

Babbie

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 09 Nov 1999

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Robert Borski — 09 Nov 1999, 15:18

There is a mystery here, as well, or part of one. When Seawrack vanishes from Horn's boat, he begins to doubt that she was ever really there. To determine if she was real, he turns to Babbie. "I questioned him then, and from his answers knew that the young woman I had seen had been real." The mystery is, just how intelligent does Horn think Babbie is? He often talks about him as if he were an animal, albeit highly intelligent, but here Horn seems to regard Babbie as having an almost human ability to communicate (unless this "conversation" was actually a hallucination).

Given that "Babbie" does mean "baby" (OED), and that he can "talk," could this be punster Wolfe's tip of the hat to the wonderful "Babe" movie of several years ago, with its titular talking pig? Hus do appear rather porcine, if octuple-legged. And what, given the Circe/Mucor connection, might be the connection between Babbie and blind Pig, the likes of whom we have yet to meet? (I don't trust Wolfe's use of the word "must" when, in describing how Seawrack and Babbie may have eventually returned to Pajarocu in a fixed boat, he has Horn write: "They must have arrived much too late [to see the lander take off], if indeed they arrived at all.")

Lastly: has anyone ever figured out the etymology of "hus"?

Robert Borski

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