

various miscellany

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 06 Mar 2003

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Lisa Schaffer-Doggett — 06 Mar 2003, 06:28

Hi everyone, Don here. I'm back from a long hiatus and I thought I'd throw out a few odds and ends in no particular order of importance. First in my head, first from my fingers. Does Typhon recognize Severian when they meet in *Sword of the Lictor*? I think it's a pretty sure yes:

' "The Conciliator," I said . . .

"Yes, that was one of his names. Do you know where he is now?"

"He has been dead for many chiliads."

"And yet he remains, I think?"

In the context of the paragraph (and on a second reading of the books) Typhon is obviously toying with Sev. and feeling him out to see if he really doesn't realize that they've met before. IMO of course.

Second. "Green is Urth." Is it a joke? Well, maybe it is, but sometimes the best way to hide the truth is in a joke. Here's another joke if Green is Urth: Wolfe has gone from a moon made out of green cheese to a blue moon. Don't underestimate the power of the pun. But more significantly, if Blue is Lune then it makes perfect sense why the Mother is there. The moon is the provenance of the Goddess. And another thing that I must address: Green is not "Hell". Blue is. Look beyond the superficialities of climate. Every place on Blue, without exception, that the narrator visits is beset with some combination of lawlessness, slavery, warfare, corruption, dishonesty, or violence. Every one. Now let's go to Green, and Sinew's village. The visitors (Silkhorn and Jahlee and whoever else) are welcomed, cautiously but courteously, and not imprisoned. They find a thriving and fairly harmonious society, where Sinew's second in command is a Trivigaunti! It's not perfect but it's certainly not hell. In fact, it's probably a Green man's paradise.

Third. I've (finally!) finished reading *The White Goddess*. I have never found myself obsessed with a particular author before, but Graves is insanely incredible. Even if everything in that book is historically incorrect it is still a work of absolute genius and even more remarkable in its creativity. But man, it's a slow read. Still I urge anyone interested in going down Wolfe's rabbit hole to read it. When Wolfe isn't using its ideas to his own end, he's often reacting and replying to them.

Third and a half. While reading *The White Goddess*, I came across this passage and I started thinking about the mechanics of the New Sun. By that I mean Severian is himself, the man, but he is also the literal New Sun, the white fountain. How does this happen, other than Tzadkiel snapping his fingers and saying it's so. Well, I've found an interesting possibility, as far fetched and unlikely as it may seem, even to me. It's on pp. 480-81 of TWG: "A New Zealand atomic scientist assured me the other day that Christianity had received its heaviest blow in 1945: a fundamental tenet of the Church, namely that Jesus's material body was immaterialized at the Ascension had, he said, been spectacularly disproved at Hiroshima and Nagasaki - anyone with the least scientific perception must realize that any such break-down of matter would have caused an explosion large enough to wreck the entire Middle East." Could it cause a release of energy large enough to create a white fountain? Any takers for the pros or the cons?

Thanks for your time.
Don Doggett