

Gene Wolfe's New Sun stuff

The SF-Lovers list — 15 messages, 13 voices, 02 Oct 1992

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/sflovers/102>

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Jonathan A. Kung — 02 Oct 1992, 16:48

I remember a thread from a month or so back where Wolfe's stuff was being discussed, and various people claimed to know most of what was going on. Well, I am not one of those people. If anyone could e-mail me or post on the following, I will surely die of gratitude. My brain is under too much strain as it is.

There may be SPOILERS below.

1. Who Severian's mother is. I have a hunch that's she's Dorcas, tortured by the Guild for some reason, so they took Severian in.
2. Who that servant that ran away after passing the warning note in the inn by the Sanguinary Fields is. Is he the one that married Dorcas at the end?
3. That old man Dorcas was mourning at the end of the Book - was that her husband?
4. That business with the aliens from the other universe - in which universe does Book take place, and in which ones does Urth take place, and how are they related.
5. The first Claw that Severian got - was it really "magical"? Or did it glow because of previous contact with the past Severian? Or did it glow because Severian wanted it to?
6. Why I always fell asleep after reading every hundred pages or so.
7. Is Severian the first Autarch with his kind of memory? I had at first thought that each Autarch had perfect memory, and each one would wait until the next person with perfect memory came along, and then groom him for the Autarchy.
8. Book takes place in the VERY far future, right?
9. Was the Citadel originally a "space ship"? There were some references to "cabins" for the journeyman with "portholes", and Severian once says, I think, how wonderful it would be if the tower just blasted off into space like it was meant to.
10. What happened during the time between Shadow, I think, and the next part, at the Wall, that separated Severian and Jonas from the rest?
11. Did that guy who helped Severian and A-wozname and Dorcas out in the lake of the dead (or whatever it was called) die in that episode at the end of one of the books with the witches and Apu-Punchau?
12. What the HELL is the deal with Apu-Punchau? I don't think I can get it straight without a bit of help...
13. Typhon - why didn't he remember Severian's face from before and kill him when he had the chance the second time (for Typhon) they met?
14. What was the deal with the fights in space on the ship that sailed between universes? I was kind of unclear on this (along with everything else I'm asking about).

15. Whose crypt does Severian lie in? It's from one of his past lives, right?
16. Severian dies several times, but is cloned by the Hierogrammates, or something, right?
17. Terminus Est was originally the property of that one guard in the past, right?

Well, that's all I can think of or remember right now, I'll probably have more later. Maybe I'll reread the books.

Was anyone else impressed by the scope of these novels? It was neat how you get to see Typhon's mountain in progress after you see the finished product - the sheer scale is impressive, yet the Citadel dwarfs that project, and the Wall is even larger than I can really picture being built.

Yeesh, my mind just shorted out, so I guess I should go.

Jon Kung

Ethan A Merritt — 02 Oct 1992, 17:48 · follows Jonathan A. Kung

joak at ocf.berkeley.edu (Jonathan A. Kung) writes:

1. Who Severian's mother is. I have a hunch that she's Dorcas, tortured by the Guild for some reason, so they took Severian in.

Yes, Dorcas would appear to be Severian's mother. I don't recall whether there was specific indication that she was tortured by the Guild other than the general explanation of how apprentices were often acquired.

2. Who that servant that ran away after passing the warning note in the inn by the Sanguinary Fields is. Is he the one that married Dorcas at the end?

He says in the note (in regard to Dorcas) "You are my mother come again" - so the implication is that he would be Severian's brother.

3. That old man Dorcas was mourning at the end of the Book - was that her husband?

I presume so.

4. That business with the aliens from the other universe - in which universe does Book take place, and in which ones does Urth take place, and how are they related.

Huh? I don't think I understand the question. All the action in BotNS takes place in "this" universe. In "Urth" Severian travels to the "other" universe and returns. I'm not sure exactly what you mean by "aliens from the other universe". I believe that all the "aliens" in BotNS are from "this" universe.

5. The first Claw that Severian got - was it really "magical"? Or did it glow because of previous contact with the past Severian? Or did it glow because Severian wanted it to?

Tenses will do you in here. It's past contact was with a future Severian. But Severian's access to the power of the New Sun seems to transcend linear time, so I think you could explain it either way.

6. Why I always fell asleep after reading every hundred pages or so.

Too much to think about???

