

Agia/Hypogeon

The Urth list — 12 messages, 9 voices, 23 Jul 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4669>

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thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 23 Jul 2006, 08:12

Besides "Theanthropos", Agia calls on another entity in Shadow: "Well, high Hypogeon help you." (Ch 18)

"Hypogeon" presumably means something like "the one under the earth", and this neatly ties in to the man-ape cave scene and the being the Claw disturbs there - my guess is that Agia worships this being, and knows about the cave because of that.

A suprising thing about Agia is that she cares about religion. She's the one who tutors Sev in the history of the Claw and the Pelerines; she understands that the Conciliator is the "master of Power" and may transcend time; she knows that a particular building is the "mensal of the monachs"; when Sev fils to die in the avern combat, she shouts, "Sacrilege!" This last reminds me of Jonah's description of the notules; used on some far distant world for ritual murders - perhaps the averns have a similar story, and Hethor is Agia's and Agilus' tutor in devil-thing-worship?

b sharp — 23 Jul 2006, 14:20 · follows thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

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I really think you are onto something here. I've always thought her yelling "Sacrilege!" was very meaningful. As though death by avern was a holy (unholy) event. Her coin scratched devil symbol has been mentioned numerous times in the past. Her use of a lucivee weapon, almost identical (I think it is in fact, identical and part of a Wolfe literary deception) to the jungle sorcerers' claws, ties her to them.

Agia is familiar with the cave but also very familiar with the Botanic Gardens. Who built them and who planted the averns (to keep out manatees/undines...hmm..)? Who put the treasure in the cave and set the man-apes to guard it? Who is having these perversions of human+beasts guard the Nessus wall and the gold carriage at Orithyea? Who is this devilish leader who has inspired a cult to prevent the coming of the New Sun?

I cannot answer on the grounds that I am accused of obsession ;-). And dammit, as I wrote this I realized Father Inire probably makes another appearance I hadn't thought of before. This SUCKS!

-bsharp

Jeff Wilson — 23 Jul 2006, 16:23 · in reply to b sharp

b sharp wrote:

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These last sound more like the doings of the Autarch, who is flat out shown doing sneaky things under assumed identities, unlike Inire who is only suspected of it.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
< <http://www.io.com/~jwilson> >

David Duffy — 23 Jul 2006, 22:37 · in reply to thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

On Sun, 23 Jul 2006 thalassocrat at nym.hush.com wrote:

...my guess is that Agia worships this being, and knows about the cave because of that.

Agia says IIRC that the cave was suggested by her locally recruited sidekicks, so Sev would have nowhere safe to escape to.

David Duffy.

Roy C. Lackey — 24 Jul 2006, 05:04 · follows David Duffy

Jeff Wilson quoted and wrote:

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Jeff is right about the man-apes of the treasure mine being the autarch's to command -- see the first page of chapter XXXI in CITADEL.

Am I reading you right? Are you seriously suggesting that Inire was working to prevent the coming of the New Sun?

-Roy

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 25 Jul 2006, 02:10 · in reply to b sharp

On 7/23/06, b sharp <bsharporflat at hotmail.com> wrote:

I cannot answer on the grounds that I am accused of obsession ;-).

Good heavens, who _accused_ you? Accusation is for bad things. Lupine obsessions are just part of the game, something to be aware of and allow for, not to avoid like the plague. Clearly Fr. I. is important; your take on just _how_ important may look to _me_ like an obsession -- and I use the word in a non-pejorative sense -- but that doesn't mean you can't find good meat using it as a tool. I've certainly found plenty using my Christianity crochet.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes, writer, trainer, bon vivant

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>

"Shovels are essential to the fantasy genre.

However, they are primarily used by the authors rather than the characters." -- Stephen R. Donaldson

Jeff Wilson — 25 Jul 2006, 03:22 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Roy C. Lackey wrote:

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If Inire is really all those other people and in all those other places, he's likely a double agent posing as one of the sun-stoppers, the same way the Autarch is also a spy for Vodalus' revolution against the Autarchy, and the BFO trio court both black thaumaturgists like Baldanders and saintly theurgists like Severian. On which side his true loyalties lie would be

hazy.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
< http://www.io.com/~jwilson >

Matthew King — 25 Jul 2006, 15:37 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On Jul 24, 2006, at 10:22 PM, Jeff Wilson wrote:
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he's likely a double agent posing as one of the sun-stoppers, the same way the Autarch is also a spy for Vodalus' revolution against the Autarchy, and the BFO trio court both black thaumaturgists like Baldanders and saintly theurgists like Severian. On which side his true loyalties lie would be hazy.

