

Typhon & Whorl

The Urth list — 29 messages, 11 voices, 20 Dec 2007

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4961>

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thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 20 Dec 2007, 12:28

I just find it really difficult to match up the NS and LS/SS scenarios.

If you just took LS/SS by itself, you'd have something like this:

Typhon was a guy who quickly rose to take over the *Earth*. No hint AFAIK in LS/SS of anything like an existing instellar empire, with Typhon trapped on Urth through bad luck & force of circumstances. The Duko says: "... when there was a war with one ***country*** stronger than the other, he was generally for the weak one ..."

He had two heads, for some unexplained reason, and a dysfunctional family.

The Whorl was very likely the first & only interstellar colonization project. It obviously took a long time and large resources to build. There is no hint of FTL capability. A generation ship was seemingly the only way to do it, and any reasonable size estimates I think lead to the conclusion that originally it must have been Ceres, the biggest asteroid in the solar system (pace those who don't think it worthwhile to look at dimensions etc).

Typhon was close enough to us in time for Latin & French to be known languages; for people to have names like "Warren"; for familiar ethnic groups to still exist; for our religious writings to still be available.

Abaia etc are in the oceans of Urth during Typhon's reign, and given that his family knows about them, presumably he does too (whereas in NS their presence seems to be a new thing for the "resurrected" Typhon).

If it wasn't for the tie in to Sev and Nessus I'd think that Wolfe was just recycling some images and narrative themes from NS to LS/SS; or that maybe Pas was actually "Typhon I" (as he is referred to by one of the councillors of Viron), versus Sev's "Typhon LXXIV" or whatever.

As it is, I have to think that Wolfe didn't care very much about making the two series consistent. But if he didn't, then why the tie in at all? So maybe he had something else in mind which I can't figure out.

Pedro Pereira — 20 Dec 2007, 12:58 · in reply to thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

The reason why Typhon had two heads is explained in TBotNS. He needed a new body, but just tranfering the brain would not do any good, because a Leader is recognized by his Face. Thats why he had his own face grafted to the body of a slave.

As for the FTL. Some people mentioned here that there was FTL technologie available and that Typhon even brought doctors from far away places. Now, I don't remember (please confirm this) that those doctors were brought from outside the solar system. If they were brought from inside the Solar System (say Venus, the birth place of Typhon) then there would be no need for FTL travel.

Also, even if they were coming from outside our system, they could have been brought by ships that were not part of Typhon's empire, even by the Tzadskiel ship. Don't forget that the hierodules, hierogrammates, etc, help the New Sun AND the New Sun's enemies at the same time, for uncertain reasons, which could mean that they could provide the means for bringing Typhon's doctors to him for whatever reason (even if they destroyed the First Empire). Typhon's reign is not the peak of the Empire. He WANTS to create a new empire. Much of the technology comes from other planets, its not produced on earth anymore like it was during the peak of the First Empire. The reason why the Whorl is STL can be simply because there are no FTL technology easily available to Typhon.

As for the reason for constructing the Whorl, the major reason is that Wolfe wanted to write a story about a generation starship. The second is that Typhon wanted Immortality, he wanted to be Remembered. He was a megalomaniac. He wanted to be worshiped for Eternity. So he built the Whorl. Wolfe states so as the main reason in one of his interviews. With the whorl he installs a new colony in which people adore him as a god. As his empire grows, so does his cult. His name will not be a distant thing of no importance to people on the fringes of a nominal-only empire. People will actively worship him even if he never pays a visit in 100 years.

Pedro

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 20 Dec 2007, 13:16 · follows Pedro Pereira

On Thu, 20 Dec 2007 23:58:00 +1100 Pedro Pereira

<domus_artemis at hotmail.com> wrote:

The reason why Typhon had two heads is explained in TBotNS. He needed a new body, but just tranfering the brain would not do any good, because a Leader is recognized by his Face. Thats why he had his own face grafted to the body of a slave.

Sure - I was just talking about what I think you'd know or infer if you only had LS/SS, not NS.

As for the FTL. Some people mentioned here that there was FTL technologie available and that Typhon even brought doctors from far away places. Now, I don't remember (please confirm this) that those doctors were brought from outside the solar system. If they were brought from inside the Solar System (say Venus, the birth place of Typhon) then there would be no need for FTL travel.

Also, even if they were coming from outside our system, they could have been brought by ships that were not part of Typhon's empire, even by the Tzadskiel ship. Don't forget that the hierodules, hierogrammates, etc, help the New Sun AND the New Sun's enemies at the same time, for uncertain reasons, which could mean that they could provide the means for bringing Typhon's doctors to him for whatever reason (even if they destroyed the First Empire). Typhon's reign is not the peak of the Empire. He WANTS to create a new empire. Much of the technology comes from other planets, its not produced on earth anymore like it was during the peak of the First Empire. The reason why the Whorl is STL can be simply because there are no FTL technology easily available to Typhon.

