

Juturna's Backstroke (long again)

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 26 Oct 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/1859>

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Greene, Carlton — 26 Oct 1999, 10:19

I wrote:

<<Sev says of Juturna: "She saved me once when I was a boy" and then to her "Do you remember that?" Juturna replies "No. It hasn't yet occurred. It will, because you spoke.">>

Then Vizcacha wrote:

<<I've always assumed that this means that Juturna will now swim through time and then Gyoll to assure that Severian is saved. That is, it is the Juturna of the present of _Urth of the New Sun_ who goes back and saves him from drowning in _Shadow of the Torturer_.>>

I completely agree. I guess what puzzles me are Juturna's motives for doing so -- i.e. why go back and save someone whom you know will bring the New Sun, if your master is dead set against it. Perhaps the opportunities for befriending, molding, and diverting Sev early in his life were worth the risk of assisting in the creation of a New Sun messiah. Or perhaps Juturna is a traitor to Abaia. Or maybe Abaia changed his mind. Anyway, a bit of a mystery.

I also question what is meant when we are told that the New Sun will "destroy" Abaia and Erebus. It may be meant literally (i.e. increased solar radiation or rising water temperatures or whatever will kill them) or it could be meant figuratively -- i.e. it will destroy their minions the Ascians, as well as the rest of humanity that they sought to enslave, thus effectively eliminating their power and the object of their desires (though we are never told why they wanted mankind so bad).

Certainly the New Sun seems to have little effect on Juturna, who is seen frolicking and munching fish in the waters of Ushas.

One problem with the Sev's skull theory I advanced is that it assumes a copying of Sev a la the Tzadkiel/hierodule "writing in the sand" style of resurrection. However, we know that when Sev performs miracles via the power of the New Sun, he does so by a different method -- direct reconstitution of the dead -- a literal re-animation (returning the anima). Since we have no reason to believe that the undines can resurrect, and there are no obvious heirodules about, there is a problem there. (of course, there is no generic problem with Sev performing miracles at this time -- he brings Triskele back).

One final notion. At one point (no cite, sorry) after bringing the New Sun, Sev notes that his ability to draw on the power of the New Sun for miracles is gone (presumably because his job in bringing the white fountain is done). If so, how does Sev travel from Ushas to the time of Apu-Punchau at Juturna's direction? -- it seems from the Apu-Punchau chapters that the walking of the corridors of time takes some energy source. (This in turn begs the question of how the

green man does it).

Jim Jordan — 26 Oct 1999, 14:24 · follows Greene, Carlton

At 10:19 AM 10/26/99 -0400, you wrote:

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It's been my assumption that Severian simply cannot be killed, and brings himself back to life, so to speak -- cannot be killed at this pre-New Sun point in his life anyway. But maybe that's not correct. Obviously this is a baptismal scene, and perhaps it is the Outsider (or Increate) who does this, since the entire redemptive scenario is His doing, ultimately.

Such a construction would fit with Wolfean beliefs, but is it actually what is intended here? Perhaps, is we let the Silk narrative inform the Severian narrative a bit. Wolfe is interested not only in how Severian came to the throne (which is Severian's interest), but how Severian begins to outgrow a horrible background and upbringing, becoming a (somewhat) better man. One would expect some kind of religious experience to be the point at which that growth is initiated. Of course, where this is pretty obvious in the Silk narrative, it is way in the background of Severian's. The Increate, or Pancreator, and the Theanthropos (Jesus Christ, only mentioned once) are not, in any obvious way at least, directly interacting with Severian.

I still suspect that we only have the first two parts of a Severian trilogy, however, and that eventually there may be more to come. Wolfe has explored politics (war, sovereignty) in the first four-fold part, and ecology in the second. But his ultimate interest is in redemption, understood in the broadest possible way.

Arguably, though, the Long Sun narrative is that "third part."

The Severian narrative would be Wolfe's "Old Testament," and the Silk narrative, with Horn afterward, would be his "New Testament." God is way in the background, working through numerous mediators, in the Severian narrative; but He becomes an Actor in the Silk narrative. Remember that the Noahic Flood did end one corrupt world, ruled by Mighty Men, and brought in a new one, but not THE new one of the whole Bible narrative.

Consider that Jesus did his work in a tiny province within an empire that covered only part of the globe. But what He set in motion gradually changes the entire course of human civilization. (Whether some of us like this or not is not at issue; Wolfe thinks so, and writes in terms of that belief.) Suppose that Silk's work is destined to spread not only to all of the Whorl, but also back to Urth as well....

Just some grist for your mills.

Nutria

Nutria

Nutria