

(no subject)

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 02 Nov 1999

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Greene, Carlton — 02 Nov 1999, 15:08

Daniel Fusch wrote:

There is a technological level, a metaphorical level, a mythological level, and a spiritual level to all these things. I think what whoever-started-this was trying to point out was that the symbolic level of analysis is more important (or higher, to use a Miltonic concept) than the scientific level or analysis. In other words, it is more important that the reader understand what Typhon is doing on a symbolic level than it is for the reader to understand the anatomical knowledge that went into putting Typhon together.

I agree with you. My point is simply that we should not cease seeking technological explanations for the wonders in TBOTNS simply because the metaphorical associations they create are more important than the physical wonders themselves. This is because the consideration of possible technological explanations for these events enhances the power of their corresponding metaphorical associations.

Following your Typhon's head example -- if there was no convincing scientific explanation for Typhon's surgery ("and the magic man decided he needed a second head, and poof! He had one!"), then Typhon's story becomes a arbitrary, transparent fairy tale vehicle designed simply to get across the *moral of the story*. In contrast, by suggesting that Typhon's aquisition of a second head is an explainable scientific event bounded by physical laws, Wolfe creates a very powerful association between the explainable physical world and the divine not present in fairy tales (or science fiction of the Arthur C. Clarke variety, for that matter).

C/