

not so sure about this...

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 18 Mar 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3044>

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maa32 — 18 Mar 2002, 07:04

Andy stated:

As I thought - Wolfe is obeying internally generated mythic imperatives in creating these patterns. He does not know if Ushas/Lune is Blue/Green, and he can't tell us.

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all I can say is that Nick did not ask specifically if Urth was Blue; he asked if St. Croix and St. Anne fit in thematically. Wolfe claims he does not know if he is using mythic patterns in that quote, not that he doesn't know whether urth and blue are the same. He just doesn't know how St. Anne and St. Croix might be related ... I see the exact opposite of how you interpret that ... but I think Gene knows whether Urth is Blue or not. I'm sure he does. He just won't say for sure because, (I quote him) "it would spoil your fun". He backs off any question that touches on Blue and Urth - I think he is proud of hiding their connection so well, and hides behind his uncanny dodging ability.

Remember how he keeps claiming that the primary inspiration behind Severian stems from his sorrow at not having a character for a masquerade party? That's a pretty insipid inspiration for the fine work of art he produced ... I think Wolfe knows if Blue and Green are Ushas and Lune, but I'm not sure if he knows who Severian's sister really is. Just my two cents. Also, another point from the interview: the godlings have sonar, don't forget. Pig claims he can "hear" where the foliage is even if he is blind. There is more than one or two hints that they themselves might be mechanical. But the distinction between organic and mechanical life has become blurred in the texts. Marc

Andy Robertson — 18 Mar 2002, 05:52 · follows maa32

It really does seem to me that much of this discussion is based on a profound error about the way people write.

In some part a writer is an explorer - discovering, rather than unpacking, what is in the text.

If you read Wolfe's own essay on Severian, the one where he says that the story of Severian started as a novella in intention, you will see this coming through loud and clear.

You may reply that Wolfe has reworked the books from start to end.

I agree, but still, in this case, it seems to me that the discoveries move from being linear (located at the end of the advancing text) to being hologramatic - located at multiple points in the mutating text.

I don't think Wolfe knows everything about what is going on. He builds a story, but as he builds it the relationships between the characters and events conjure new things into life.

Half-accepted facts become irresistably obvious. Minor characters reveal unforeseen aspects. Obscure background events mutate and change.

And mythic patterns perist, and occur again and again. The historic relationship between the Blue world and the Green world is one of these patterns.

We would do better to wonder what the Green World *represents* in a mythic sense. Obviously both St Anne and Green are loci of human suffering and of visions. The Green World seems to me to be a marginally spiritual reflection of the Blue one.

hartshorn

----- Original Message -----

From: "maa32" <maa32 at dana.ucc.nau.edu>
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if St. Croix and St. Anne fit in thematically.

Jerry Friedman — 18 Mar 2002, 21:20 · follows Andy Robertson

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might be related ...

In fact, Nick Gevers asked two questions, and it's not clear whether Wolfe answered the first, the second, or both.

NG: Can your readers usefully view The Fifth Head of Cerberus as being set in the same science-fictional universe as New Sun, Long Sun, and Short Sun? Why does Fifth Head's pattern of blue/green sister worlds recur so tantalisingly in Urth/Lune, Blue/Green?

GW: I don't know.

I suspect that Andy Robertson is right that Wolfe is saying that he doesn't know why the blue/green pattern recurs, but wrong in saying that Wolfe doesn't know whether the planets are

"really" the same. Wolfe may also be saying that he doesn't know whether readers can usefully link the fictional universes. He doesn't say a word about whether Blue is Ushas--largely, perhaps, because Nick didn't ask (although he certainly gave Wolfe the opportunity to comment). ...

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...

I strongly suspect you're right, and if anyone else gets a chance to interview him, I hope he or she asks straight out, in three words.

Jerry Friedman