

Blue-Ushas; Green-Urth -- Problems

The Urth list — 9 messages, 8 voices, 05 Jan 2003

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3744>

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James Jordan — 05 Jan 2003, 01:23

At 05:47 PM 12/23/2002, Nigel wrote:

Marc wrote:

I've already proposed several mechanisms, and Nigel Price has come up with an interesting further interpretation of the star system that is fascinating and may explain the theme of the doubled limbs.

I take GW's comment to Marc very seriously, and believe that it is true, at least at a symbolic level. Green is, in part, a satire on greedy, warring, self-destructing Urth/Earth. Here is part of my recent off-list correspondence with Marc on the subject.

Thought #1: GW told you that Green is Urth, but that doesn't preclude the possibility that Blue is Ushas.

Yeah. I'm thinking along those lines also. But shucks, I was so sure that my "another bangnab" theory was right! Well, there you are.

Anyway, let's run with this, and see where it might lead. Assuming that GW was not joking, and also that his note was precise: Green is URTH, not Ushas. If it is, then Ushas must be around somewhere, and must be Blue.

One can see possibilities here. The city of the sewers is Nessus, but so is the underwater city on Blue.

Green is analogous to the old pre-gospel world that continues alongside the New Creation inaugurated by Jesus. It has been suggested that the Neighbors are like the pre-Christian philosophers, the inhum like pagan gentiles in need of redemption, and the invaders from the Whorl (humans) are like the Christian world. The Whorl itself (especially Viron) is like Judaism, and Silk is like Jesus (for his narrative tracks the gospels pretty well, and then moves into Acts and Revelation).

For Wolfe, the Christian world (Blue) is a sorry mess, but not as sorry as mess as the world outside of Christendom, which invades Christendom (like the inhum) and needs to be redeemed by Christians behaving as they should (like Silk).

As a grid -- one among others -- this works okay whether Green/Blue are Urth/Ushas or not. Here are some agenda items/problems for the thesis, assuming Wolfe was not joking.

1. I think what we need to look for is an indication of how, or an indication THAT, the coming of the New Sun split Urth into Old Urth and New Ushas, and split Severian as well (since he seems to be on Green/Urth, as Marc has pointed out, and we know that he was on Ushas).

Hmmm. Severian is the New Sun in a sense, but he is also the Representative of Urth, being made of Urthish matter. If Severian splits, then possibly Urth splits also. Any hint anywhere of Severian splitting? We know that there are other Severians, but I'm not recalling any notion of splitting....

2. Time travel back to Severian's day is still a problem. Maybe I've missed the solution and it has been posted already. There needs to be a time-traveller along on the astral journey for it to be a time trip. Have we found such a person, on or off camera? Did Silk's "eternal moment" at

the beginning of the narrative make him someone who could be an anchor for time travel?

3. What was Typhon aiming for? He was aiming for Blue/Green; we know that. It makes sense to me that he might have sent the Whorl in a large circle to come back to Urth/Lune, where he could wake up as a two-headed god to be worshipped by people trained to do so by Pas. But that assumes Green is Lune, which we are rejecting in this hypothesis. Could Typhon have known not only of the future flood, but also of the future splitting? It seems to me that he would have to have known this, for this hypothesis to work.

4. Why and HOW do both planets become planets of intelligent plants? Some of Marc's old stuff might play in here, of course.

5. What happened to the humans who lived through the coming of the New Son on Green-Urth and Blue-Ushas? Severian still seems to be haunting Green in human form. What of the rest? Did they "evolve" into Neighbors and maybe also inhumi? How? And, is there evidence?

6. What is the meta-narrative underpinning? Silk is a Christ figure (not a Moses figure, Biblically, save as Moses is a type of Christ

-- don't be fooled by the word "exodus," but see Luke 9:31, where what Jesus accomplished at Jerusalem is called his "exodus" -- something Wolfe surely knows, having heard this passage read annually at mass). Are we to think of Severian as more of a Noah figure, once we read all 12 volumes? Does it finally come out something like this?:

a. An old pre-flood world, where the sons of god (interpreted as space beings) are marrying (interfering with) the daughters of men (human beings), and the world has become corrupt.

b. A new Noah brings a flood.

c. The world divides into higher gentiles (Neighbors) and raw barbarians (inhumi), while the Jews have a separate history (the Whorl) leading down to a savior (Silk).

d. The new people emerge from the Whorl (Christians) and now must enter and deal with the twin worlds of the gentiles (Blue-Ushas/Green-Urth). The higher gentiles, the philosophers (Neighbors) yield to the new Christians (the humans).

e. But I can see lots of objections to this, and so doubtless can you all.

