sprague de Camp story where this happened? "The Glory That Was Greece," IIRC, although that was a university with a research grant -- as near as makes no difference, I guess.)

On the other hand, the inhabitants seem to fit visually, not just culturally, into the nations (I won't say 'races' here) to which Typhon assigned them. I have a mental picture of Typhon going to his era's equivalent of India and gathering up proto-Gaonese, Latin America for proto-Vironese, and so on. This is not as far fetched as it seems (though it is somewhat far-fetched). It is certainly possible to imagine that racial or national "types" could last a long time into the future, especially if there was a decline to a lower technological base. Mamelta's people were probably the ancestors of the Exultants of Severian's time, who we have theorized came from off-world. Typhon may have even had the gene-engineering technology to twiddle people so they fit the national stereotypes better, but that's more of a stretch. Even so, the inhabitants of Viron aren't all Latin American stereotypes in appearance, though the other towns seem more homogeneous insofar as we know anything about them.

Seawrack doesn't fit any of the stereotypes of the nations we have been introduced to (unless pinup girl is a nationality). The only other blond we know from the Long Sun books is Silk. (He is blond, isn't he? Or is he just blue-eyed?).

-- Dave Lebling
(aka vizcacha)

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

Jim Jordan — 12 Oct 1999, 15:57 · follows David_Lebling

At 04:25 PM 10/12/99 -0400, you wrote:

. Wouldn't "Wijzer" in Dutch be pronounced like "Wiser"

in English?

Viser'd be closer. The "ij" in Dutch is the German "ei," so the long "i" sound is correct. The doubleyou would be pronounced as a vee, though. Of course, when it comes to Wolfe, you never know, so we'd have to think about it, and maybe get into a BIG argument here over whether Wijzer is far-seeing (Visor) or insightful (Wiser).

Nutrium

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