

apologies

The Urth list — 7 messages, 7 voices, 17 Dec 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3684>

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maa32 — 17 Dec 2002, 23:34

I really must apologize for my post yesterday. Wolfe only told me because, I am sure, some of my ideas were close and there was one big one that really bugged him - but I was doing a good job arguing it anyway, so he had to set me straight. I didn't mean to offend anyone. I should have sat on the information until I had Wolfe's permission to make it public, but I was very, very passionate about the Urth is Blue theory, because I believed in it 99.9%. I suppose I will go about procuring that permission and post his exact words as soon as I get it, but in the mean time I will respond to the speculation that has already arisen, and I really think we should encourage more, because Wolfe himself has said that there is nothing left to talk about when the author comes out and says the final word:

Nutria, I am sure that the passage with the missionaries in the garden was of prime importance, I don't know how related it may be to the one "fact" I know
- I can only speculate like everyone else, but I think that is important. As far as I know, no dimensional inversion has gone on in Short Sun, but I could be wrong.

Tami, I have already proposed a mechanism for the evolution of the green man: plant life hybridized with human life and produced an animal with chloroplasts (with access to the corridors of time, I think). I have proposed that he is the descendant of the Vanished People - a haploid generation to their diploid (or more) one. I think people normally die when trees eat them, but that something special happened with Horn and maybe Silk that allowed them to survive, but added the ability to feed autotrophically in some small amount, a trait which may be shared with other people in the near future of the text since the neighbors made a deal with Horn to "return". While I can draw some inferences, Mr. Wolfe has neither denied nor confirmed this mechanism, and it remains my own idea, open to debate like any other concept flying around on the list.

Just remember that people bring in outside comments and interviews all the time to defeat others ideas. I truly am sorry, but let me just say that there was some reason that Mr. Wolfe set me straight. I wasn't trying to hoard information - I would never have posted to the list again in that case, and smirked from around the corner. I was trying to comment on an idea that we have argued a WHOLE LOT that had been nixed by the author of the work. Indeed, I have half a mind to say that perhaps we should all ignore it and take a New Critical approach, saying that "he changed his mind and it doesn't affect the work of art." The other half of me, of course, believes that the author always has authority ... but I would never, ever, ever have relinquished the Blue is Urth theory without a word from Wolfe himself. I was really devastated to be WRONG. I hope you can understand that - it was my baby, just like the Horn in Babbie thing - which I am firmly convinced of from my own reading. I think I was close - closer than he thought we would get so soon - and that was enough for Wolfe to help me out a little. Marc Aramini

StoneOx17 — 18 Dec 2002, 08:44 · follows maa32

There's been a question that has, for some time, been circulating among mathematicians (and now I, like Jerry, have revealed my profession). Suppose you could learn the proof of the

Riemann hypothesis (it used to be Fermat's Last Theorem), but had to swear never to reveal it to anybody else the rest of your life. Would you agree? I suspect Marc now understands this dilemma quite well.

And guys, we're being too hard on Marc. I don't think he meant to tantalize us and drive us crazy with frustration. I think that after receiving the note, he was so excited he had to say something, and he didn't think very carefully about how it would go over on this list. And Marc -- I hope you can get permission from Wolfe to tell us about it eventually (although it'll be really interesting to see how close we can come if he asks you to keep it quiet for some time first).

-- Stone Ox

Josh Geller — 18 Dec 2002, 09:07 · follows StoneOx17

On Wed, 18 Dec 2002 StoneOx17 at aol.com wrote:
And guys, we're

Who we, white man?

being too hard on Marc.

He's holding up admirably, and I would like to encourage him not to give in to peer pressure.

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Andrew Bollen — 18 Dec 2002, 12:44 · follows Josh Geller

Stone Ox wrote:

There's been a question that has, for some time, been circulating among mathematicians (and now I, like Jerry, have revealed my profession). Suppose you could learn the proof of the Riemann hypothesis (it used to be Fermat's Last Theorem), but had to swear never to reveal it to anybody else the rest of your life. Would you agree? I suspect Marc now understands this dilemma quite well.

I stopped being a logician soon after I finished my PhD, stuck in a different but perhaps equally biting dilemma: Even if I did manage to prove FLT, would it actually make me care whether it was true or not? I guess I just wasn't cut out for the job. (A corollary concern: Even if I did manage to prove it, the prospect of this increasing my chances with attractive women seemed quite remote. Apologies for vulgarity.)

Anyway, just to say "Me too!" to Stone's comments re Marc. I hope that whatever Marc has may shed some light on what to me are the Large Mysteries of the cycle. I don't include Blue/Ushas among these - that's a "don't really care", FLT-type of question, unless it is intimately bound up with these.

