

[Ebook] The Wake Author Paul Kingsnorth – Soccerjerseys-wholesale.co

Posted on 14 April 2018 By Paul Kingsnorth

Upon reading the 2014 Man Booker longlist announcement, I was immediately drawn to *The Wake* because of its unique premise and because I believe it's the prize's first crowdsourced nomination. Sourced by readers, I had to give it a try. What is perhaps the most unique about this novel, and needs to be mentioned, is the language. Written in a version of Old English created by the author for layman readers, I didn't know what to expect. But what I think should be made clear is that Paul Kingsnorth didn't write this novel intending it to be a chore for the reader. He wrote it this way to reflect the world it takes place in, and he did so beautifully. The story is fascinatingly alien, and utterly relevant to a time we can only try and imagine. I appreciate Kingsnorth's reasoning in the note on the language: The way we speak is specific to our time and place. Our assumptions, our politics, our worldview, our attitudes all are implicit in our words, and what we do with them. To put 21st century sentences into the mouths of eleventh century characters would be the equivalent of giving them iPads and cappuccinos. Just wrong. And he's right. Ever get annoyed reading modern morals in a character of historical fiction? I bet Kingsnorth would too, but by taking the brilliant extra steps with language he's created something magical. Once you pick up on the rules of the language, reading it becomes second nature. It nourishes the story, never detracting from the tale. There is a partial glossary in the back, but I didn't use it. Kingsnorth did all the hard work for us, and I found joy in understanding his new words through context. Set during the Norman invasion of England, the story follows Buccmaster, and his somewhat

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misguided attempt to bring England back to what it used to be Buccmaster is cocky, outspoken, and probably schizophrenic, but oddly riveting in an endearing sort of way Except for the homicidal tendencies of course But it s 1066, and his entire world is in turmoil The journey is dark, but dreamy, and I was sad to see it end Not that I was expecting otherwise, but I ll be honest, this one caught me off guard One of the best historical fictions I ve read yet, it brings exciting new breath to the genre. I look forward to reading of Paul Kingsnorth s work in the future Highly recommended. 3.5 4 stars

When we think of post apocalyptic fiction we tend to think specifically of science fiction or at least I know I do Our vision is usually either of a near future survival thriller about the fall of current human civilization into ruin most often as the result of a nuclear holocaust, an ecological disaster, or recently due to those pesky zombies , or of the far future as we witness the after effects on a society that has fallen into utter barbarity and ruin We tend to see the apocalypse, understandably, as truly world ending on a global scale wherein the entirety of human civilization has been laid waste, but what about an apocalypse that is restricted in its geographical extent What about one that impacts only a single nation or a culture What about an apocalypse that happens not in the future or near present, but one that lies in the distant past We think, or hope, of apocalypses apocalypsi as rare events, something so inconceivable that it could only happen when the blue moon shines, but when we broaden our definitions just a little and look beyond only those events that shatter the globe and also turn our vision from the future to the past we may start to see a world that was riddled with apocalypses a world where cultures thrived and died on a regular basis It would seem that in many ways the apocalypse has been a fact of life for humanity since our infancy Countries, cultures, whole civilizations were destroyed as a matter of course throughout most of human history and Paul Kingsnorth s *The Wake* is a tale of one such apocalypse. 1066 is a famous year Even those ignorant of many major historical events likely know that this was the year that William alternately the Bastard and the Conqueror of Normandy invaded England and defeated then king Harold Godwinson and subjugated a people This subjugation was particularly harsh, even in an age known for the harshness of war, and ultimately involved the