7. Is Severian the first Autarch with his kind of memory? I had at first thought that each Autarch had perfect memory, and each one would wait until the next person with perfect memory came along, and then groom him for the Autarchy.

Interesting question. I pass on that one.

8. Book takes place in the VERY far future, right?

Can't really say. As someone pointed out earlier, the decay of good 'ol Sol is artificially induced, so the natural lifetime of the star is not relevant.

9. Was the Citadel originally a "space ship"? There were some references to "cabins" for the journeyman with "portholes", and Severian once says, I think, how wonderful it would be if the tower just blasted off into space like it was meant to.

Definitely. This is abundantly clear in a number of places.

12. What the HELL is the deal with Apu-Punchau? I don't think I can get it straight without a bit of help...

[Direct SPOILER ahead]

This is part of the narrative in "Urth". Severian returns from the other universe into the past of this one, where he lives as Apu-punchau. However, due to time loops he ends up being present more than once at the same time/space coordinate. It is explained that this can cause multiple "copies" of the personality so duplicated to merge into a single copy. The "copy" of Severian which continues on into the rest of the narrative has absorbed the Apu-punchau copy as I read it.

13. Typhon - why didn't he remember Severian's face from before and kill him when he had the chance the second time (for Typhon) they met?

What makes you think he didn't? Typhon certainly seemed to think he would gain something substantial from control of Severian. He certainly made believable threats to kill Severian if he didn't capitulate.

14. What was the deal with the fights in space on the ship that sailed between universes? I was kind of unclear on this (along with everything else I'm asking about).

Well some of them were instigated by Abbaia's agents in an attempt to kill Severian. Others may just be ongoing politics as usual.

15. Whose crypt does Severian lie in? It's from one of his past lives, right?

Yes.

16. Severian dies several times, but is cloned by the Hierogrammates, or something, right?

Again I'm not sure exactly what your question is. If you mean are Severian's multiple lives due to cloning then no, I don't think this is the case. If you mean did Severian die in the ship travelling to the other universe (Yesod is it? I can't keep the two names straight) then I think the answer is yes, or almost, but whether his resurrection was courtesy of Zak or his own power I can't quite follow.

17. Terminus Est was originally the property of that one guard in the past, right?

You have finally hit a totally new one to me! What guard????

Ethan A Merritt

Jonathan A. Kung — 02 Oct 1992, 18:42 · follows Ethan A Merritt

merritt at u.washington.edu writes:

4. That business with the aliens from the other universe - in which universe does Book take place, and in which ones does Urth take place, and how are they related.

Huh? I don't think I understand the question. All the action in BotNS takes place in "this" universe. In "Urth" Severian travels to the "other" universe and returns. I'm not sure exactly what you mean by "aliens from the other universe". I believe that all the "aliens" in BotNS are from "this" universe.

Don't understand the question? No problem; neither do I. I guess I thought that the Hierogrammates (is that them, the trio with names like Ossiforous or whatever) were from the next universe, come back to help Severian because of something he did in his "first", original non-NewSun incarnation that passed Zak's test and asked that an alternate Severian be created that would become the New Sun. (Ow. Sharp pains in my head.) If they are indeed from Severian's birth-universe (what's the name, Briah? or is that the other one?), then I was in error.

7. Is Severian the first Autarch with his kind of memory? I had at first thought that each Autarch had perfect memory, and each one would wait until the next person with perfect memory came along, and then groom him for the Autarchy.

Interesting question. I pass on that one.

I should clarify: the reason I had that notion was that the Autarchy goes back a long way - that means a LOT of Autarchs. Even if they took that special alzado drug (I think it was alzado) to fully get the memories of everyone before, there is no way that kind of info could be preserved without at least some degradation without Severian's type of memory. However, there is a bit of suggestion that this is not what happens - that Severian kept most of his personality after taking the drug because of the other Autarchs' diminishment over the years.

13. Typhon -- why didn't he remember Severian's face from before and kill him when he had the chance the second time (for Typhon) they met?

What makes you think he didn't? Typhon certainly seemed to think he would gain something substantial from control of Severian. He certainly made believable threats to kill Severian if he didn't capitulate.

Oh. No reason. Careless reading, I suppose.

15. Whose crypt does Severian lie in? It's from one of his past lives, right?

Yes.

But which one? Do we know? A post-Apu-punchau identity?