There are several Large Mysteries, but for me the major one is the relationship between Silk, SilkHorn and Severian. I cannot help but see a progression, from Silk, to SilkHorn, to Severian. The raw Silk is something of a wet - unwilling or unable to really take the reins of leadership in a crisis, rushing to his woman & leaving his people leaderless and adrift; a Paris filling Moses' sandals Contrast this with SilkHorn - a veritable old testament judge, time after time mending fractured communities, dealing out robust justice.

Wolfe does this wonderfully, I think. We see Horn at that start of Short Sun, judge of his little family, strong and courageous, but limited in his potential. He dies on Green, when

circumstances overwhelm those limits. Melded with Silk, his strengths live on, but now as the strengths of a Hero, rather than an constrained within the confines of an ordinary mortal. All through Blue, I was thinking: Surely this yearning for Silk is an error; I cannot imagine Silk being of any use at all in this gritty, down-and-dirty world. I loved the way this view was both validated & transcended, in the development.

SilkHorn becomes a wonderful combination of Odin/Mercury, Heracles (not least in the yearning everybody has for his aid, in his supposed absence - so reminiscent of the Argonauts' yearning for the absent Heracles in the Argonautika; I would be amazed to find Wolfe did not intend this parallel), and Moses.

And this combination owes much to Horn. I cannot imagine Silk inspiring the kind of fear & awe that SilkHorn does, were he to lack the stern qualities of Horn.

Beyond Horn-qualities, there is an aspect to SilkHorn whose origin I do not quite understand. This is the magician aspect, which is exactly correct for a character who is part Hermes, part Moses (who was clearly a magician). This does not come from Horn, and I cannot see any evidence of it coming from Silk. From the text, it must be a gift in some way from the Vanished People, and of course there is a passage where a gift is explicitly granted. But the whole extended cycle is very intimately bound up with the idea of personalities and qualities layering on to each other, either by transmission or by recycling through time. It would be much more fitting for such a layering to be involved with this aspect also. Is there any evidence of SilkHorn melding with a Vanished Person?

Now to Severian. I think it is completely natural to see a progression from the Moses/judge figure SilkHorn to the sort-of/kind-of Christ figure Severian (no doubt there are theological problems with this, but I don't think that Wolfe worries about them, so we need not). We are led to understand that the raw Severian was refined into this role through recycling in time. My "gut feel" is that part of the process must have involved a melding with SilkHorn, somehow or other.

Perhaps this is wrong; the only concrete evidence I have for this is Wolfe's comment somewhere to the effect that Silk is a member of Severian's Order, for whatever that is worth. But surely there is a connection between the two, not just a matter of some circumstantial genetic argy-bargy as has been proposed, but with a deeper meaning. Otherwise, why have the characters inhabit the same fictional space at all? The apex of the whole cycle is Severian's role in the redemption of humanity. Anything not part of that story surely does not warrant two further multi-volume narratives. So I think that Long Sun/Short Sun must be seen as a "precursor", convoluted & twisted in time, of course, but not in theme.

Given that Long Sun and Short Sun are so much the story of the development and deeds of the Hero SilkHorn, the only theme I can see linking the whole cycle is the further development of that Hero into the quasi-Christ Severian.

Annoyingly, Wolfe has left out a precise map of the details, but he's like that :)

Michael Straight — 18 Dec 2002, 14:35 · follows Andrew Bollen

On Tue, 17 Dec 2002, maa32 wrote:

Indeed, I have half a mind to say that perhaps we should all ignore it and take a New Critical approach, saying that "he changed his mind and it doesn't affect the work of art." The other half of me, of course, believes that the author always has authority ...

I always look at it like this: If you're having a discussion about what the author intended, then a remark from the author can bring about a conclusion to the argument.

You can always then turn to an argument about what the author *ought* to have meant (i.e. that a different interpretation is better, more coherent, etc.), but some people aren't interested in that type of discussion.

Neither interest nor lack of interest in whether a given interpretation might be better than the author's intention should be labeled as Right or Wrong, unless you've discovered an objective aesthetic standard. In which case, please contact me right away.

-- Rostrum

James Wynn — 18 Dec 2002, 16:12 · follows Michael Straight

As my head began to clear (with the help of friends) I realized I should have handled this entirely off-list. The way I handled this was not right ethically, and it was strategically ham-fisted.

I do not believe Wolfe would have told Marc anything if he were not comfortable with it being publicized, but Marc doesn't want to be presumptuous, and that is an admirable attitude.

I wish I had not said anything on list, and if anyone cares a whit for my feelings in this regard, they will let this thread die.

<Mr. Mountebank Ethicist> Crush

Malco — 29 Dec 2002, 21:25 · follows James Wynn

Computers are not something I like to think about.
I hope this is better now
nastler

Har du problemer med din hjemmecomputer? Få hjælp med Yahoo!s PC-support på
<http://dk.shopping.yahoo.com/pcsupport/index.html>