

Marc's smoking gun?

The Urth list — 10 messages, 6 voices, 04 Dec 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3651>

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 04 Dec 2002, 16:15

(This is a somewhat artificial post ... I've self-edited but left in some weird stuff to indicate how my thought processes went.)

Among other things, Marc points out

The underwater wall that surrounds the huge city Seawrack
speaks of: evidence of a flood.

Okay ... This may or may not count as a smoking gun, but
(to my own vast surprise, as I have a deep-seated _dislike_ of the Blushas theory) I found it
extremely persuasive, and in fact felt quite startled that I had not noticed it before.

Later (in the same post), he wrote:
... can't Silk in his astral travel go through the same
"white hole" or whatever to go back in time in his travels?
There you go: he travels far enough away to pass through that
dying/gestating black/white hole, and the red light he seeks
is through that barrier. Since he travels with light, of
course he is drawn to the spiritual birth of the New Sun.

I don't see any evidence that the Narrator's astral travel has anything to do with the White
Fountain, but that might be another

OH.

Wow.

Duh!

Now I'm convinced. The whole thing makes sense, in an utterly Lupine way.

How does the _Whorl_ wind up back at Ushas? How does so much time pass? What odd
relativistic effects stretch the thousand years or so we have been talking about to many
thousands, maybe millions?

Let's answer that question with another question: As the
Whorl was heading out from the Urth system, what major spacetime anomaly was heading
toward it ... ?

Hidden in plain sight. Marc, I hold the Blushas theory as fully plausible and highly probable. You
da man.

Now, this doesn't actually solve the mystery of why the Narrator winds up at Severian's
childhood ... or does it? Again and again, I'm looking for a mechanism that fits with the other
known constraints upon the Narrator's astral travel.

Elsewhere in the post, he wrote:
if a ship has the ability to reach back in time, like
the ship Severian takes by moving through space in UOTNS,

Need I point out that the ship in _Urth_ runs by angel power?

The ability of Green to affect the tide at its closest.

This remains puzzling. If Green == Lune, then the orbital mechanics get messed up ... I showed earlier that Green need not be nearer the Short Sun than Blue, but we need an orbit that puts them close together _only_ every -- uh
-- however many years it was, my little grey cells seem to have failed me; and we need an explanation of how Lune became massive enough to hold an atmosphere -- massive enough that Horn doesn't notice a difference in weight when he travels there.

Actually, we can handwave this latter point and say that it must have happened _before_ Severian's time, because it obviously must hold an atmosphere in order for the "forests of Lune" to exist at all; but the orbital problem remains. I do not suppose it intractable, but I'd like a solution.

Other problems remain:

- o If (as Wolfe has clearly stated) Severian's future is the future of the Green Man, then where are his people, (possibly the descendants of the Cargo?), and who are the Neighbors?
- o Why have all the creatures on Urth developed extra limbs while, apparently, remaining otherwise recognizable? (Handwaving about doubled chromosomes _won't_ solve this one.)
- o What kind of evolution accounts for the inhumis? The Neighbors? Those gosh-darned trees?
- o And what about Naomi?

Jerry Friedman — 10 Dec 2002, 21:41 · follows Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

--- Dan'I Danehy-Oakes <ddanehy at siebel.com> wrote:
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More (but not as good) evidence of a flood is the Neighbor in the tree that one of the twins sees through the Neighbors' ring. Somewhere late in RTW.

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dying/gestating black/white hole, and the red light he seeks is through that barrier. Since he travels with light, of course he is drawn to the spiritual birth of the New Sun.

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This is very appealing from the text, but it doesn't seem to fit with that interview that everybody's been quoting at <<http://www.ansible.demon.co.uk/cc/cc77.html>>.

"3. What was Typhon's purpose in launching the Whorl and was the Blue/Green [solar] system the intended destination? -- Knowing Typhon as I do, he probably had at least half a dozen purposes; but certainly one of the chief must have been self-aggrandizement -- to return human kind to the stars would be a very great thing indeed. Yes, the Blue-Green system was the intended destination."

Maybe I'm missing some way to reconcile it.

Elsewhere in the post, he wrote:

...

The ability of Green to affect the tide at its closest.

Any large object would do that.

This remains puzzling. If Green == Lune, then the orbital mechanics get messed up ... I showed earlier that Green need not be nearer the Short Sun than Blue, but we need an orbit that puts them close together _only_ every -- uh -- however many years it was, my little grey cells seem to have failed me; and we need an explanation of how Lune became massive enough to hold an atmosphere -- massive enough that Horn doesn't notice a difference in weight when he travels there.