16. Severian dies several times, but is cloned by the Hierogrammates, or something, right?

Again I'm not sure exactly what your question is. If you mean are Severian's multiple lives due to cloning then no, I don't think this is

the case. If you mean did Severian die in the ship travelling to the other universe (Yesod is it? I can't keep the two names straight) then I think the answer is yes, or almost, but whether his resurrection was courtesy of Zak or his own power I can't quite follow.

He also died as Apu-punchau, and awoke in his tomb, I think, and that's when I think the image of Master Malrubius comes again and talks to him.

17. Terminus Est was originally the property of that one guard in the past, right?

You have finally hit a totally new one to me! What guard????

When Severian, in Urth, has travelled back to the past and become the Conciliator, and is captured by some of Typhon's men, he is taken to the future-Torturer's Guild and imprisoned. One of the guards there has a long sword described as having a square head.

And here're two more:

18. Did the Green Man ever fulfill his obligation to Severian? Remember that his rescuing of Severian from the pyramid structure (?) was regarded by the Green Man as coincidental, so he still had to help Severian later on. Is his obligation perhaps fulfilled when Severian is presented with the branching futures: the cold glacier one and the Green Man's?

19. Was the jungle area in the Garden with the three people, one woman, a man, and a naked man, in the hut an instance of time-travel? I remember reading that Severian noticed that those people seemed to be ignoring or at least trying not to notice himself and Agia.

Jon Kung

Dan'l DanehyOakes — 02 Oct 1992, 19:10 · follows Jonathan A. Kung

Significant (in both senses) SPOILERS ahead:

joak at ocf.berkeley.edu (Jonathan A. Kung) writes:

1. Who Severian's mother is. I have a hunch that's she's Dorcas, tortured by the Guild for some reason, so they took Severian in.

That would seem to be the case. She's certainly his mother, and, given how the Guild acquires 'prentices, the other is a logical deduction: but logic does not always seem to apply.

Gene _will_ have his little mysteries (like the name of the narrator in THE FIFTH HEAD. . .: when I figured _that_ one out, I laughed for at least five minutes.)

2. Who that servant that ran away after passing the warning note in the inn by the Sanguinary Fields is. Is he the one that married Dorcas at the end?

I don't believe so, no. I believe he's her grandson.

3. That old man Dorcas was mourning at the end of the Book - was that her husband?

Most likely... which would make him Severian's father, no?

4. That business with the aliens from the other universe - in which universe does Book take place, and in which ones does Urth take place,

and how are they related.

They all take place in the same Universe (except the parts of URTH that take place in Heaven): and it is either the distant future or the distant past of our world. Remember the "painting" of the "warrior": it's Neil Armstrong on the Moon.

5. The first Claw that Severian got - was it really "magical"? Or did it glow because of previous contact with the past Severian? Or did it glow because Severian wanted it to?

Yes.

Gee, that's not helpful, is it?

Okay: Severian *is* the New Sun, or at least *a* New Sun. The past Severian is/was the present Severian, and both are/were the Conciliator, at least briefly. The Claw has no real significance in itself, but (like all symbols) has a great deal of significance to those who invest it therewith.

6. Why I always fell asleep after reading every hundred pages or so.

For the same reason you would tend to fall asleep if you tried to eat an entire chocolate truffle cake at once: too rich, too much. Overload. Brain shutdown.

7. Is Severian the first Autarch with his kind of memory? I had at first thought that each Autarch had perfect memory, and each one would wait until the next person with perfect memory came along, and then groom him for the Autarchy.

There's no particular reason to believe that other Autarchs have had Severian's peculiar memory. (BTW, note that Severian's memory is not as perfect as he believes it to be. There are hints about this.)

8. Book takes place in the VERY far future, right?

Right. Or maybe the VERY distant past. Or both.

9. Was the Citadel originally a "space ship"? There were some references to "cabins" for the journeyman with "portholes", and Severian once says, I think, how wonderful it would be if the tower just blasted off into space like it was meant to.

The Citadel was not *a* spaceship. The individual *towers* were, and may well still be, space ships.

10. What happened during the time between Shadow, I think, and the next part, at the Wall, that separated Severian and Jonas from the rest?

Read CLAW more carefully. It's in there.

11. Did that guy who helped Severian and A-wozname and Dorcas out in the lake of the dead (or whatever it was called) die in that episode at the end of one of the books with the witches and Apu- Punchau?

Yes. Or maybe that should be "maybe."

12. What the HELL is the deal with Apu-Punchau? I don't think I can get it straight without a bit of help...

Try the afterword to URTH; that will help a great deal.

