

teratoid symbols

The Urth list — 10 messages, 7 voices, 25 Jul 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4672>

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b sharp — 25 Jul 2006, 15:22

In a recent criticism of my Urth before Earth ideas, one anonymous reviewer asserted that Earth must be in the past of Urth because of

"the radiation hazard warning signs in the House Absolute, the radioactive isotopes in the mine at Saltus which have decayed to stable, non-radioactive heavy metals"

Are these Lupinology world truisms or the foibles of this one person?

Regarding radiation hazard warning signs, I have seen mention of them in the past but I didn't know it was accepted dogma as explanation for the teratoid symbols which seem to mark Father Inire's areas. Worth addressing.

I think the interpretation is a mistake, though understandable. Radiation sources are often referred to as "teratogenic" but radiation is only one of a number of teratogens. The terato prefix means malformed. And its roots are from Greek for monster (or portent).

I suspect Wolfe intended that interpretation for Father Inire.

-bsharp

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 25 Jul 2006, 17:14 · in reply to b sharp

In medicine, "teratoid" means resembling a teras, or grotesquely deformed. (A teras is a deformed embryo.)

An online version of Webster's defines "teratoid" as "resembling a monster."

In short, "teratoid symbols" would not at all resemble a contemporary radiation hazard warning sign, but would be either grossly deformed or monstrous-looking symbols.

On 7/25/06, b sharp <bsharporflat at hotmail.com> wrote:

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Macronaut — 27 Jul 2006, 15:51 · in reply to b sharp

B wrote:

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I had a different interpretation -- that the teratoid symbol, which as I recall appears on the mirror cabinet of the presence chamber, was a chinese character. Some of the more complex, squiggly Chinese characters can look monstrous, and this interpretation fits with the other indications that mankind spoke Chinese during its space/time faring heyday (Kim Lee Soong, Jonas speaking in a "garbling sing song" etc.). Stretching a bit, it also fits with the connotation of teratoid as portentous and malformed: portentous because the mirrors seem to reach across time as well as space, and malformed because they evoke a past where mankind's domination corrupted him. I think the teratoid as chinese character has been suggested before.

A radiation warning seems to me to make little sense, given we know that Inire and Domnina stand in the chamber while it's active, and that Jonas, who is reasonably frail despite his cyborg body, used the chamber to travel without any special protections against radiation.

Macronaut

James Crossley — 27 Jul 2006, 16:04 · in reply to Macronaut

Sort of off the point, but isn't "Kim Lee Soong" a transliteration of a Korean name, not a Chinese one?

James

On 7/27/06 8:51 AM, "Macronaut" <macronaut at yahoo.com> wrote:
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Macronaut

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Andy Robertson — 27 Jul 2006, 17:25 · in reply to Macronaut

Macronaut writes:

B wrote:

Regarding radiation hazard warning signs,

I had a different interpretation -- that the teratoid symbol, which as I recall appears on the mirror cabinet of the presence chamber, was a chinese character.

Or perhaps it was the Yellow Sign ???

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Transient — 27 Jul 2006, 18:23 · in reply to Macronaut

On Jul 27, 2006, at 11:51 AM, Macronaut wrote:

B wrote:

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I had a different interpretation -- that the teratoid symbol, which as I recall appears on the mirror cabinet of the presence chamber, was a chinese character.

I just wanted to chime in that when I first encountered these symbols, I looked up `_teratoid_` in a dictionary, and since the definition I found was simple "abnormally formed" I took a very simple interpretation. I imagined it was something like a wavy, distorted stick-figure of a human, something like a "CAUTION: SPACETIME DEFORMITIES AHEAD" sign.

Macronaut — 27 Jul 2006, 20:09 · in reply to James Crossley

Sort of off the point, but isn't "Kim Lee Soong" a transliteration of a Korean name, not a Chinese one?

Actually an excellent point. I don't know how it affects my theory: on the one hand, Hangul is a lot simpler visually than Chinese, and can't be said to look "monstrous" the way Chinese can. OTOH, we're talking about an asian civilization thousands of years forward -- who knows how their writing (if it's meant to be theirs) has evolved?

Macronaut

Macronaut — 27 Jul 2006, 20:11 · in reply to Andy Robertson

Or perhaps it was the Yellow Sign ???

Or the Elder Sign? Someone <has> to compile all the Lovecraftian elements in TBOTNS (or has it been done already?).

Macronaut

Jeff Wilson — 28 Jul 2006, 04:39 · in reply to Macronaut

Macronaut wrote:

A radiation warning seems to me to make little sense, given we know that Inire and Domnina stand in the chamber while it's active, and that Jonas, who is reasonably frail despite his cyborg body, used the chamber to travel without any special protections against radiation.

I don't recall Domnina entering the chamber; wasn't she just in a mirrored hallway?

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

Macronaut — 28 Jul 2006, 14:34 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

I don't recall Domnina entering the chamber; wasn't she just in a mirrored hallway?

At first, yes, with Thecla -- but later Domnina meets alone with Inire in his presence chamber, where he shows her the "fish."

Macronaut