Goddess

Pride and Prejudice

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Summer Sisters

The Help

One for the Money

Something Blue

Good in Bed

Twenties Girl

The Devil Wears Prada

Eat, Pray, Love

Shopaholic Takes
Manhattan

Water for Elephants

P.S. I Love You

The Sisterhood of the
Traveling Pants

The Other Boleyn Girl

destruction or was it a transmutation of a people through the decimation of their language, their rights, and, ultimately for many, of their lives The Anglo Saxon culture that then held sway admittedly itself a race of conquerors on the island was overcome by the culture of France and a way of life was seemingly decimated almost overnight Landowners lost their rights and privileges to a crown with new and far reaching powers speakers of the Anglo Saxon tongue found themselves ruled by a people that neither knew, nor cared to know, their language or ways nearly the entire ruling class was decimated and those beneath them learned that even the yoke they once bore was perhaps not so bad a thing when compared to the new one What is less well known is that there was, for several years, a guerilla war waged on the Norman invaders by some of the remaining Saxon population This war, while ultimately fruitless, was the last hope of many for retaining their way of life and it is the story of one such rebel that we are told in Kingsnorth s novel. One thing to note before this review goes any further is that Kingsnorth has basically created his own language in this novel and it could be a stumbling block for some He calls this language a shadow tongue since it is a fabricated version of English that incorporates many Old English words and grammatical structures in an attempt to incorporate a sense of verisimilitude with the era in which the story takes place without actually writing it in Old English It could thus be compared to what Russell Hoban did in Riddley Walker, though I would argue that this is a bit easier to slide into esp if you have any background in basic OE syntax and vocabulary There is also a helpful glossary at the back of the book for some of the opaque words and terms used in the text I think, as with Hoban s use of an invented language, Kingsnorth s experiment is not merely a gimmick and ultimately succeeds I find far too often that historical fiction fails due to being little than modern characters dressed up in historical drag I wouldn t say that attempting to recreate a dead language in a way that can mostly be read by modern audiences is the sole solution to this problem, but in this case it definitely went a long way towards immersing the reader into what is effectively a different world, and certainly a different mindset When we have to meet the narrator on his own terms due to the language used we are forced to leave many of our preconceptions at the door Of

I've Got Your Number

The Joy Luck Club

The Boy Next Door

course the fact that I have at least a smattering of Old English definitely helped me in acclimating myself fairly quickly, but I would strongly encourage any readers, even without this background, to still put in the effort. Once you've picked up the gauntlet dropped by Kingsnorth I think you'll find that after a few chapters the words that were previously giving you headaches start to roll naturally off the tongue. We open on the eve of the Norman invasion and are introduced to Buccmaster of Holland a region of eastern England, not the Netherlands our stalwart narrator and a socman a man of the wapentac who has three oxgangs which ultimately translates to an important man of influence and means beholden to none a fact of which he is eager to remind us every chance he gets. Buccmaster tells us his tale of tragedy and woe as he recalls the day that everything started to go wrong and all of the events that followed in its wake. It was, as is usually the case, a day much like any other aside from the fact that he witnessed an omen, a strange bird in the sky, that led him to believe that changes were in the air. His feeble attempts at warning others fall on deaf ears and we soon learn that Buccmaster is an atavism amongst his own people, a man of the old ways as taught to him by his grandfather who has rejected the hwit crist and the wave of change that has already come and significantly changed the traditions and beliefs of his people. As a result he is not only something of an outcast and recluse in his own small community, but also already in a position of bemoaning the lost past of his people even before the great apocalypse that will truly decimate his culture has arrived. It is interesting to note that despite the tragedies that we come to see befall Buccmaster the loss of his position, the burning of his home, the disappearance and probable death of his sons, the rape and murder of his wife, Buccmaster never becomes a sympathetic character. He is a man, we quickly come to realize, who is neither likeable nor trustworthy. His words always serve a specific purpose his own perceived best interest and while it seems fairly clear to me at least that he is not deceiving us on purpose it is equally clear that his entire perception of reality and the events that go on around him are skewed. Ironically it is his own words that betray him. As we hear the constant justifications, the repeated assurances of his own worth, power, and rightness, the continual complaints about the