13. Typhon - why didn't he remember Severian's face from before and kill him when he had the chance the second time (for Typhon) they met?

He does and he does. In his own inimitable way.

14. What was the deal with the fights in space on the ship that sailed between universes? I was kind of unclear on this (along with everything else I'm asking about).

So was Severian, and he's your only source of information. Take it as it is.

15. Whose crypt does Severian lie in? It's from one of his past lives, right?

What past lives? They're all one. Follow the subjective time lines...

16. Severian dies several times, but is cloned by the Hierogrammates, or something, right?

No.

17. Terminus Est was originally the property of that one guard in the past, right?

I hadn't thought of that. Good reason for me to re-read these...

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Ethan Merritt — 03 Oct 1992, 04:37 · follows Dan'l DanehyOakes

joak at ocf.berkeley.edu (Jonathan A. Kung) writes:

Don't understand the question? No problem; neither do I. I guess I thought that the Hierogrammates (is that them, the trio with names like Ossiforous or whatever) were from the next universe, come back to help Severian because of something he did in his "first", original non-NewSun incarnation that passed Zak's test and asked that an alternate Severian be created that would become the New Sun. (Ow. Sharp pains in my head.) If they are indeed from Severian's birth-universe (what's the name, Briah? or is that the other one?), then I was in error.

I haven't read the Sun books for a while, so I may misremember, but... I believe that Ossipago, Familulus, and Bar??? were busy living backwards in time (like Merlin in TH White's Once and Future King?). I.e. their future was Severian's past. Now as I recall the explanation for the heirogrammates' interest in humanity it goes something like this: humanity created and/or evolved into the heirogrammates. The heirogrammates in turn, so as to ensure their own future existence, wish to evolve/create humanity so that humanity is in a position to return the favor again. As usual the tenses and time directions are all messed up. Wolfe does not, that I picked up anyway, develop the backwards-in-time notion very well. One possible vision is of a universe shared by humanity evolving in one time/direction towards the heirogrammates; with the heirogrammates working backwards through the same events to the beginnings of humanity.

Anyone want to take a stab at explaining this better?

19. Was the jungle area in the Garden with the three people, one woman, a man, and a naked man, in the hut an instance of time-travel? I remember reading that Severian noticed that those people seemed to be ignoring or at least trying not to notice himself and Agia.

I could never tie up the loose threads in this one. I half suspect that Wolfe was originally heading in another direction in his conception of the panoramas, but changed his mind. For what it's worth I think that the reason that the inhabitants were semi-oblivious to Severian and company was that (1) each panorama sort of exuded a proper mind-set for its setting (2) susceptible passers-by were taken up by this and became effectively part of the stage set. I.e. I don't think the people were true originals seen via time travel, I think they were contemporaries

of Severian who had gotten caught up in an Ernest Hemmingway look-alike contest imposed by the stage set.

Here's a question in return: At least one of the stories which Severian relates from his little brown book is recognizable - that of Theseus returning without changing his sails. Can the other stories be matched up with tales we already know?

Ethan A Merritt

sometimes a Wombat — 03 Oct 1992, 06:12 · follows Ethan Merritt

Jonathan A. Kung writes:

Those questions I CAN answer have been. Except this one.

19. Was the jungle area in the Garden with the three people, one woman, a man, and a naked man, in the hut an instance of time-travel? I remember reading that Severian noticed that those people seemed to be ignoring or at least trying not to notice himself and Agia.

Yes, it was, time travel back to roughly our day Brazil. Or probably Brazil. Iffy, just where in South America the City is.

Larry Hammer

P W Stephenson — 03 Oct 1992, 16:35 · follows sometimes a Wombat

merritt at milton.u.washington.edu (Ethan Merritt) writes:

Here's a question in return: at least one of the stories which Severian relates from his little brown book is recognizable - that of Theseus returning without changing his sails. Can the other stories be matched up with tales we already know?

My head is seriously overloaded after reading this thread and I think I need a lie down with a good book (it seems I'm going to have to dig out my Fifth Head of Cerberus again), but I remember various of the stories rang bells at the time. In particular, the one about anthropomorphic wolves struck me as a mixture of the Romulus and Remus legend and the Jungle Book. I can't remember why I recognised the latter.

Also, in a posting the last time this subject cropped up, I pointed out a quotation (the only direct one I know about) from Marlowe's Faustus which I believe he sees in the brown book: ``Hell hath no limits nor is circumscribed...' (I think it's that one, at least it's something similar).

