

bluegreenandcerberus

The Urth list — 10 messages, 6 voices, 28 Aug 2005

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4495>

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walter read — 28 Aug 2005, 22:08

Have you read The Book oh the Short Sun?!?!?! have you read 5th head of cerberus?!?!?! well do you know the connection? I just fininshed cerberus and im shocked that noone has brought this up for speculation. I suppose i could be... no im sure of it! if anyone out there has read these please tell me you got it too? i dont wanna say anything (like spoilers) but anyone who has read book of the short sun should really get much (MUCH) more out of 5th head of cerberus than one who hasnt... !

Search for businesses by name, location, or phone number. -Lycos Yellow Pages

http://r.lycos.com/r/yp_emailfooter/http://yellowpages.lycos.com/default.asp?SRC=lycos10

Chris — 29 Aug 2005, 02:53 · in reply to walter read

<http://www.urth.net/whorl/archives/v0006/0473.shtml>
<http://www.urth.net/whorl/archives/v0013/whorl.v012.n178.6.shtml>
<http://www.urth.net/urth/archives/v0203/370.txt.shtml>
<http://www.urth.net/urth/archives/v0026/0073.shtml>
<http://www.urth.net/whorl/archives/v0001/0052.shtml>
<http://www.urth.net/whorl/archives/v0007/0505.shtml>
<http://www.urth.net/whorl/archives/v0010/0039.shtml>
<http://www.urth.net/whorl/archives/v0007/0514.shtml>
<http://www.urth.net/whorl/archives/v0013/whorl.v012.n185.6.shtml>
<http://www.urth.net/whorl/archives/v0011/0046.shtml>
<http://www.urth.net/whorl/archives/v0001/0010.shtml>
<http://www.urth.net/whorl/archives/v0007/0515.shtml>
<http://www.urth.net/whorl/archives/v0006/0381.shtml>
<http://www.urth.net/whorl/archives/v0001/0049.shtml>
http://www.mikespace.net/images/photos/new_order_at_finsbury_park_2002/the_excitement_is_all_too_much_for_dan_who_goes_insane.jpg

Just to scan the tip of the iceberg, that's a start.

While you're at it you might as well just go all the way and read

<http://www.urth.net/urth/archives/v0212/2523.txt.shtml> along with the several threads that followed it. If your head hasn't melted by the end of that, you will be well primed to pursue this investigation.

-- Civet

Walter Read said:

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Adrian Robert — 29 Aug 2005, 05:49 · in reply to Chris

Walter Read said:

Have you read The Book oh the Short Sun?!?!?! have you read 5th head of cerberus?!?!?! well do you know the connection? I just fininshed cerberus and im shocked..

...

On Aug 29, 2005, at 5:53 AM, Chris wrote:
<http://www.urth.net/whorl/archives/v0006/0473.shtml>

[more archive URLs removed..]

I realize this topic has been discussed (to death?) by the list before and also that Wolfe's own answers have tended to quash the idea of a "reality" behind the parallel, but the coincidences are interesting enough in their own right to be worth listing out anyhow. So here are the parallels I've noticed between Blue / Green and St. Croix / St. Anne. (Earth/Lune and/or Ushas have also come into these discussions, but those parallels, to the extent they exist, are of a different order than these..)

+ Both systems are binary planets approximately the same distance from one another. St. Croix and Blue are predominately water planets; St. Anne and Green predominately vegetated land.

- However, Green is portrayed as consisting largely of jungle, whereas St. Anne is lauded for its "meadowmeres", and 'A Story' describes a variety of different terrains, none of them jungle.

+ Green and St. Anne are both the home of a shape-shifting race with non-human characteristics.

- However the nonhuman aspects differ -- reptilian and blood-sucking in Green's case, while the St. Anne abos have their brains in their thoraxes and moreover they were said to be capable of assuming forms far more varied than the inhum.