Again, my point is that I think if you just had LS/SS, you wouldn't have any reason whatsoever to suspect that FTL technology existed at all for Typhon (which it clearly does in NS), and on the other hand you would have every reason to think that Urth was the only planet, as far as humans go (which it clearly isn't, in NS).

As for the reason for constructing the Whorl, the major reason is that Wolfe wanted to write a story about a generation starship.

The second is that Typhon wanted Immortality, he wanted to be Remembered. He was a megalomaniac. He wanted to be worshiped for Eternity. So he built the Whorl. Wolfe states so as the main reason in one of his interviews. With the whorl he installs a new colony in which people adore him as a god. As his empire grows, so does his cult. His name will not be a distant thing of no importance to people on the fringes of a nominal-only empire. People will actively worship him even if he never pays a visit in 100 years.

Sure, that fits perfectly with the internal evidence in LS/SS. In NS, Typhon has a history on worlds outside the solar system already. In fact, he ruled them, probably as some kind of faux-god, if his behavior when Sev "resurrects" him is any guide.

The two series are definitely inconsistent on many points and on several levels, IMO. I don't think you can harmonize them really without adding in something major (eg, two quite different iterations of the universe cycle), and quite likely they're not supposed to be harmonized. (But again - then why the tie in?)

You mention the hiero-dudes. How do you fit them into LS/SS? Does Alphetta have a giant bureaucratic moth-person colleague who's supervising the Neighbor world? Is there a Neighbor-Tzadkiel? Maybe, but it doesn't feel right to me.

Pedro Pereira — 20 Dec 2007, 13:27 · in reply to thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

Good that you confirm that, I didn't remember if extra-solar system rule by Typhon was clearly established in TBotNS. Anyway, couldn't he be just lying while he was tempting Severian, and in fact he didn't rule anything outside of the Solar System? Again, I don't remember the details so I don't know if this would be consistent.

But if extra-solar system rule is confirmed, then the only answer to the Whorl is that Wolfe wanted a generational starship and that's it. And in that case you're right, the two series are somehow interconnected in the sense that it's the "same" universe, but they are not really the same thingy and should be looked upon as two related series with recurring themes but ultimately independent.

hum...

Pedro

Michael Straight — 20 Dec 2007, 20:38 · in reply to thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

Typhon was close enough to us in time for Latin & French to be known languages; for people to have names like "Warren"; for familiar ethnic groups to still exist;

I'd guess that LS & SS are translated from some future as-yet-unexisting language, and that "Latin" and "French" are analogues chosen by the translator, much the same way that we're told "Terminus Est" is not the actual name of Severian's sword.

(Now how Wolfe got a hold of Horn's book(s)...)

for our religious writings to still be available.

I wouldn't be surprised if Wolfe believes that those writings will never completely disappear from human civilization. If we didn't see more of them in the New Sun books, it's not because they weren't still around anywhere.

Rostrum

don doggett — 21 Dec 2007, 06:33 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

--- Pedro Pereira <domus_artemis at hotmail.com> wrote:

But if extra-solar system rule is confirmed, than the only answer to the Whorl is that Wolfe wanted a generational starship and thats it. And in that case you're right, the two series are somehow interconnected in the sense that its the "same" universe, but they are not really the same thingy and should be looked upon as two related series with recurring themes but ultimately independent.

Except for the impossible to avoid fact that Wolfe has Silk(horn) travel to Urth and meet Severian in RttW. Whatever else it might mean, it certainly means the books are intended to be read as a cycle.

Don

The Evangelists: a Lesser Apocrypha

<http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendid=178109961>

Roy C. Lackey — 21 Dec 2007, 07:57 · follows don doggett

Andrew wrote:

I just find it really difficult to match up the NS and LS/SS scenarios.

You've said as much in the past. I agreed with you then and I agree with you still, fwiw.

[snip]

Abaia etc are in the oceans of Urth during Typhon's reign, and given that his family knows about them, presumably he does too (whereas in NS their presence seems to be a new thing for the "resurrected" Typhon).

Exactly right.

[snip]

As it is, I have to think that Wolfe didn't care very much about making the two series consistent. But if he didn't, then why the tie in at all?

I don't know if Wolfe really thought SS would be "lame" without the visit to Urth or if he was just bowing to pressure from readers, particularly those on this list. I think LS/SS was confusing enough without muddying the waters even further with the NS link.