Could this be a Lupine elaboration on the double-agency in Chesterton's nightmare "The Man who Was Thursday"?

The Autarch would be Sunday, with Severian as Thursday. I don't recall any analogues for Inire, though.

Adam Thornton — 25 Jul 2006, 23:06 · in reply to Matthew King

So, I have just finished _The Fifth Head of Cerberus_.

SPOILERS BELOW. Stop here if you haven't read 5HC.

Still with me?

OK.

So, it seems pretty clear that Blue is Ste. Croix, Green is Ste. Anne, and that the abos are the inhumu. What I don't know is which of these three hypotheses is right:

a) Wolfe just really likes the idea of shapeshifting creatures becoming what they mimic. So he recycled the central conceit from 5HC into the Short Sun books, but other than that we aren't supposed to see any connection between the stories. b) Ste.-Anne and Ste.-Croix are Green and Blue from an earlier universe-cycle, even farther from the eventual Incarnation and thus end of history. Me, I'm not at all sure I buy the spiral-time theory, so I don't really like this one. c) They're the same planets in the same universe. But in that case: if SS happens after 5HC, then the ruins on Green are explicable, but why are there no signs of prior human settlement on Blue? Contrariwise, if 5HC postdates SS, then why are there no signs in 5HC of prior human settlement on either planet in 5HC? And who are the Visitors anyway?

This also raises a troubling, to me, theological point, that exists in SS too:

If the inhumu are merely what they mimic, and before the arrival of humanity they are innocent beasts, but after they bite humans they can in most essential ways **be** humans....then do they have souls? If so, when do these souls come into being?

Adam

Jeffrey Lefstin — 26 Jul 2006, 01:28 · follows Adam Thornton

I think this has been discussed before, but myself, I favor (a). Just as Wolfe recycled aspects of the ship in "Silhouette" in Tzadkiel's ship, or the duel in "Tracking Song" to the combat on the Sanguinary Fields.

In general, I think GW doesn't play ridiculously complicated games with us re FACTUAL issues (hiding Father Inire behind every bush, making everyone a clone of everyone else). Yes, he makes us hunt for a few things but I think there are pretty clear lines between what is explicit, slightly hidden, suggested, and insolubly ambiguous. In my view, what world we're usually falls in the first two categories.

More to the point, GW writes LITERATURE - in the sense that characters and things are very often richly symbolic. I find it much less interesting whether Valeria lives in a time-traveling building (not that I think she does) compared to what she represents in light of GW's overarching themes.

So, if Blue = St. Croix and Green = St. Anne, what significance to the themes and symbols GW is working with?

Jeff

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Adam

b sharp — 26 Jul 2006, 11:46 · follows Jeffrey Lefstin

I agree with Jeffrey Lefstin that the Blue-Green theme found across Wolfe works should be seen as symbolic rather than factual. That Earth is covered with water and life? I dunno.

Gene Wolfe was asked by James Jordan: "Which of the following, if any, are physically (not in some merely literary or symbolic sense) the same planets as Blue and Green, in the same

order?:

Ushas and Lune
Urth and Lune
Lune and Ushas
Lune and Urth
Two Urths
Two Ushases
Two Lunes

Gene Wolfe: "None"

I disagree with Jeffrey Lefstin's definition of "literature" as works in which "characters and things are very often richly symbolic". What do you call enduring classics which don't rely on symbolism and multiple subtext levels to engage a reader? Aren't there many great works of literature which are such because they rely on an interesting story, interesting character development, witty dialogue or interesting historical context? Why limit so narrowly?

Adam Thornton notes and asks:

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Shape-shifting is a physical process. A shape-shifter may physically imitate a human so closely as to allow interbreeding but that is only a material resemblance. A soul is immaterial and must be acquired through Special Creation, right? (well, one part of the Bible suggests we don't get a soul until after death, but anyway...)

So an interesting question is: What about offspring of human and non-human? Is it possible to have a partial soul? Or perhaps a contaminated soul? I think Wolfe might be addressing this in BotNS.

-bsharp

Jeffrey Lefstin — 26 Jul 2006, 18:59 · follows b sharp

Sorry b, I wasn't meaning to define or limit "literature." I guess I need a word that means "literature with richly embroidered layers of meaning and symbol." if there is one and if that isn't too mixed of a metaphor.

Another GW recycling from short story to novel I forgot to mention:

The "overmonitor" program in the ship in Silhouette is supposedly wiped from the mainframe, but survives by distributing itself to little computers in appliances and such. Same as Pas in BotSS.

Jeff

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