Also, I have a recollection of some story about a man sitting under a tree which sounded extremely Buddhist.

In fact I think most of the stories carry a good helping of myths we know about. The story of the Armiger's daughter (I know it wasn't from the brown book) certainly struck me as a classic piece of folklore, and I should be glad to know if anyone recognised it. That doesn't mean I can't believe Wolfe invented it.

Of course, a lot of Severian's own experiences have mythological counterparts: as in the second (chronologically, first for Severian) meeting with Typhon where, like Christ, he is tempted by being shown all the countries in the world (ish); as in the Tower of Master Ash which is some counterpart of the tree Yggdrasil of the Norse myths. It's almost as if all the myths and actualities of the old Urth have mixed together and produced the

one-step-removed-from-reality feel of the novel sequence, just as the surface of the planet is littered with the detritus of former civilisations, and just as the very vocabulary is littered with resurrected words... the way the themes all tie together never ceases to astound me. No other writer I know has ever achieved the same effect.

``Almost nothing remains to be told..." (Citadel, final chapter) - Pah!

Peter Stephenson
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Dan Rabin — 03 Oct 1992, 16:38 · follows P W Stephenson

1. Who Severian's mother is. I have a hunch that's she's Dorcas, tortured by the Guild for some reason, so they took Severian in.

I believe that Dorcas was Severian's GRANDMOTHER, and Ouen (the servant at the inn) his father. Certainly Ouen's recognition of Dorcas as his 'mother come again' establishes him as her son. At the end of *The Citadel of the Autarch*, Severian asks Ouen if he was ever in trouble with the law. Ouen admits that he was involved with a woman who ran away from 'some order of monials', and that she was taken by the torturers and bore a child. At the beginning of *The Shadow of the Torturer* we learn that torturers are taken exclusively from children born to their 'clients'. Furthermore, Severian is young at the time of his exile, and he portrays Ouen as at least middle-aged, too big an age spread for them both to be children of the same mother. The old man at the lake is Dorcas's husband, Severian's grandfather; presumably this is the man she is mourning at the end.

2. Who that servant that ran away after passing the warning note in the inn by the Sanguinary Fields is. Is he the one that married Dorcas at the end?

See above for part of the answer. He doesn't marry her at the end: he is commanded by Severian (whom he knows to be Autarch, but does not know to be his own son) to guard Dorcas, whose mourning leaves her in danger in the abandoned parts of town.

10. What happened during the time between *Shadow*, I think, and the next part, at the Wall, that separated Severian and Jonas from the rest?

A group of uhlans (mounted troops, apparently) start attacking travelers outside the gate in order to keep them from continuing on the road, where travel is prohibited in order to hobble rebellions. In the melee, Severian becomes separated from all his companions except Jonas.

Someone following up on this thread asks whether the green man ever returns Severian's favor. He does, when Severian is a captive of the Ascians in *The Citadel of the Autarch*, and he says so explicitly.

One has to reread these books to get any idea of what's happening. This is highly characteristic of Gene Wolfe's writing, especially in some of his short stories. The story ends, you scratch your head, re-examine a few key paragraphs, and so on. Sometimes there are multiple contrasting interpretations, all supported by the text. Reading Wolfe can be very much like playing chess.

Dan Rabin

Gavin Steyn — 03 Oct 1992, 20:22 · follows Dan Rabin

Here's a question in return: at least one of the stories which Severian relates from his little brown book is recognizable - that of Theseus returning without changing his sails. Can the other stories be matched up with tales we already know?

Except that the sources are more complicated than that...

I don't remember that much of that sequence, but one thing I do remember (partly because Wolfe confirmed it when I talked to him) was that the battle between the giant and the scholar is not straight out of the minotaur legend - it also comes from the battle of the Monitor and the Merrimack. There are other sources in there too, but that's the main one I recall.

One of the stories comes from Kipling, I think, (The Jungle Book), but I don't remember where it is.

Someone should annotate these books one of these days...

Gavin Steyn

Michael Bowman — 04 Oct 1992, 23:39 · follows Gavin Steyn

Regarding Dorcas and the waiter:

John Clute (in Strokes, a collection of reviews and essays) contends that Dorcas is Severian's GRANDmother, not his mother. He thinks that the waiter is her son (and hence Severian's father) and that the old man is her husband (and Severian's grandfather). His question was: who is Severian's mother? His answer is that it was the Autarch.