-Roy

Pedro Pereira — 21 Dec 2007, 12:40 · in reply to don doggett

Let me clarify things then. I will again state that the only reason we have a STL generation starship is because Wolfe wanted to write a book about one. I think not even he knows exactly why it is STL, the reason being simply that he needs it to be so to tell the story he wants to tell. In the end I think Wolfe leaves to the reader the reason for the Whorl's existence and STL speeds. He lets the reader being an active participant in explaining that, because for him it's an unimportant aspect of the book. Everyone can come up with some explanation for why the whorl was built or why it's STL and I think all of them are correct as long as they do not contradict explicit facts of the books.

Or maybe he simply used some neat ideas from TBotNS to set some of the background (Pas, etc) but without the intention to actually make it a sequel/prequel/whatever, in the sense they may not really mesh well.

I have to recognize that I do have some reluctance about considering them two different "universes" with common themes though (BotNS vs LS/SS). I would correct my position and instead say that they are the same universe but there are things that are not easily relatable to because Wolfe just writes about what the hell he wants and doesn't worry too much about if it feels right as long as it does not directly contradict anything previously written. The encounter with Severian in SS seems to be of minor importance (I don't really remember details) and it seems more of a tie-in with previous books resulting from some fancy on the part of Wolfe than any necessary thing for LS/SS. What I feel when I read the so called Solar Cycle is that TBotNS/UotNS is one thing meant to be read together and LS/SS is another thing meant to be read together, but the two cycles are basically independent and can perfectly be read separately.

And again the reason is simply that Wolfe wants to write about a STL generation starship and its tripulation tribulations in colonizing a new system...

Marc Aramini — 21 Dec 2007, 14:44 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

--- Pedro Pereira <domus_artemis at hotmail.com> wrote:

What I feel when I read

the so called Solar Cycle is that TBotNS/UotNS is one thing meant to be read together and LS/SS is another thing meant to be read together, but the two cycles are basically independent and can perfectly be read separately.

My fervent belief is that short sun shows the nascent rise of the green man and his ilk on Ushas with the recombination of man with that ancient vegetative matter.

The trees make the multi-limbed animals by eating their diploid templates but the lianas are the primordial inhumans, with growth and reproduction through blood - but they can survive being buried, etc. The green man seems between these two, vegetative certainly but not multi-limbed.

But most think I'm out of my gourd.

Pedro Pereira — 21 Dec 2007, 15:09 · in reply to Marc Aramini

Yes, I read yor essay. Good stuff. As I said before I'm not convinced that SS is set in a distante future of our system, but neither am I convinced it is not. This may not be important to the general flow of the tale (just like its not important the reason why the whorl is STL) but still is a legitimate question that could clarify a lot of things. A lot of people here feel its a question that is a waste of time, but I don't think so. Unfortunately I doubt it will ever be definitely answered (Wolfe's response in a interview seems too dubious to me, too "wolfian" to be credited as a direct answer).

In fact, another reason for the Whorl beying like it is is simply that Typhon may want to ensure that in Urth's future he will still be worshiped. Thus he sends a gigantic ship (excellent for the job at end) with thousands of colonialists/evangelists, in a STL travel at relativistic speeds so that when the "journey" ends it will be on Urth's system in the far future. And basically what we see is the distante future of the green man.

But then, maybe not. Maybe Typhon in his megalomaniac way just wants to create a megalomaniac project of colonization, create a new colony that he can brag about, instead of just re-colonizing/adding the former colonies of the First Empire to his.

Both of this ideas are plausible.

Pedro

Pedro Pereira — 21 Dec 2007, 15:25 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

Also, people tend to try to find answers to legitimize their point of view in strict scientific views, like "the moon can't be so close to earth because of "this"", or "there's not enough asteroids in the asteroid belt to add significantly to mass of the moon to make it consistent with what we see in TBotNS", etc. Well, people are just assuming that Wolfe is super-human and knows everything about everything. He makes mistakes, and from my geologists point of view, I see many inconsistencies. People forget things like that you cannot add a white hole to a black hole, like in $-1+1=0$ and that reverts everything back to "normal." I can hardly call his books hard sci-fi (in fact very few books are even many of those considered so), although he does take great care in making everything consistent and credible. What people can be sure about is his stories, characters motivations, etc. As for the science, take it with a grain of salt and an open mind.