Wasn't it six years? Anyway, I don't think we should worry about celestial mechanics. I'll bet Wolfe didn't.

Actually, we can handwave this latter point and say that it must have happened before Severian's time, because it obviously must hold an atmosphere in order for the "forests of Lune" to exist at all;

That strikes me as reasonable, not handwaving.

but the orbital problem remains. I do not suppose it intractable, but I'd like a solution.

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- o If (as Wolfe has clearly stated) Severian's future is the future of the Green Man, then where are his people, (possibly the descendants of the Cargo?), and who are the Neighbors?
- o Why have all the creatures on Urth developed extra limbs while, apparently, remaining otherwise recognizable? (Handwaving about doubled chromosomes won't solve this one.)

Those two seem to me to be very good questions.

- o What kind of evolution accounts for the inhumi? The Neighbors? Those gosh-darned trees?

The same that accounts for Lyle Alzabo, that is, whatever Wolfe wanted.

- o And what about Naomi?

Dorcas's mother?

Jerry Friedman

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 10 Dec 2002, 21:50 · follows Jerry Friedman

Jerry F knocks my reconciliation to the Blushas theory into a cocked hat.

How does the Whorl wind up back at Ushas? How does so much time pass? What odd relativistic effects stretch the thousand years or so we have been talking about to many thousands, maybe millions?

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Maybe I'm missing some way to reconcile it.

Mmmm. This is a difficulty, isn't it?

Marc, do you have an answer for this? Cause I sure don't.

Adam Stephanides — 12 Dec 2002, 14:52 · follows Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

on 12/4/02 10:15 AM, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes at ddanehy at siebel.com wrote:
How does the _Whorl_ wind up back at Ushas? How does so much time pass? What odd relativistic effects stretch the thousand years or so we have been talking about to many thousands, maybe millions?

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Hidden in plain sight. Marc, I hold the Blushas theory as fully plausible and highly probable. You da man.

I can't share Dan'I's enthusiasm; in fact, I see several strong objections to this scenario, apart from Wolfe's words in the interview.

1) The white hole, iirc, is a conduit of matter and/or energy from Yesod to our universe of Briah. There's no reason why flying into, or near, such an object should cause the Whorl to leap ahead thousands or millions of years in time while remaining in the same spatial position relative to Urth, but turned in the opposite direction.

2) This particular white hole emits enough energy to recharge the sun. Flying into it would lead to incineration rather than time travel. And simply flying near it should be no different from flying near any heavy body; after all the white sun passes close enough to Urth to cause catastrophic tidal effects, without flinging Urth into the future.

3) My recollection of the Long Sun books is sketchy, but there must have been some sort of navigational system on board the Whorl. If the events of

1) above had taken place, they would have been noticed, and the Whorl would not have continued upon its way as if nothing had happened. (One could argue that the events were noticed, and the Whorl decided to abort its journey and proceed to the nearest habitable system which just happened to be Ushas; but this would contradict Wolfe's words even more strongly.)

--Adam

Don Doggett — 14 Dec 2002, 22:31 · follows Adam Stephanides

Hi everyone,

I'm way way way behind on the list, but I have to put in my two cents and take a

counteroffensive to the "how do you explain this" contingent that argues Blue is not Ushas. While I agree that the burden of proof is generally on the Blushas group, as the default answer is the negative, I need a reasonable explanation for this: Why does time stop on the Whorl during Silk's enlightenment? And don't say that time doesn't stop. It does. As I argued to Crush (and Blattid agreed) since Silk was outside of time during his enlightenment he saw everything as it happened/happens - past present and future. So if he perceived time as stopped on the Whorl, it was stopped. And don't argue that Wolfe was careless in this. He knows full well what being outside of time means. If time didn't stop, the proper way to show Silk's enlightenment would have been for him to see his own prone body on the ball court as everyone huddled around him wondering what was going on. Silk's enlightenment and the stoppage of all action on the ball court are completely separate events. So again I ask, why did time stop on the Whorl?

Don diggity Doggett

Chris — 14 Dec 2002, 23:29 · follows Don Doggett

What any of this has to do with the Blushas theory is tenuous at best. Even if you assume the Whorl travelled at the speed of light, this does nothing to help establish the identity of the Whorl's destination or even what direction it was going. But I'll respond, since I don't see the question as valid.

