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The Whorl list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 31 Mar 2000

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Bjrp2 — 31 Mar 2000, 19:05

In a message dated 00-03-31 00:31:22 EST, you write:

<< Re my posting on difficulty in even getting started on the Long Sun books because of the writing style some months ago in urth.v028.n079 and replies in n080-n082, I took the advice given and read OBW - and loved it. So then I went back and made myself read all the Long Sun books in one hit (assisted by mantis' booklets).

I still think Long Sun is very disappointing. The third person style of diction chosen is flat and to my mind rather boring, anaesthetising Wolfe's linguistic genius (so on display in OBW and TBNS). The ideas, while interesting, did not require four volumes to present. As for the meticulous plotting suggested by Alice Turner, I can only say this was not evident to me - on the contrary I had the impression that unlike TBNS the series was not fully written in advance, if only because Exodus is twice as long as the three preceding volumes. Nor did much of the plotting seem to lead anywhere - to take one random example, what was the value of the long (and boring, at least to me) chapter on the visit to the talus factory in Exodus? >>

I'm a long-time Wolfe fan (and lurker) and I agree with respect to the Long Sun books. I liked the first one, but found subsequent volumes extremely disappointing. I also found much of the series tedious. Do we really need three pages to describe to Silk how a needler works? Seemingly endless discussions while wandering around the tunnels? Because it's Wolfe, I recognize the distinct possibility that maybe I'm just not smart or perceptive enough to understand the point, but the fact remains that I found myself skimming pages at times in the Long Sun books. I agree that the Short Sun series is shaping up to be another masterpiece.

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

Michael Straight — 03 Apr 2000, 13:14 · follows Bjrp2

On Fri, 31 Mar 2000 Bjrp2 at aol.com wrote:

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Different tastes, I guess, but I've actually pointed that passage out before as an example of Wolfe's virtuoso writing. The way Auk describes such advanced technology in such simple language is beautiful in itself, but also puts an interesting spin on imagining a culture that has lost high technology. In most such novels, the Auk-character would just shrug his shoulders and say, "It's magic."

-Rostrum

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