wrongs to which he has been subjected by both his enemies and his friends we begin to question Buccmaster's grasp on reality. As Buccmaster falls further and further from his position of relative comfort and influence, or as obstacles to his unquestioned authority arise, we start to hear the voices in his head. These voices whisper to him that the old gods have returned and hand-picked Buccmaster himself to bring back their ancient ways to his people and overcome the invaders. Unable to accept that he is no more than an outcast and outlaw living like a beast in the forest, Buccmaster must instead see himself as the ordained saviour of his people and their ancient way of life. You might wonder how a book with a main character whose catalogue of faults and crimes matches that of Buccmaster could be readable, let alone enjoyable, but I found *The Wake* to be both. Buccmaster is no saint, he's not even a likeable sinner, but his story of loss, decline, and madness is a compelling one. As we are given glimpses of both past and present events and the story of his life begins to unpeel like the skin of a rotting onion we start to see the full tragedy of Buccmaster's life and understand that the last greatest calamity of the overthrow and destruction of his people was simply the final nail in the coffin, the last straw in a long line of sins, disappointments and defeats. It sounds an utterly gloomy tale, and while it certainly isn't full of a lot of chuckles, I still found it to be compelling and not so much depressing as harrowing. The apocalypse of the Norman invasion may have left the globe at large much as it had been before it occurred, changes in regime happen every day after all, but it was no less world-ending for that to the people that lived through it and came out the other side into a world, a reality, which they could no longer understand. *The Wake* is a fine piece of historical fiction that not only incorporates a truly intriguing narrative technique and linguistic structure, but also proves to be a powerful meditation on loss, culture, and the ways we define ourselves as both individuals and members of a wider community. Definitely recommended, though not for the faint of heart. After the Norman invasion of England, the French ravage and burn. One man, Buccmaster, returns to his home to find nothing but ash, and his wife's body amidst the ruins. He takes to the woods to become a green man, an outlaw, with loud proclamations of his intention to raise a group to fight the

French in revenge for all he has lost. The story is told in Buccmaster's own words. From a narrative perspective, this means that he clearly tries to paint himself in the best light possible, seeking the reader's sympathy for his situation. At first, as readers, we do have sympathy. Certainly, from the first, Buccmaster seems to be all talk and little action. Many of the actions he justifies to us seem pretty cowardly. He's arrogant, violent, superstitious, self-entitled, and certainly knows how to nurse a grudge. But, after all, he has been a victim of brutal invaders. His position as a man holding to the old ways as he imagines them from his grandfather's tales, while the world has moved on around him, seems poignant. We expect, as the story progresses, that he might find redemption in some way, whether through justice or spirituality. Instead, the reader finds Buccmaster's character thrown into increasing doubt. Finally, we see an outside opinion of him. These revelations trigger a crisis point, where events of the past and Buccmaster's current decisions combine for a finale that's quite horrific. **Outstanding novel about a landowner in Lincolnshire** Buccmaster of Holland set in the years 1066-1068. Buccmaster, even before the Norman invasion, is apart from his fellow fen dwellers, still, like his grandfather but not his father, a follower of the Old Gods and a rejecter of the Church. Also someone convinced he has through his Grandfather been chosen and marked out by the legendary blacksmith Weland whose sword he believes he owns. At the start of 1066 he believes he sees various ill omens he refuses to participate in the fights against either the Danish or Norman invasion, his children do fight and are killed in the second and shortly after as reprisals for not paying taxes to the French and while Buccmaster is absent his farm is burned down and his wife killed. He escapes to the woods, joining up with a servant and then a young boy initially avoiding the French, the boy's hero worship challenges him into killing a French knight leading to vicious reprisals on the village and in turn gathering a small band of outlaws around him. His band kills various Frenchmen over time, but Buccmaster is clearly reluctant to commit actions to match his words and even his self-image, he is challenged verbally by his band-keeper to join up with Hereward the Wake and in his head by conversations with Weland Smith. As the book draws to a close the gap between Buccmaster and his

