

Whorl <> Second Empire

The Urth list — 5 messages, 4 voices, 16 Aug 2003

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4164>

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 16 Aug 2003, 03:10

Whoops, I missed one point from before, when Andrew Bollen wrote:
- Typhon in New Sun at least desires to rule an inter-stellar empire, and offers Sev the job of satrap of Earth. How does this make any sense without superluminal travel?

Andrew, for starters you seem to be insisting that Typhon's post-Urth capital will be in another star system. I, for one, have always assumed it would be on Skuld, our Venus terraformed.

Sure, all this cool stuff is available to non-Urthians, and quite likely to New Sun Typhon, but there's no hint that it's anywhere on the Whorl. I suppose you could say it's there, but unused, given Typhon's premature demise.

We are not communicating here. I did not mean to suggest that there was an ansible on the Whorl; I tried to say that an ansible network would ease the ruling of an STL empire. I did not mean to suggest that Typhon, the original, biological man, would personally visit the colony set up by the Whorl; I did try to say that the colonization project was a hedge, so that even if his empire should fail, there would be this mark he had made on the galaxy in the form of a colony world that worshipped his computer-version persona. Just as the mountain was carved =should he die.=

But I don't think New Sun Typhon would be satisfied with a STL empire.
Doesn't he say somewhere that he and his followers returned from the stars?
If I've got that right, did they come back frozen in a slow-boat? Does this story of his return really square very well with Roger's description of Typhon's rise in IGJ? In Claw (?) Typhon talks of delaying his decision to leave Urth too long - was he planning to freeze himself on a slow-boat? is his digital presence on the Whorl a kind of poor-man's alternative?

I don't recall a passage about Typhon and his followers returning from the stars. All this talk of freezing is kind of beside the point. If Typhon did come from another star system I'm fairly certain it wasn't nearly as far as the Blue/Green system is (iirc it seems like 500 to 900 light years away).

Obviously, all of these things which look like mis-matches to me can be glued together, but I think it needs some fairly sticky chewing gum to do it.

Or we could look at your unexamined assumptions and see how strongly the text supports them. Or not.

So why the Whorl? Another hedge, I say. While all the other stuff is conquer and control, this other project will be "pure" colonization.

But at some point the : "real" Typhon is going to want to take control - what's the point of having even an empire if you don't get to rule it? Will he have to assert his authority over his digital avatar via ansible? Of course, you can postulate some kind of built-in thingy giving real Typhon authority over digital Pas, but I don't find it very convincing.

Again, the Whorl is a =different= project from the Second Empire project. Colony <> Second Empire. I don't agree with the notion that Typhon plans to visit. If he thinks he will be immortal, which seems plausible, then he will be pleased to hear from them.

I don't understand this point. If Typhon can stock the Whorl with many thousands of chem soldiers, why does he not use them on Urth? Perhaps they were intended just for the Whorl, but again I find this quite dubious. Why should it be so?

We have different perspectives, clearly. I thought that the Whorl project was a contributing factor in the =stripping= of resources from Urth, =such that= chems and the like could no longer be supported at the level that passes for "living." (You seem to be ignoring the obvious non-Jonas examples of machine life =seen= on Urth, that is, the mountain-carvers, but who can blame you? They are very enigmatic.)

As for the nature of the battle on Urth, my impression was that Urth at that point was a palace-grounds, and the battle was a family-fight with all the limited resources at hand. The Whorl had already left by the time the rebellion began -- in fact, as you pointed out, =all= the functional ships were gone by that time.

=mantis=

matthew.malthouse — 18 Aug 2003, 08:16 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

On 16/08/2003 04:10:54 Michael Andre-Driussi wrote:
I, for one, have always assumed it [Typhon's new capital post re-awakening]
would be on Skuld, our Venus terraformed.

Why?

Matthew

Michael Andre-Driussi — 18 Aug 2003, 17:41 · follows matthew.malthouse

Matthew quoted me and wrote:
I, for one, have always assumed it [Typhon's new capital post re-awakening]
would be on Skuld, our Venus terraformed.

Why?

I guess I'm just a sucker for Thea's story about Skuld as "the world of the future." <g>

It does seem to me that Skuld would be the planet in the solar system most likely to be in relatively good shape (material resources, solar insolation, etc.). But this is pure conjecture, based upon what little we know about the duration of posthistorical resource exploitation (Skuld could very well be as stripped as Urth is).

