

Black Sun, White Fountain

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 12 Feb 1998

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/373>

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Kieran Cleary — 12 Feb 1998, 15:20

Christopher Culver says:

if anything came into this universe from a lower universe (White Fountain),
an
equal amount would leave it to a higher universe (black hole).

er, that's kind of what I was getting at in a previous post.

So, speculation follows: the black hole that is destroying the Old Sun is
merely the necessary complement to the White Fountain. One has caused the
other, and are both different sides of the same coin that is Severian.

While I've been aware that there was a black hole in the Old Sun, and that the catalyst for the conversion of the Old Sun to New Sun is a White, I've never been able to imagine what exactly is supposed to happen when White Fountain meets Old Sun and why this event creates a young regenerated sun. It's a bit like the two scientists at the blackboard in Larson's cartoon: "and then a miracle happens".

So to be explicit: It seems plausible that the black hole in the Old Sun is
directly connected to the White Fountain. Energy/matter exiting through the black hole in the Old Sun appears from the mouth of the White Fountain. Which means that its not a Black Hole complete with singularity but instead both phenomena represent the two mouths of the same wormhole. This has some nice cyclical resonances if we can get over the dualist implications it has for Severian's character and nature, and also gives us a way to think about the rejuvenation of the Old Sun.

Kieran C.

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Michael Straight — 12 Feb 1998, 11:45 · follows Kieran Cleary

On Thu, 12 Feb 1998, Kieran Cleary wrote:

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Kind of like plugging a hole by putting the other end of the hole in the original hole? Or maybe a bathtub drain that leads back to the bathtub, refilling it?

If so, it might be more accurate to speak of Healing the Wounded Sun rather than replacing the Old Sun with the New Sun.

Except I still obviously don't understand anything because if the world Severian returns to is a whole new universe, then the Urth of the first four books never gets a New Sun, it just dies with the old one. And the new world, Ushas, shouldn't need a New Sun.

Time to reread.

-Rostrum

Jim Jordan — 12 Feb 1998, 13:56 · follows Michael Straight

At 03:20 PM 2/12/98 -0000, you wrote:

[Posted from URTN, a mailing list about Gene Wolfe's New Sun and other works]

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Kieran C.

I'm partial to Alga's suggestion that the black hole, the worm in the heart of the sun, relates to original sin symbolically. The white fountain relates symbolically to redemption and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (parallel the river flowing from Yesodh to Beriach, Revelation 22:1ff.). This seems very Wolfian to me, especially given the theological subtexts in the book. Now, IF there is an old Severian and a new Severian, then this might be like the old Adam and the New Adam (Jesus). In that case, it MIGHT be the case that the old Severian is guilty of

introducing the black hole (original sin), while the new Severian comes to undo that sin and restore the sun.

I'm still not sure about the two Severians, though.

Maybe Wolfe needs to write a "Book of the Old Sun" for us, about the old Severian?

Any thoughts on this?

Nutria