followers grows, particularly when his embrace of the old Gods lead to try to carry out a ritualistic killing on a French knight we also find out as do his followers that after having been expelled by his father for attempting a pagan style burial for his Grandfather, he returned several years later and likely murdered his father and sister in an accidental fire. The book is written in a shadow tongue a version of Olde English updated to be readable but respecting many of the rules of that language Crucially this adds seeming authenticity to Buccmaster s first person tale and it s clear that the constraints of the language force the author to closely imagine the actual thoughts and attitudes that Buccmaster may hold This relates to a wider theme which its clear Kingsnorth feels strongly about and which he puts into Buccmaster s mouth, that the true soul of a country is completely bound up in its land, its farming, its language, its ways and the interactions between those Buccmaster often states that the foreign ways and names for things which change England for ever, that Christianity is destroying the uniqueness and essence of Englishness themes similar to the author s non fictional polemics around the commercialisation of English town centres and villages What is perhaps most interesting about it is that Buccmaster himself, despite representing the author s views, is a self obsessed and delusional character I am not sure if is self aware or self delusional that a character who clearly represents the author s views is themselves self delusional A clue may be that a self proclaimed English nationalist and follower of traditional pre Christian English rituals actually lives in the West of Ireland and says he is a Zen Buddhist. 4.5 I ve always wanted historical fiction written like this To feel like I was reading something of another, older world, but not hard work like Chaucer or Beowulf So I d probably have read *The Wake* anyway, regardless of the Booker Prize it s just that I only heard of it a day or two before the longlist announcement, via, I think, a Guardian comment from book blogger John Self who has since reviewed the novel for *The Times* behind paywall, haven t read it At that point, when I looked at the Goodreads book page, I was delighted to see an average rating of 4.28 and several reviews clearly the book was already being found by the right people And as I expected, with it being longlisted, people who don t like it and can t read it are now trying it and

giving 1 and 2 stars it surprises me how many people don't read a few pages before buying a book. But is it better to have a grateful niche audience and less money, or higher sales including people who noisily don't appreciate a work plus a few extra fans? That's not hard work. As mentioned in a few other reviews, I generally just don't bother with fiction where specialist knowledge helps if I haven't got it. Things that helped here included knowledge of the relevant history including pre-Christian religions, familiarity with accents and dialects of Northern England and southern Scotland, *beornin* heard in an old Durham accent made sense instantly, understanding of the general patterns of Old English without actually knowing the language. Germanic languages would help a lot too. And a thing which must have a proper name, switching gears where language is concerned and understanding it through feeling and sound than thinking this felt the same as reading paragraphs of text. Speak and youth slang, except that I was interested. I've always had a knack for silently working out slang based on context and instinct, which is very useful if you're an easily embarrassed kid who doesn't want people to know you're easily embarrassed. *The Wake* is best read in big chunks and when fairly awake so you stay inside its idiom and remember the vocab. It gets faster as you go along. Also, read the afterwords first, and if you're on an e-reader, print out the glossary unless your OE/German/Dutch/Scandinavian is good enough that you won't need it. Having been vaguely interested in Paul Kingsnorth's non-fiction already, it maybe wasn't so surprising to find a writer with views I'm very sympathetic to. Have recently read several of the articles on his website. He also had mystical feelings about landscape from an early age, and studied history, someone who likewise hankers for a vivid felt sense of the past whilst having come to understand that we can really only see it through ourselves and our own time. The shadow tongue in which *The Wake* is written panders skilfully to the feeling of what it was like, but it's not authentic, it's a twenty-first century constructed pidgin of modern and Old English although nearly all of the words are of Anglo-Saxon origin. This combination of ancient and modern shares the ethos of neo-paganism. Pedants familiar with Old English may find it annoying, but knowing OE wouldn't necessarily preclude a reader from enjoying the writer's creative games with

language. Likewise, there are contradictory layers to the narrator, Buccmaster, and his story. This is a post-apocalyptic historical novel whose phrase that was I can't remember and Kingsnorth mentions in his afterword that few British people know how awful the aftermath of the Norman Conquest was. He points out the effects on land ownership and the class system but the Harrowing of the North still has its effects today in the North-South economic divide. A cheesy, obviously didactic historical novel would set out to show this using sympathetic characters. Buccmaster pre-Hastings is a self-important Lincolnshire sokeman, or yeoman farmer, easy to imagine as a burly Daily Mail reader, forever complaining about taxes and red tape, always expecting something to be done about things without contribution from him and his perfectly able household and also something of a Walter Mitty dreamer, all talk and little, sporadic, action. He's not exactly central casting's budding rebel outlaw type, nor does he experience a chrysalid transmutation of personality at his country's hour of need. No sensible reader would expect a man of the eleventh century to be PC and peaceful, but he's unusual among his contemporaries for being, essentially, pagan. His grandfather remained secretly loyal to the old gods and was a great inspiration to Buccmaster. The narrator's conversations with Weland and visions of Woden echo Robin of Sherwood's relationship with Herne the Hunter given Kingsnorth's age I'd bet he watched the series as a kid/teenager. There are various other echoes such as Lincolnshire green men, a Little John-like giant etc. I'm deeply sympathetic to this pagan aspect and viewed it as a positive side of Buccmaster's character. I also rooted for the Wicker Man people. I don't like violence but it was some kind of satisfying counterbalance to all the conversion and martyrdom stories from a Catholic perspective. I read as a child I'd guess the author has pagan leanings too. But the book is well constructed such that a negative interpretation of this side of the character is equally possible as his contemporaries do, a reader could also see Buccmaster's paganism as inevitably connected with his episodes of madness. Whereas I consider his main problem is egotism and tyranny, and that as far as the old gods are concerned, he's merely guilty from time to time of that very English fault to find, taking things a bit too far. One has to also take into account that