Time stopped for Silk, or so he felt. Time is subjective, it has a frame of reference and appears to pass at different rates, respectively, when you compare them. Silk described what he experienced - this doesn't mean that everyone else experienced the same thing, and in fact no one else described experiencing anything of the sort at that time. If you're saying that Silk experienced a time stoppage because of acceleration to light speed, then you need to explain how Silk did so - and without disastrous physical consequences - while everyone else did not, and with no apparent motion between them.

Silk describes his own perceptions of being outside time - this narrative is being delivered by Horn and Nettle, based on what Silk told them. This in itself is not staggering, because mystics have been describing this phenomena from time immemorial, in much the same terms. Whether you believe Silk's enlightenment was mystical in nature or not, in order to describe it he pretty much has to fall back on the vocabulary of mysticism - and given his background, he naturally would.

On my first reading, and also on my second, I find no consistent problem with my own interpretation of the passage. Basically, I commit the shameful and extremely unwise sin of believing what Silk says. He was enlightened, he partook of the consciousness of the Outsider who stands outside of time, and saw - ever so fractionally - through the Outsider's eyes.

The joke at Dr. Crane's expense is **not** that his idea of Silk having had a stroke or embolism or whatever is necessarily incorrect. The joke on Dr. Crane is that he missed the **point** of the whole thing in the process of focussing on the physical phenomena involved, as if they made any difference - this, by the way, tastes of the humor of G.K. Chesterton, whose influence runs through the entire series. So, with a wink and a nod to Dr. Crane, if the mystical offends, then say he had a stroke if you like.

Chris

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I'm way way way behind on the list, but I have to put in my two cents and take a counteroffensive to the "how do you explain this" contingent that argues Blue is not Ushas. While I agree that the burden of proof is generally on the Blushas group, as the default answer is the negative, I need a reasonable explanation for this: Why does time stop on the Whorl during Silk's enlightenment? And don't say that time doesn't stop. It does. As I argued to Crush (and Blattid agreed) since Silk was outside of time during his enlightenment he saw everything as it happened/happens - past present and future. So if he perceived time as stopped on the Whorl, it was stopped. And don't argue that Wolfe was careless in this. He knows full well what being outside of time means. If time didn't stop, the proper way to show Silk's enlightenment would have been for him to see his own prone body on the ball court as everyone huddled around him wondering what was going on. Silk's enlightenment and the stoppage of all action on the ball court are completely separate events. So again I ask, why did time stop on the Whorl?

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Don Doggett — 16 Dec 2002, 01:32 · follows Chris

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

From: "Chris" <rasputin_ at hotmail.com>
To: <urth at urth.net>
Sent: Saturday, December 14, 2002 3:29 PM
Subject: Re: (urth) Marc's smoking gun?
What any of this has to do with the Blushas theory is tenuous at best.

Even

if you assume the Whorl travelled at the speed of light, this does nothing to help establish the identity of the Whorl's destination or even what direction it was going. But I'll respond, since I don't see the question as valid.

It has everything to do with the Blushas theory because it means the Whorl could have ended up anywhere at any time.

Time stopped for Silk, or so he felt.

This is simply not so. One cannot be both outside of time and frozen in time. They are qualitatively different. I'll illustrate. If time stopped for you in your house and I was somehow unaffected by this change and rearranged all of the furniture in your house you would experience it as a disconnect when time resumed. One instant your furniture would be the way you left it and the next it would be somewhere else. If I didn't rearrange your furniture you would never know time had stopped. No one rearranged any furniture on the Whorl. If you are outside of time as Silk claims to have been, you would be omniscient and would be able to witness the stoppage of time.

Silk describes his own perceptions of being outside time - this narrative is being delivered by Horn and Nettle, based on what Silk told them. This in itself is not staggering, because mystics have been describing this

phenomena from time immemorial, in much the same terms. Whether you believe Silk's enlightenment was mystical in nature or not, in order to describe it he pretty much has to fall back on the vocabulary of mysticism - and given his background, he naturally would.

No mystic to my recollection has ever described being outside of time as a stoppage of all motion. It has been described as being indistinguishable from an instant or an aeon but that is a far different perception. Again, I say that Wolfe is not so careless as to describe something as theologically fundamental as being outside of time as a stoppage of motion. It amazes me that everyone will split hairs over the correct distance in leagues from Blue to Green in relation to Urth to Lune, or whether inhumani can breed on the Whorl (which they certainly could if there are jungles) and various other scientific and pseudo scientific minutiae, but when it comes to something as theologically specific as the concept of being outside of time (which Silk, as a trained theologian, would not be careless about either) in a work which is at its heart theologically motivated the same rigors are set aside. So, to my mind, I remain unanswered.