Anyway, just some thoughts, and just for fun.

You see, I think it possible that Wolfe's comment was serious, but not literal. Jesus took bread and said, "This IS my body." Well, as theologians (and recently others) have argued for centuries, how you take this depends on what the meaning of "is" is. Green IS Urth. Sure it is. If you want to see what Urth was like before the New Sun, take a look at Green. Not Blue but Green is symbolically parallel to Urth. Maybe that's all Gene meant.

But if he meant more, it's fun to try and track it down.

Nutria

Chris — 05 Jan 2003, 02:46 · follows James Jordan

Thank you James, for your comments; I'd never seen the interview you were referring to, and that probably saved me some headaches - though I may try to develop the theory anyway, just as an exercise (and who knows, it could be right in its own way, still).

Re: "No, no, NO, GREEN is Urth", I thought I'd add this on (from the joke angle), though it's not much of a joke unless you're an engineer. In various types of power cords, there tend to be three wires of different colors. The colors mean different things, depending on what kind of wiring it is, but as far as I know there is almost always a green, and it corresponds to: "Earth". (the others being "line", and "neutral")

I am interested in your points on the meta-narrative. I am uncomfortable going too far with the Silk-as-a-Christ-figure line, though I can see where it's coming from. To simplify what would otherwise be an overly-wordy post on my part, in essence I feel that if Wolfe had intended Silk as (primarily) a Christ-figure, we would have a whole different story on our hands.

I don't think Severian matches a Noah either; Noah wasn't the agent of God's flood, he simply was chosen to survive it and to make preparations to preserve life for after the flood. Severian in contrast actively precipitates his flood, and doesn't really do much of anything to prepare or to mitigate its destruction. I'd call him a Shiva-figure, but there are probably better descriptions.

Perhaps all planets, with their cycles of creation and destruction, are Urth (Ushas, Blue, Earth, and Green)?

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Jeff Veyera — 05 Jan 2003, 04:53 · follows Chris

Chris wrote:

Re: "No, no, NO, GREEN is Urth", I thought I'd add this on (from the joke angle), though it's not much of a joke unless you're an engineer. In various types of power cords, there tend to be three wires of different colors. The colors mean different things, depending on what kind of wiring it is, but as far as I know there is almost always a green, and it corresponds to: "Earth". (the others being "line", and "neutral")

Teflon replies:

Well, we all know Gene IS an engineer, so that little in-joke may actually fit.

Having re-read the Red Sun whorl visit portions of RttW again (esp. Chap 17) some things gelled:

1. The reference to Green made by Hoof is pretty damning to the overall Green-Blue as Ushas-Lune hypothesis. At first, I was struck by this passage, made while on the ship in the Red Sun whorl: "Green came up, bigger and brighter than we ever see it on Blue." But then, later, Hoof says, "Green was up above the main-mast, and it seemed like if we put up the main top it would touch it. Our Green is not as big as theirs, but ours was plenty bright." Then, apparently back on Blue: "Out on the water there were the stars and quite a bit of light from Green; for nighttime it was really pretty bright, but there was sort of a shadow between the side and the water. Green was halfway up over to starboard."

Hide was born on Blue. He has never known any other place, until the journey to the Red Sun whorl. It seems natural that he would describe what he saw there in terms of what he knew from his own experience---thus he recognizes the towers of Nessus for the landers they truly were, and sees Lune as a larger, brighter version of Green.