the supernatural was an accepted part of every day life before the age of reason although that doesn't mean that all dreams and visions were automatically accepted, as the reception of Margery Kempe and Joan of Arc indicate. Alongside the moments of too modern religious doubt of all religions, this story of the once well established man become an outlaw on the run is a common motif in several of this year's Booker longlisted titles, a comment on creeping authoritarian aspects of contemporary life. Kingsnorth, a former road protestor and environmental journalist, evidently means something along those lines, also re globalisation. He may be another white middle class man as many have said there are too many of on the list, and an Oxbridge one to boot, but he seems the sort who seriously mucks in and sees how it is, perhaps not quite in so much depth as Orwell, but same ethos. But he is circumspect enough to consider in his narrative why resistance seems futile, or even harmful, to some. And hidden under Buccmaster's veneration of the old gods and concept of pre Norman, pre Christian England as somehow the real deal a popular idea at least since the Victorians is the knowledge that before the Anglo Saxons there were the wealsc now inhabiting the far west whom the Germanic invaders conquered, and that there were other people before the wealsc too. He is outraged that people like himself are made thralls the geburs and thralls his own people held are mentioned, made obvious and human to the reader, but to Buccmaster they remain beneath him. Love of the English countryside and history is abundant in the writing, but not without knowledge of the potential for xenophobia within these sentiments. I admire the sense of balance in this novel, that it passionately understands why something is worth fighting for, but simultaneously what might be wrong about that or about the way it's done and that any one time is just part of a long cycle of takeovers and oppressions, and the mythical past of perfect freedom always was mythical, even if certain aspects of life were or are better at one time or another. It combines the historian's long view with the political activist's immediate outlook and seriously creative use of language as rarely found in books of that sort. Another post here [Astounding](#). Written in a shadow version of 11th century English which is incredibly evocative, this is stark and brutal and magical. An invaded country, groups of men

driven to the woods and fens, a land haunted by dying gods where Christianity is the first invader Told by a magnificent creation, buccmaster of holland, an inarticulate, rage filled, brutal man consumed by paranoia and self doubt that expresses itself in visions of Odin as Wayland Smith This is a magnificent book The author has tried to restrict the vocabulary to pre Norman English and the poverty of language is incredibly expressive the struggles for expression, the grinding repetition It s a difficult, struggling, dying language like the story it tells deop in the eorth where no man sees around the roots of the treow sleeps a great wurm and this wurm what has slept since before all time this wurm now slow slow slow this wurm begins to moflt s pretty hard work at first and takes slow reading, but my God, it s worth it. In The Aftermath Of The Norman Invasion Of , William The Conqueror Was Uncompromising And Brutal English Society Was Broken Apart, Its Systems Turned On Their Head What Is Little Known Is That A Fractured Network Of Guerrilla Fighters Took Up Arms Against The French Occupiers In The Wake, A Postapocalyptic Novel Set A Thousand Years In The Past, Paul Kingsnorth Brings This Dire Scenario Back To Us Through The Eyes Of The Unforgettable Buccmaster, A Proud Landowner Bearing Witness To The End Of His World Accompanied By A Band Of Like Minded Men, Buccmaster Is Determined To Seek Revenge On The Invaders But As The Men Travel Across The Scorched English Landscape, Buccmaster Becomes Increasingly Unhinged By The Immensity Of His Loss, And Their Path Forward Becomes Increasingly Unclear Written In What The Author Describes As A Shadow Tongue A Version Of Old English Updated So As To Be Understandable To The Modern Reader The Wake Renders The Inner Life Of An Anglo Saxon Man With An Accuracy And Immediacy Rare In Historical Fiction To Enter Buccmaster S World Is To Feel Powerfully The Sheer Strangeness Of The Past A Tale Of Lost Gods And Haunted Visions, The Wake Is Both A Sensational, Gripping Story And A Major Literary Achievement I suspect if I read this again, it might get an extra star I ve certainly been thinking about it enough in the three weeks since I finished it I tend to like the idea of experimental novels than I like the execution, so this was a welcome exception to that I thought it was

