

These planets we have discovered, there is something very peculiar about them, no?

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 16 Dec 2000

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Talarican — 16 Dec 2000, 12:31

A bit of cross-posting occurred, as I should have expected.

<quote>But what am I saying?! You don't even have the book, and presumably haven't read it yet!</quote>

I have indeed read 5HC, years ago, the Ace edition which belonged to my late brother and was nowhere to be found in his estate. I borrowed a public library copy (Scribner's 1st edition) later, but I no longer reside in that county. It was indeed 5HC which led me to Wolfe and , by way of Mr. Borski and "Cave Canem", this list.

<quote> Since some would argue that the dying sun [of Urth] is ...a sapient-modified luminary not a natrually-dying fireball, this hints tenuously that the C&A primary is a similar post-modification star.... At the very least it is a non-cannonical anomaly. Like some of those stars in the neighborhood that are simply too dim ... </quote>

Thank you, that is indeed the conclusion toward which I was meandering ever so erratically. The difficulty I have, with just leaving it at that, is that I should think that the French interstellar explorers who (re)discovered the system would have done basic astrometrics as a matter of course and perhaps been put on guard by the evident fact that Messrs. Hertzsprung, Russell, Newton, and Kepler have gone on holiday so far as this system is concerned.

If the star is so nonconformant to the parameters of the main sequence, who knows how unstable it might be? (and, if artificially altered, what would be the ramifications of that scenario? What if the parties responsible return, prepared to weed from their garden any biological infestations which might have occurred in the interim?) Would it be wise to colonize it, or even to invest the effort of exploring it with an objective of possible colonization? Or, perhaps, was the Great Anglo-Franco War already raging elsewhere in the galaxy, and were the French explorers/colonists in fact desperate refugees disinclined to look a gift horse in the mouth? (rather reminiscent of Larry Niven's motley collection of flawed colony worlds in his Known Space cycle.)

And how could planets so wet be so full of pink dust suspended in the atmospheres as to permanently color the skies, al la dessicated Mars?

<quote>(in terms of writer's craft, 5HC is a dry-run for some of the hardware in Severian's narrative: sky darker than light blue; twin planets; etc.). </quote>

About a year and a half ago, we revived the old alzabo=Annese ghoulish argument (my position being basically the "writers tend to stick with and reuse favorite images" line someone repeated recently), and you will find a post by my alter ego cataloguing a number of striking parallels between the two bodies of work.

You might also see the long rambling essay he did theorizing that the abos allegedly exhibit poor manual dexterity because they imitated real humans rather than evolved those hands naturally. One inspiration for that essay is contained in _Urth of the New Sun_ ch. XII, where Severian considers Zak's evident pleiomorphism and the implications for the sort of creature Zak must be.

In fact, it is not at all far-fetched to suppose that 5HC takes place in the same universe - much earlier - than BNS. In the Great Anglo-Franco War we can see realized the statement made somewhere in the Urth cycle that the early explorers took their old wars with them to the stars and kindled new ones .

Talarican