+ In addition, St. Green/Blue were home to a second race, more intelligent, or at least more socially adaptable or having a better affinity with humans than the first. St. Anne (we don't

know about St. Croix) was also home to a second race, also with a stronger connection to humans. At one point in 'A Story' it is even said that they *were* human.

- The 'neighbors' are said to have 4-legged / 4-armed bodies, obviously different from the shrunken humanoid bodies of the shadow children. They have mostly left Green/Blue where they were native, whereas the shadow children were said to be immigrants who came to St. Anne.

+ Both the neighbors and the shadow children used the distinctive term "starcrosser" to refer to spaceships.

Those are the ones I come up with. Can anyone think of any I missed? Granted, there are differences, but the parallels are so striking as to seem hardly incidental. However, Green / Blue is in the incomprehensibly far future, while *Fifth Head* seems to be mere centuries beyond the present day. Can the histories be reconciled? Given such a span of time, almost anything could be proposed of course, but what about something minimal and plausible?

David Lebling — 29 Aug 2005, 06:19 · in reply to Adrian Robert

Adrian Robert wrote "Given such a span of time, almost anything could be proposed of course, but what about something minimal and plausible?"

How about this?

"Gene Wolfe is extremely interested in the question of identity, what it means to be human, and whether identity and humanity can be mimicked by machines, aliens or other humans. These themes are present in many of his works. A common way he explores these ideas is to create a duality between a relatively mundane setting in which our conventional notions of identity (etc.) apply, and another in which they do not."

I realize that this isn't what you are looking for, but I think it's more likely than any convoluted scheme that ties Wolfe's novels and stories together by plot.

-- Dave Lebling, aka vizcacha

James Wynn — 29 Aug 2005, 07:04 · follows David Lebling

I realize this topic has been discussed (to death?) by the list before and also that Wolfe's own answers have tended to quash the idea of a "reality" behind the parallel, but the coincidences are interesting enough in their own right to be worth listing out anyhow.

Has Wolfe emphatically denied that Bleen is Number Five's system? I do remember him responding to Gevers' question as to whether it "would be useful" to view the systems as a the same and Wolfe said, "I really couldn't say."

I posted a quite extensive list on this once upon a time but I don't see it in the archives so maybe it was posted in the lost year. Here is a partial list:

+ St. Anne is a green colored planet. Watery St Croix is blue. Incidentally, "Pandora, by Holly Hollander" also employs the Green/Blue connection since the two protagonists' names are Holly

(an evergreen) and Alladin Blue.

+ Mr. Million is a walking sacred window. Chems could be thought of being the same.

+ Spiral staircase in the library and The Eye in which Sandwalker is held are both *whorls*.

The following are (apparently) debatable, although I don't seriously doubt them:

+ Number Five and V.R.T are *somehow* twins, since they share each other's dreams. Horn meets his twin, another "Horn" among the Neighbors.

+ St. Anne has senient trees. In SS, the Neighbors *are* in some ways trees, and if one doubts that, there is no doubting that Krait spoke of them that way: "The trees are bigger up the river. Bigger and older, and not so sleepy." 306 OBW

+ The annese were originally "long" as the Shadow Child told Sandwalker. So I'm guessing they were originally in the form of the "huge worms, luminous but of the livid color of a dead man's lips, writhe underfoot at night" found by Dr. Marsch. Of course, the inhumi are also frequently compared to snakes.

- St. Anne abos...were said to be capable of assuming forms far more varied than the inhumi.

I'm not convinced we know the extent of the forms inhumi can take. We know they can assume human disguise because humans are the subject of the story. But they must have assumed other forms before humans came, and I strongly suggest you pay close attention to those lianas (and the Rajan's staff which was made from a liana).

- The 'neighbors' are said to have 4-legged / 4-armed bodies, obviously different from the shrunken humanoid bodies of the shadow children. They have mostly left Green/Blue where they were native, whereas the shadow children were said to be immigrants who came to St. Anne.