I also think that Typhon is offering Severian Urth, not the entire solar system. Implying that there will be an autarch of Verthandi and an autarch of Skuld, etc. Which brings us to the question: how many of the several worlds he claims to have controlled were located in the solar system itself, and how much interstellar reach did he ever have, anyway?

As for the scope of the First Empire, there is talk in the text, iirc, of the humans leaping from galaxy to galaxy. So if we take this for truth, then it is an intergalactic empire.

There does seem to be FTL travel, but in that can of worms it seems to me that one must

establish a model of how it works, because it does not seem to be as simple as a Star Trek warp drive. I sense that the space ships (the tenders) are as innocent of acceleration as Le Guin's starships: theirs are reactionless drives that go from the ground to the sky in the twinkle of an eye, without crushing the human passengers into goo or leaving a radioactive crater. And yet, for all of that, the starship (which seems to operate under similar if not the same rules) still takes months of travel before it crosses over into hyperspace.

When they sail out of Briah, is that literally the Grand Gnab they are seeing, or is it just a visual effect? If it is real then the ship is something like a quasar that avoids the monobloc, and travel back to Briah, at any point in its timeline, becomes problematic. Or so it seems to me.

A detail which causes no end of arguments is the nature of timeflow in hyperspace. I think it flows in a direction opposite to that in Briah, so that rather than "instantaneous" interstellar travel one gets something more like "retrogressive" interstellar travel -- you arrive long before you ever left. (Some trips could be made to seem Star Trek warp-like by juggling the ride up to Yesod and the ride down from Yesod: these periods of pseudoacceleration will always be in Briah (i.e., positive) time, so the months of the ride up will be mirrored by the months of pseudodeceleration

-- added to the timeflow perceived by the crew, of course, but possibly close to instantaneous to a viewer outside of the Ship.) A side effect of this would mean that the galaxy becomes populated by Earth in the increasingly deep past, and far travelers who return to Earth will find themselves in the far past. But this on the surface contradicts what we think we know about Jonas, who is presented as a sailor from the past, washed up on Urth's shores by relativistic effects (yet as I say, these effects will come into play as the Ship is riding down from Yesod).

I have said too much.

=mantis=

Alice K. Turner — 19 Aug 2003, 00:38 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

mantis said:

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Agreed, and I'm sure Nutria does too; it's a clear New Testament echo. And I don't think he had any interstellar reach whatsoever; there's no proof that hierodules were visiting in his time even if "living backward."

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I have said too much.

No, you haven't. It's just a consequence of GW's having tried to cobble several sf traditions together that sensibly shouldn't be cobbled. NS not only has FtL effects, but the ship, through some post-Einsteinian doodah that makes my head spin can get there before it started. LS has traditional (in sf) generational travel, and seems pretty well thought out. SS has instantaneous magic flights to other planets that hark back to Burroughs. What's not to be confused about? Sometimes I think you guys spend a lot more time than the author did trying to make sense of all this.

Matthew Malthouse, that was a nice post about Hindustani, Hindi and Urdu. I've tried to explain this myself (lived in India for a while) but never so clearly.

Marc, I love the last volume of Proust's RoTP--just about makes it worth slogging through the rest <g>.

-alga

Michael Buice — 19 Aug 2003, 01:05 · follows Alice K. Turner

On Monday, August 18, 2003, at 07:38 PM, Alice K. Turner wrote:
No, you haven't. It's just a consequence of GW's having tried to cobble several sf traditions together that sensibly shouldn't be cobbled. NS not only has FtL effects, but the ship, through some post-Einsteinian doodah that makes my head spin can get there before it started. LS has traditional (in sf) generational travel, and seems pretty well thought out. SS has instantaneous magic flights to other planets that hark back to

Burroughs.

What's not to be confused about? Sometimes I think you guys spend a lot more time than the author did trying to make sense of all this.

IMHO, Wolfe "cobbled" rather well. One of the many things I appreciate about Gene Wolfe's writing is the way he deals with science. Since none of the major "authors" in the Sun universe are scientists themselves, we're to expect some confusion in the relation of the deeper workings of things. I've always been impressed with how realistic most of it seems, having been filtered through the "lay-brains" of Severian, Horn, etc. Ever read a "popular" book on Quantum Mechanics? I've yet to see one get it right. I've NEVER seen any science fiction in which it's down right (that is, when people try to dig deeper than Severian ever does).

In this particular case, however, I'm neither surprised nor confused about the existence of these different technologies. In our own world, we have rockets yet I've still seen the occasional horse and buggy plopping down the road.

Michael