

OBW Various

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 14 Oct 1999

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David_Lebling — 14 Oct 1999, 09:54

Length of _Whorl's_ voyage. I recall a remark by Marble, in the scene where she is remembering the mustering of the chems before departure, where she mentions how old she is. I don't have the book handy, so I can't be sure, but that would provide an upper bound for the length of voyage.

The Writing of TBotLS. Speculations on how Horn might have had help writing _The Book of Silk_ seem to forget that he did have help, from his wife Nettle. He also describes how they reconstructed scenes where they weren't present, by inventing "typical" dialogue that led to the outcomes they knew. I might also mention that the style in TBoS is quite different from that of OBW, and I attribute that to Nettle's influence. Horn, on several occasions, laments that without her organizational ability, the present work will be inferior. This is not to say that I don't agree that Something Is Up with respect to who Horn actually is...

On Black Holes. David Alan Groce captures one half of my BH worries (plot kludgery and retroactive undermining of earlier books), and Jim Jordan the other (Severian showing up on the _Whorl_). Severian, after _Urth of the New Sun_, is so nearly a _deus ex machina_ plot device that his appearance would be very dangerous. But this isn't what I worry about (Wolfe can pull that sort of thing off typing with one finger). What I dislike is series where you feel more and more constricted because it begins to appear that there are really only about a dozen Real People in the universe. Heinlein fell into this in his later novels, as well as the _deus_ stuff. What eventually happens is that every new character you meet turns out to be a previously introduced character, or related to one. I suppose "All You Zombies" is the ultimate one of these, but it's a short story. Anyway, I'll shut up about this now.

Distant Possibility. I'm very impressed by Jim Jordan's (possible) explanation of the changes in Horn's attitudes depending on which (possible) personality is doing the writing. I too had noticed that at times he seems genuinely remorseful at his adultery, his "failure," and so on, and at others not. I had tentatively attributed this to mood shifts and the presence or absence of Seawrack and later her songs. Now I'll have to take another look. The whole DP idea is very interesting: there's a whole lot of plot between the end of the "past" and the beginning of the "present" OBW plot threads in which it (or anything else) could happen.

Spoilers. While I can forgive Kevin his post, I hope we don't get any more like it from Those In The Know. Wolfe did say that Sev and his sister would appear in the trilogy, so most of what KJM spilled wasn't too much of a spoiler, but please, in the future, keep it zipped.

-- Dave Lebling
(aka vizcacha)

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