marvellous. When I look over my reading habits, they tend to ebb and flow in certain directions. *The Wake* for me hit the end of a phase of playing with storytelling conventions, and the early blossoming of an enthusiasm for old and middle English. I've got a book on King Arthur going on in the background, my non-fiction reading has tended to the millennium old of late, and oh yes, twenty points if you guessed it I've finally managed to nick a hardback copy of *The Buried Giant* off my friend. More on that as I inevitably start cooing over it. The point is that I was in the right headspace to be thinking about a novel set just after the invasion of Britain in 1066, and really, that's what kept me going. The language in *The Wake* creates a sense of place like I've never seen it before. I can only imagine how tough it was to write, how many knots it tied Paul Kingsnorth's brain into. After a few hours of reading this, you start conceptualising the world differently. It did something to the pace of my day, and I'm not sure what. Sometimes it was exhausting or disconcerting, but either way it's stuck with me. It's tempting to say that the point of *The Wake* is the language, but I don't think that's true. The language is certainly what jumps out at you, but the content of the story is still the thing. Buccmaster of Holland, his name as I correctly guessed and Kingsnorth apologetically confirmed in the afterword a bit of an anachronism in itself, is a man out of time. Desperate to be taken seriously, he remembers the stories his grandfather told him about the old days, the time before, when men were heroes. When the French come, killing his family and peers and taking everything he has, he struggles to regain and keep the place he used to have in the world. It's his place in the world that he's had taken from him. It's the esteem of others that he wants, or needs. Buccmaster is, bluntly, a little shit, and all of the other characters have an awful lot of patience. But there's something sinister under the attitude, something just below the surface, all the way through. Like the best of detective novels, when you get to the end, you can look back and point to all the clues. As you're going along, it's another matter. When the moment of truth comes, it doesn't come where or how you expect. I was shocked. It was signposted everywhere, but I was shocked. I love being taken for a fool by an author who knows what they're doing. About the author Paul Kingsnorth has another project that I've been following for the last nine months or so, the

literary journal called the Dark Mountain Project Partly, I love getting beautiful hardbacks full of tales of the apocalypse in the post Partly, though, the Dark Mountain Project confuses me it's got a high esteem for how things used to be, and the things we as a society have ostensibly lost I sympathise a whole lot, I do for all that I love, and make a living from, being really connected to a lot of the world, all of the time and at high speed, I do sometimes miss the times when I didn't have internet access, and didn't feel anxious about it I joke about knitting and spinning and darning and the various accoutrements of my Girl Guiding days as being part of my post apocalyptic skill set, but I still have one eye on making sure that Me Without Electricity is not Me Without A Hope. For all Paul Kingsnorth's sheep farm and articles about missing middle England, I still think mate, you've just crowdfunded your book You probably got half your research, and your audience, via the internet And, reading The Wake, I think he's aware of this fact than I gave him credit for even in 1067AD, Buccmaster of Holland is already pining for the old days, when men was men and giants walked the earth That glorious past where everything was right is an imagined village it never existed If we want it, we need to go to it, not go back to it But just because a collectively imagined or in Buccmaster's case, individually imagined history never happened, doesn't mean it can't mean something We've just got to be a bit careful of it, that's all If nothing else, The Wake has something to say about that And you may believe me when I say that it is not messing around. So here you go a great story, interestingly told, curiously produced by people who are obviously bibliophiles, and with something important and unusual to say Don't be put off by the language if you managed Trainspotting, this'll be a breeze You won't have read anything else like this lately It'll get the old cogs grinding, and if you're anything like me you'll really enjoy it. Well, that was quite a leap Can't say I've ever gone from one star to five before But I revisited and finished this book, and it turns out to be the impressive achievement that its fans claim It's a masterful stream of consciousness narrative told by a deeply unreliable narrator and one of the most compelling and chilling depictions of mental illness that I've ever read It's also a beautifully crafted example of authorial subtlety not so easy from the first person perspective that