There is a great deal of doubt about what the Shadow Child tells Sandwalker as to their pasts. In fact, Wolfe has referred to Sandwalker as "the Shadow Child".

Oh yeah. And there's another similarity between Number Five's family and Tussah's but for the life of me, I can't remember what it is. ;-)

J

James Wynn — 29 Aug 2005, 07:15 · follows James Wynn

[Dave Lebling, aka vizcacha identifies an extremely important thread in Wolfe's works, and then says...]

I realize that this isn't what you are looking for, but I think it's more likely than any convoluted scheme that ties Wolfe's novels and stories together by plot.

I agree. I think it is obvious that Wolfe is riffing off some unidentified themes and references, and that he recycles some of his previously used ideas and motifs to employ them in other stories.

To tie the stories together narratively does not seem to be possible given the differences

between the inhumani and the annese that have already been noted.

J

Adrian Robert — 29 Aug 2005, 08:13 · in reply to David Lebling

On Aug 29, 2005, at 9:16 AM, David Lebling wrote:
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likely than any convoluted scheme that ties Wolfe's novels and stories
together by plot.

Agreed. But there's still a certain pleasure in imagining the more direct connection..

Chris — 29 Aug 2005, 11:08 · in reply to James Wynn

Well, it depends. From the links I posted, Borski in 1999 claims that Wolfe has emphatically denied that the worlds are the same, but does not say when/where. It's hearsay, but Borski is not the most unreliable source for something like that.

Then there is a Q & A session from 97, which was quoted but not directly linked in my last post.
Link: <http://www.urth.net/whorl/archives/v0007/0511.shtml> - text:

25. "Does Green/Blue have anything to do with THE FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS?" No.

I know that we can semantically wiggle around with this, but there doesn't seem to be much point.

I have taken the position that you can't consult the author for the "right" way to interpret his text - everything absolute that the author has to contribute to the meaning of the text is *in the text*. Others would like to rely on asking questions of the author and take the position that his word, even after the fact, is law - and this is a consistent enough position until you then start wrangling over how to interpret his answers to those questions. At that point you are no better off than you were before.

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before and also that Wolfe's own answers have tended to
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;-)

J

don doggett — 29 Aug 2005, 13:47 · in reply to David Lebling

--- David Lebling <dlebling at hyraxes.com> wrote:

I realize that this isn't what you are looking for,
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likely than any convoluted scheme that ties Wolfe's
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together by plot.

Except when they obviously take place in the same universe, as NS LS and SS do. I agree however that the ties between 5HC and these works are largely thematic.

don

James Wynn — 29 Aug 2005, 14:41 · follows don doggett

25. "Does Green/Blue have anything to do with THE FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS?" No.

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Well, there questions and there are questions. Same for answers.

I would very much like it if people would stop using suppositional language when asking Wolfe questions (such as "Could it be..." or "Shouldn't one gather...") Wolfe clearly loooves to answer those with a chipper "You bet!" or a thoughtful "Hmmm....I don't know", knowing full well that within 24 hours he will realize he has no answer at all. I understand that you are nervous and you don't want to sound like a boar asking impertinent questions but just ask the question in the most simple way possible and if you get an answer hooray and if you don't you dont'.

And then there are the questions like the one above or:

27. "Is Pike's ghost really Quetzal?" No.

The asker really already suspected the answer, but decided to take a long shot.

My personal favorites are when Wolfe cleverly manages to only answer half the question (or

less). Like this one from the Q&A: <http://www.urth.net/whorl/archives/v0007/0511.shtml>

22. "Why did Auk . . . kidnap Hyacinth, and why . . . did he let her go?" Because Tartaros had told him to bring a woman. He released her as he recovered from his brain injury, was able to think more clearly, and realized that Hyacinth was not the woman he should bring. (Putting it another way, he released her because Tartaros told him to. These answers are not as disparate as they may appear.)

Uh huh. What woman was he supposed to bring? Why was Hyacinth unacceptable? And ***how the heck was anyone supposed to glean even that much from the text????***

J