

Jonas & Hethor & Thecla

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 24 Mar 1998

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Alice Turner — 24 Mar 1998, 08:51

Quotes from C. Culver and Tony Ellis

Oh, I don't think anyone is arguing that KLS's name is not Korean, but Mantis believes the language of *Jonas* is not Korean.

The passage in Conciliator (Chapter X) where Jonas apparently tells Severian something of his origins is interesting. He says that his father was a craftsman, talks of having two parents, and of his home being a seacoast town.

Presumably his "craftsman" father was the engineer who built him. But two parents? Who was the other? Another engineer perhaps, or maybe this is an oblique reference to the machinery with which he was made. Another possibility is that two android parents can build a child, as they do in the Long Sun books.

My point is, Jonas could be sticking very closely to the truth, in which case we could assume that the southern seacoast home story is also as good as true. It's another argument against Jonas being speaking Asian, basically. He could have picked up such a language later in life, of course, but I still have faith in my computer-speak theory.

I've just reread Conciliator, chapters XIII-XVII (, the notules, the anteroom, the escape and Jonas's disappearance into the mirrors. And I think that wherever Jonas grew up, it was not on Urth, though it may have been on Earth (he knows "Alice" and the Theseus story, though this could simply point to a good ship's library). Every time he refers to Urth, it is as a port, not as his home. Nor do I think he is Korean, though he may be able to speak it when he is reminded of KLS (Wolfe probably speaks some himself, from his own time in Korea).

There are parts in the books when Urth does seem to be our Earth grown ancient--for example when it is noted that the planets have been renamed because it seemed unseemly that the red one was named for war. Or at the Robert and Marie exhibit. But if this were so, Inire's mirrors would be time-travel devices if Jonas were to get to his goal, and they seem instead to be to be gates to another place (yes, I know how trite the "parallel universe" thing sounds, but really, what else?) Robert and Marie, too, could have come from that place. Hethor's beasts seem to come from yet another place, but that could certainly be from somewhere in Yesod.

Jonas is entirely familiar with what the mirrors do, so he must have used them before.

On another subject, It has always bothered me that Severian seems to take for granted that his relationship with the inner Thecla is unique. But the alzabo drug would be expected to cause a similar effect in everyone who ate that meal. Moreover, Vodalus & Co. have done this before, with other corpses. I suppose that one could explain this by saying that the alzabo effect is

ordinarily powerful but temporary ("a fellow mortal who will live again--strongly, for a time--in us")---like an LSD experience, say---but that the presence of the Claw, or something in his heritage, somehow imprints Thecla on Sev in a unique way. Nevertheless, this isn't explained, and it's weird to think of a couple of dozen or so people all experiencing Thecla the way Sev does.

-alga-

Michael Straight — 24 Mar 1998, 10:39 · follows Alice Turner

On Tue, 24 Mar 1998, Alice Turner wrote:

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I wonder if there could be some difference attributable to Severian's memory. Perhaps for everyone else the sharing of Thecla is a fleeting thing, but since Severian can't forget, Thecla is always with him. Have you read "The Hemmingway Hoax" by Joe Haldeman? A nifty novella featuring a protagonist with an eidetic memory that has an interesting side effect.

Except that all the autarchs are supposed to share all the memories of the previous ones. So we could still save the idea if the autarch's alzabo is more powerful, so that autarchs always have the experience that Severian only has with Thecla because of his perfect memory.

-Rostrum

Tony Ellis — 24 Mar 1998, 15:21 · follows Michael Straight

24/03/98

15:23

RE>Jonas & Hethor & Thecla

Alga wrote:

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that wherever Jonas grew up, it was not on Urth, though it may have been on Earth (he knows "Alice" and the Theseus story, though this could simply point to a good ship's library). Every time he refers to Urth, it is as a port, not as his home.

Yes. Jonas is a sailor, so it would be natural for him to regard a ship, or perhaps all space, as his home.

<snip>

...But if this were so, Inire's mirrors would be time-travel devices if Jonas were to get to his goal, and they seem instead to be to be gates to another place (yes, I know how trite the "parallel universe" thing sounds, but really, what else?)

I've always assumed that Jonas simply escapes to a -place- where he can be repaired, rather than a time. (A place in our universe, that is, rather than some other.) One of the worlds of the Hierodules, perhaps, or some other planet that still has a viable technology.

Robert and Marie, too, could have come from that place.

I think if they come from anywhere it's the past rather than a parallel Earth, since it's implied pretty strongly that the Botanical Gardens extend into Urth's past. But don't forget that they may simply be "chant-caught" contemporaries of Severian. I've always loved that scene for its tantalising ambiguity.

...the presence of the Claw, or something in his heritage, somehow imprints Thecla on Sev in a unique way. Nevertheless, this isn't explained,

Hmm, I could swear that there's at least one point where Sev or someone -does- assert that the Claw resurrected Thecla within him. But of course I have no idea where <g>. I'll start hunting.