deploys foreshadowing with grace and artfully conveys revelations to the reader while keeping our narrator unaware of them I think this book could easily wind up being used in high school English classes it's well constructed, harrowing and short But there's another reason the experiment with language As noted everywhere, Kingsnorth tells the story in a shadow language, a readable but still deeply alien tongue meant to reflect elements of Old English while not striving for accuracy As you'll see below, I initially found it deeply frustrating. And I still think there are elements of the experiment that are a bit self-indulgent What was gained by my not understanding, until the afterword, that *scramasax* means dagger or that *socman* is a class of free farmer Kingsnorth's afterword says that his intent was to accurately portray the thought patterns of people separated by time and culture, and that language is an essential part of this I'm not sure I buy it, at least for the purposes of a novel Still, the language inarguably affects the experience of reading the book It works your brain differently I found myself getting sleepy much faster than usual, weirdly and it changes how you perceive Buccmaster's language, with its limited vocabulary and lack of structure There's a revelatory element, too, as the book progresses and one begins to wonder where the lines exist between Buccmaster's ignorance and his mania It both introduces distance and sweeps you in to a place where you have no choice but to accept the flow of language All in all a neat trick, and one that I'll grudgingly admit was essential But it is certainly not without its frustrations.

ORIGINAL REVIEW FOLLOWS

Boy Screw this

When authors write in dialect the subsequent conversation is often tinged with difficult racial dynamics Well, here the dialect is a made-up approximation of Middle English as the narrator describes the devastation of the Norman invasion in a stream of consciousness It's annoying as fuck I made it 3% through

An example, laboriously typed through autocorrect i will tell thu of this time my grandfather toc me trappan the ael i was a cilde a lytel cilde but my grandfather he wolde sae that the ways of the fenns moste be taught yonge or will nefer be cnawan

So yeah, okay I don't really get to weigh in on this book because I didn't give it a proper chance There are some people who will enjoy the artfully added layers and the alienness of the chosen tongue For the rest of us, the dialect will be a superficial

gimmick and a substantial obstacle to connecting with any emotional core that the book might have. And we will be inclined to punish the author with one star reviews for wasting our 9.

Honestly, I loved Jim Crace's *Harvest*, from the last Booker class. That novel was a historically informed first person rumination on the destruction of a kind of pastoral idyll in England. I was primed to really like this book. I am not going to struggle through this silly, showy stunt, though. Get bent, Mr Kingsnorth.

Kingsnorth's novel was on the longlist for the 2014 Man Booker Prize, and it seemed to me the most interesting book in the bunch. I waited and waited for a US release until I couldn't stand it any longer and ordered a copy from the UK, well worth the trouble. It tells of the aftermath of the Norman invasion of England in 1066, and it does it in its own shadow tongue, a modernized and easily intelligible version of the Old English that was spoken before our language got all Frenchified and Latinated. It's a sophisticated way to recapture the primitive brutality of the era, and the results are powerful indeed. *The Wake* has all the post-apocalyptic oomph of Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* and carries all the historical weight of *Beowulf*. Luckily, Graywolf Press is bringing the book to American audiences in September.

James Crossley from *The Best Books We Read In May* is reading this in bits in between others. I'm fascinated by the pseudo-Anglo-Saxon the author created to tell the tale. After a few sentences, you really forget it's not in modern English and you're absorbed by the story.

Kristen McQuinn from *The Best Books We Read In July 2016*

THE WAKE



PAUL KINGSNORTH