Michael Bowman

Donald Lindsay — 05 Oct 1992, 00:56 · follows Michael Bowman

rabin-dan at cs.yale.edu writes:

woman who ran away from 'some order of monials', and that she was taken by the torturers and bore a child. At the beginning of The Shadow of the Torturer we learn that torturers are taken exclusively from children born to their 'clients'.

We also learn that sometimes, the Seekers For Truth and Penitence are instructed to rape a client. Wasn't this a clue that Severian's father is the torturer who told him this?

Don C. Lindsay
Carnegie Mellon Computer Science

Dani Zweig — 05 Oct 1992, 05:41 · follows Donald Lindsay

mbowman at andromeda.rutgers.edu (Michael Bowman):

...Dorcas is Severian's GRANDmother, not his mother. He thinks that the waiter is her son (and hence Severian's father) and that the old man is her husband (and Severian's grandfather). His question was: who is Severian's mother? His answer is that it was the Autarch.

Nothing reading the book wouldn't cure. Dorcas is Severian's grandmother. She died about forty years earlier, giving birth to Ouen, the waiter. Ouen never married, but did have several lovers.

One of those, Catherine, who was given to the torturers, was Severian's mother. The Autarch was a eunuch. Most of the details are brought out near the end of "Citadel of the Autarch".

Dani Zweig

Thomas Duffey — 05 Oct 1992, 16:06 · follows Dani Zweig

...Dorcas is Severian's GRANDmother, not his mother. He thinks that the waiter is her son (and hence Severian's father) and that the old man is her husband (and Severian's grandfather). His question was: who is Severian's mother? His answer is that it was the Autarch.

Nothing reading the book wouldn't cure. Dorcas is Severian's grandmother. She died about forty years earlier, giving birth to Ouen, the waiter. Ouen never married, but did have several lovers. One of those, Catherine, who was given to the torturers, was Severian's mother. The Autarch was a eunuch. Most of the details are brought out near the end of "Citadel of the Autarch".

But this still leaves the question; where is Severian's mother in the BotNS? Almost certainly she appears somewhere. I wonder if she might not have been the woman who played Holy Katharine in the torturers' initiation rite. Perhaps she was spared death in exchange for playing this role?

On another note, in Sword of the Lictor, it's implied that Severian may well have a sister (in the section where he meets the pioneering family). Does SHE appear in the book anywhere? Likely candidates, I'd say, are Merryn the Cumaeen's apprentice, the apprentice witch Severian met on a childhood errand to the witches' tower, and possibly the Pelerine postulant (Ava?) he converses with at the lazaret.

Tom Duffey
mebsunll.me.uiuc.edu

Thomas Duffey — 05 Oct 1992, 16:20 · follows Thomas Duffey

steyn at cs.rochester.edu (Gavin Steyn) writes:

Here's a question in return: at least one of the stories which Severian relates from his little brown book is recognizable - that of Theseus returning without changing his sails. Can the other stories be matched up with tales we already know?

Except that the sources are more complicated than that...

I don't remember that much of that sequence, but one thing I do remember (partly because Wolfe confirmed it when I talked to him) was that the battle between the giant and the scholar is not straight out of the mionotaur legend - it also comes from the battle of the Monitor and the Merrimack. There are other sources in there too, but that's the main one I recall.

Another part of this tale is taken from the idea of doing an academic thesis (apparently "thesis" and "Theseus" got mixed together): the part about the students in the city having to create a son magically in order to earn a tasseled hood. I suppose the Minotaur and Monitor represents another such mixture of stories due to similar sounding names.

Also, the idea of magically fleshing out a human appears in a Borges short story, though I don't remember the title. Borges is a strong influence on Wolfe's writing, and I'd be willing to bet that

the blind master librarian of the Citadel (Ullan?) is a tribute by Wolfe to Borges.

One of the stories comes from Kipling, I think, (_The Jungle Book_), but I don't remember where it is.

This is the story that Severian (the torturer) reads to the orphaned boy Severian while they are together. It is a mix of the Jungle Book, the Romulus and Remus story, and a bit of the Plymouth colony founding (I suppose here, the two types of "Indians" led to the confusion).

Tom Duffey
mebsunll.me.uiuc.edu

Elizabeth Willey — 06 Oct 1992, 14:40 · follows Thomas Duffey

Greg Feeley published a dense, multipart article on just these issues in _The New York Review of Science Fiction_ last year.