2. We've discussed the whole astral travel issue a lot. The question arose as to how they could go to the Red Sun whorl after the visit with Duke Rigoglio. Silkhorn explains, "I should explain to you both why we cannot go to the sea [on Urth] directly, as I did to Scylla several days ago. In order to go to a place we must have with us someone who has been there, or at least been in the area. I don't know why that is so, but that is how it seems to be. I can go to Green---as I have at times---because I have been there in the flesh. I can go to the Red Sun Whorl, too, as we did a few minutes ago, because Jahlee and I went there in the company of Duke Rigoglio of Soldo. He had been a Sleeper on the Whorl, and so had been there in the flesh. I cannot take us to the sea there, because I have never been on it. Scylla has, to be sure, but ultimately Scylla is not among us." This travel is clearly spatial rather than temporal---when he went to Green, it was Green at that moment. Likewise, his visit to the Red Sun Whorl is most likely at the equivalent time rather than in the past or future. When Silkhorn references the 300 year journey of the Whorl relative to the time passage on the Red Sun whorl, he notes, "It's been much longer than that" and later indicates his belief that it had been many centuries since Cilinia/Scylla had died. In Chap 19, he tells Juganu, "Think of a whorl so old that even its seasons have worn out, a whorl on which they had jungles like yours once, with wide-leafed plants and many flowers and huge trees. It is too cold for that in our time..." Note the "our" time there---Silkhorn and company are travelling in space, not time.

Andy Robertson — 05 Jan 2003, 10:18 · follows Jeff Veyera

Oh dear. Yes, I think that is the reason Wolfe said this. I had forgot he is an engineer.

hartshorn

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

From: "Chris" <rasputin_ at hotmail.com>

Re: "No, no, NO, GREEN is Urth", I thought I'd add this on (from the joke angle), though it's not much of a joke unless you're an engineer. In various

types of power cords, there tend to be three wires of different colors.

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Joe Cilluffo — 05 Jan 2003, 15:00 · follows Andy Robertson

Nutria wrote:

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Anyway, let's run with this, and see where it might lead. Assuming that GW was not joking, and also that his note was precise: Green is URTH, not Ushas. If it is, then Ushas must be around somewhere, and must be Blue.

One can see possibilities here. The city of the sewers is Nessus, but so is the underwater city on Blue.

Green is analogous to the old pre-gospel world that continues alongside the New Creation inaugurated by Jesus. It has been suggested that the Neighbors are like the pre-Christian philosophers, the inhumī like pagan gentiles in need of redemption, and the invaders from the Whorl (humans) are like the Christian world. The Whorl itself (especially Viron) is like Judaism, and Silk is like Jesus (for his narrative tracks the gospels pretty well, and then moves into Acts and Revelation).

For Wolfe, the Christian world (Blue) is a sorry mess, but not as sorry as mess as the world outside of Christendom, which invades Christendom (like the inhumī) and needs to be redeemed by Christians behaving as they should (like Silk).>>

First off, wow, excellent synthesis of it all!

<< 1. I think what we need to look for is an indication of how, or an indication THAT, the coming of the New Sun split Urth into Old Urth and New Ushas, and split Severian as well (since he seems to be on Green/Urth, as Marc has pointed out, and we know that he was on Ushas).>>

I'll take a stab at the HOW, as your synthesis above seems to be an explanation of the THAT. :)
Regarding how it happened, could it be that the same bifurcation that Burgondofara experienced also happened to the planets themselves?

<<Any hint anywhere of Severian splitting? We know that there are other Severians, but I'm not recalling any notion of splitting....>

What about Silkhorn being an "aspect" of Severian? His walking around unconsciously garbed like a torturer and carrying the torturer's sword suggests this, and could be evidence of a split of Sev.

<< 3. What was Typhon aiming for? He was aiming for Blue/Green; we know that. It makes sense to me that he might have sent the Whorl in a large circle to come back to Urth/Lune, where he could wake up as a two-headed god to be worshipped by people trained to do so by Pas. But that assumes Green is Lune, which we are rejecting in this hypothesis. Could Typhon have known not only of the future flood, but also of the future splitting? It seems to me that he would have to have known this, for this hypothesis to work.>>

Hmmm, that's a little tougher, but I have two musings on the subject. First, we all assume that Typhon was aiming for Blue and Green, yet that is not necessarily the case. He launched the Whorl, but may not have launched it with any specific destinations in mind -- it doesn't seem to be beyond the technology of the Whorl or its Crew to travel until they think they have found suitable planets or until the deterioration of the Whorl forces them to pick the next best thing.

GW has stated that Typhon did not know that the inhumi were on Blue/Green, so perhaps Blue/Green were not the specific destinations planned for the Whorl (otherwise, how could he have picked them and not known about the inhumi?). So perhaps the Whorl itself ended up (sort of) where it began without knowing.