Don

James Wynn — 16 Dec 2002, 16:26 · follows Don Doggett

Hey Don,

With the recent discussion on a Vironese name for Zx, it occurs to me that a good one for you might be Lycaon from the African hunting "dog." If you've read the Soldier books then you know it's a very Lupine word. Anyway...

"Dog"gett demands an answer:

As I argued to Crush (and Blattid agreed) since Silk was outside of time during his enlightenment he saw everything as it happened/happens - past present and future. So if he perceived time as stopped on the Whorl, it was stopped. And don't argue that Wolfe was careless in this. He knows full well what being outside of time means. If time didn't stop, the proper way to show Silk's enlightenment would have been for him to see his own prone body on the ball court as everyone huddled around him wondering what was going on. Silk's enlightenment and the stoppage of all action on the ball court are completely separate events. So again I ask, why did time stop on the Whorl?

Crush reiterates:

I said this before but I don't think I was clear enough. All time is stopped. Even "now." All time is moving. Even "now." It is all **relative** to your point of view. To a photon moving at the speed of light, Time hasn't stopped. It's non-existent. A photon from an extremely distant galaxy arrives at my desk here at precisely the instant it left its source but from my point of view it may have taken millions of years to arrive.

To say that Silk sees Time stopped due to his enlightened position OUTSIDE Time presupposes a relative perspective from WITHIN Time. This is why I said that Silk seeing Time stopped on the Whorl tells us **nothing** about the light-speed of the Whorl in any way. From his point of view he might have seen Time stopped or he might have seen moving at a million years per second, or backwards, or all at once (which seems to be how he saw it).

Wolfe **might** have used the Time stop as an **analogy** for the Whorl reaching of light speed but he **would not** be doing so based on technically accurate Einsteinian principles. So I would want evidence in text or a requirement in theme to even consider it.

Technically, traveling ****at**** light speed is an impossible paradox although some theorists have claimed FTL speed is not. The only way for your theory to carry is if they travel ****at**** light speed. Not possible and Wolfe surely knows it.

Anyway, reaching light-speed does not mean they exceeded light speed. I would think the Blushas theory would stand or fall regardless of whether your theory is accurate anyway.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 16 Dec 2002, 22:19 · follows James Wynn

Don Doggett wrote:

So again I ask, why did time stop on the Whorl?

Ummm ... I don't think it did. Silk had an experience which took place outside of Time, i.e., in Eternity, the perspective from which the Outsider (==the Christian God) views spacetime. Thus, while he experienced the passage of time in his personal consciousness, the "time" that passed for him had no meaning on the Whorl or, presumably, the rest of spacetime.

Think of it like this. Silk (like the rest of us) watches spacetime occurring in an orderly fashion, rather like someone participating in an interactive computer game, one where the player participates as a character. Then the phone rings -- the Outsider "calls," and the game goes into "pause" mode, while the Outsider tells Silk a number of things -- including, as it happens, some "spoiler" information about the game itself. When the call ends, the game comes out of "pause" mode, and continues exactly as it had been. No time has passed in the game, but no time has been skipped or lost in the game either; the time the player has spent on the call has nothing to do with the internal time of the game. Similarly, the seeming duration of Silk's enlightenment has nothing to do with the "passage" of "time" in the spacetime universe.

H'mmm: the Long Sun books may have a place as the first SF novels ever to successfully exploit both Einsteinian spacetime and the relationship Christianity describes between the realms of Time and Eternity.

My brain hurts.

Don Doggett — 17 Dec 2002, 03:12 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Crush writes,

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good one for you might be Lycaon from the African hunting "dog." If you've read the Soldier books then you know it's a very Lupine word. Anyway...

Don replies

Is that the kind of dog that grabs something and won't let it go until you hit it with a stick? In all seriousness though, I don't mind being wrong or being corrected but if I'm not satisfied with an answer, or feel like I haven't gotten one, I tend to get pesky. Hopefully not too pesky. I'm not sure that I'm ready to yield on the matter of Silk's enlightenment, but I do see the flaws in my argument and plan to mull it over. Thanks for the patient answers.