My second rumination also has to do with Typhon and his intentions.

Much has been made over the change in character from the megalomaniacal Typhon to the more beneficent Pas, who is the kind of guy who if he loves something sets it free (to paraphrase Quetzal's Hallmark moment). Perhaps this was GW's twist on the old saw that the Lord works in mysterious ways. Typhon may unwittingly have been the instrument of the Increate (that is, God) to carry out His will. GW has described Sev and the NS as the story of a Christian, not Christ, and of a bad man becoming good. Similarly, maybe the SS/LS are in part the story of a bad man (Typhon) doing good and carrying out, however unintentionally, the Lord's will. And if that is so, that could explain how the Whorl ends up at Blue/Green Urth/Ushas even if Typhon did not know of the future flood and splitting. He did not have to know that the splitting would take place, he simply had to send the Whorl out and the Crew brought it back (probably unwittingly themselves) "home" afterwards, carrying out the Lord's will to repopulate the Urth after the flood a la Moses on the Ark. That part carries out the Lord's will. As for Pas' plan, well, the Crew continue to try to carry it out and the end of RTTW when they reboard the Whorl and launch it into space in search of a planet to colonize.

<< 4. Why and HOW do both planets become planets of intelligent plants? Some of Marc's old stuff might play in here, of course.>>

OK, I plea for help here. Where are the intelligent plants??? I've read the whole NS/LS/SS troika and haven't seen any intelligent plants. Are the inhumi "plants gone bad" and I'm just missing it? I'm sure there is something fundamental here I did not pick up on, please help!

<< 5. What happened to the humans who lived through the coming of the New Son on Green-Urth and Blue-Ushas? Severian still seems to be haunting Green in human form. What of the rest? Did they "evolve" into Neighbors and maybe also inhumi? How? And, is there evidence? >>

I think the evidence for this are all the parallels that Horn unwittingly draws between the Neighbor culture and "ours."

<< e. But I can see lots of objections to this, and so doubtless can you all.>>

I agree, but the answer to that I think probably is that GW was borrowing themes and allegories instead of simply recasting event for event from the Bible, much the way he plucked Yesod and Briah from Kabbalistic theories without meaning to borrow it wholesale.

<<Anyway, just some thoughts, and just for fun.>>

Very fun! I really enjoyed your introductory weaving together of it all!

- Shell

Gareth Jelley — 05 Jan 2003, 19:46 · follows Joe Cilluffo

Re: "No, no, NO, GREEN is Urth", I thought I'd add this on (from the joke angle), though it's not much of a joke unless you're an engineer. In various

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"Earth". (the others being "line", and "neutral")

I thought the brown wire was the 'earth' wire... But I'm not an electrician...

Best,

G.

matthew.malthouse — 06 Jan 2003, 11:37 · follows Gareth Jelley

On 05/01/2003 19:46:30 Gareth Jelley wrote:
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Wire it that way and you'll blow the breakers. Here in Eurp brown is conventionally live.

Matthew

Andrew Bollen — 06 Jan 2003, 15:53 · follows matthew.malthouse

Nutria wrote:
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you want to see what Urth was like before the New Sun, take a look at
Green. Not Blue but Green is symbolically parallel to Urth. Maybe that's
all Gene meant.

This reminds me of something I posted a while ago here on Roman/Byzantine circus factions. In the hippodrome, there were four team colors: blue, green, white and red. The Blues and the Greens were the major teams; the others were somehow subsidiary, White being a junior partner to Blue and Red to Green. You could see a parallel with the four whorls in LS/SS (with White corresponding to the starcrosser whorl). The thought would be that Green and Urth go together because they are both deeply screwed up, requiring some major intervention to set right; whereas The Whorl and Blue just need some tinkering.

I would bet quite large amounts of \$\$\$\$ that Wolfe had nothing like this circus faction scheme in mind, but I like it anyway :) As a bonus, I can link it back to Janus/Quadrifons - his four faces

(according to some) apparently represented the four seasons; and some people think the four circus colors did also.

Gareth Jelley — 06 Jan 2003, 22:26 · follows Andrew Bollen

From: <matthew.malthouse at guardian.co.uk>

Wire it that way and you'll blow the breakers. Here in Eurp brown is conventionally live.

:o)

See, I told you I wasn't an electrician ;o)

Anon,

G.