Pedro

From: domus_artemis at hotmail.com To: urth at lists.urth.net Date: Fri, 21 Dec 2007 17:09:41 +0200 Subject: Re: (urth) Typhon & Whorl

Michael Straight — 21 Dec 2007, 19:31 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

On Dec 21, 2007 8:25 AM, Pedro Pereira <domus_artemis at hotmail.com> wrote:

People forget things

like that you cannot add a white hole to a black hole, like in $-1+1=0$ and that reverts everything back to "normal."

Don't you think that's a pretty tiny nitpick compared to the fact that white holes are not generally bonded to individual human beings?

Severian bringing the New Sun is essentially a miracle on the order of Moses parting the Red Sea.

I can hardly call his books hard sci-fi (in fact very few books are even many of those considered > so), although he does take great care in making everything consistent and credible.

I think the New Sun series is intended to be hard-sci-fi in a universe in which miracles sometimes occur. Just like our own :-).

Rostrum

Jeff Wilson — 21 Dec 2007, 19:34 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

Also, people tend to try to find answers to legitimize their point of view in strict scientific views, like "the moon can't be so close to earth because of "this"", or "there's not enough asteroids in the asteroid belt to add significantly to mass of the moon to make it consistent with what we see in TBotNS", etc. Well, people are just assuming that Wolfe is super-human and knows everything about everything.

Rather, we know that Wolfe is particularly well-read for a mortal. He may very well know about the asteroid deficit, which would explain why he doesn't offer it (or anything else) as an explanation for Lune's gravity.

He makes mistakes, and from my geologists point of view, I see many inconsistencies. People forget things like that you cannot add a white hole to a black hole, like in $-1+1=0$ and that reverts everything back to "normal."

Actually, that part turns out to be correct.

brunians at brunians.org — 21 Dec 2007, 19:50 · in reply to Michael Straight

On Dec 21, 2007 8:25 AM, Pedro Pereira <domus_artemis at hotmail.com> wrote:

People forget things like that you cannot add a white hole to a black hole, like in $-1+1=0$ and that reverts everything back to "normal."

Don't you think that's a pretty tiny nitpick compared to the fact that white holes are not generally bonded to individual human beings?

No, but the association of humans or some humans with stars is ancient and very widespread.

.

Pedro Pereira — 21 Dec 2007, 20:48 · in reply to Michael Straight

1) No, I don't think it's a tiny nitpick, because one thing is assuming a supernatural event in which miracles do occur and another is subverting scientific facts or accepted present theories. Miracles are outside science - either you believe in them or not. Science is another thing. And Wolfe does try to make the science plausible.

Pedro Pereira — 21 Dec 2007, 20:58 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

I do agree that Wolfe is very well read comparing to the majority of writers these days. Still, he is not perfect and far as the geology part of things go, I find many inconsistencies. He may or may not know about the asteroid deficit. Maybe he was not sure and left it vague because of that. Or maybe he just assumed there was enough material. Or maybe he even didn't think about it because it's not important and left it to the reader to come up with his own plausible explanation. What I think is, again, that he is not perfect and people cannot assume that he has thought about every obscure detail that a specialist in any field of science could come up with.

As for the white hole/black hole thing, do you care to explain? I think things would be quite more complicated, based on black hole mass, white hole energy output and quite a lot of other

highly technical interreaction details. It does not seem plausible to me that its just a mater of adding a white hole to a black hole in the center of the sun and voila, everything is back to normal. I'm just curious here.

Jeff Wilson — 22 Dec 2007, 04:45 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

Pedro Pereira wrote:

As for the white hole/black hole thing, do you care to explain? I think things would be quite more complicated, based on black hole mass, white hole energy output and quite a lot of other highly technical interreaction details. It does not seem plausible to me that its just a mater of adding a white hole to a black hole in the center of the sun and voila, everything is back to normal. I'm just curious here.

The black hole-white hole model has been deprecated for a few decades now, so this is mainly a humorous answer, but current standard model wormholes would involve negative mass causing negative spacetime curvature, and there are several scenarios where the ends of a wormhole into the heart of the sun can be brought together and then leave the sun to return to equilibrium without destroying the earth; in fact, the sun's lifetime is usually extended slightly.

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

Pedro Pereira — 22 Dec 2007, 08:38 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Interesting. Thanks for the response.

Andy Robertson — 22 Dec 2007, 15:02 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

Pedro Pereira writes:

I do agree that wolfe is very well read comparing to the majority of writers these days. Still, he is not perfect and far as the geology part of things go, I find many inconsistencies.

Maybe it's time to reiterate something I am sure we all already understand

Writers rarely know exactly what they are going to create when they start out in a story.

Like most really devoted artists, Wolfe writes whatever his internal muse dictates and then plasters enough "machinery" around it to create a plausible suspension of disbelief.

Thus, the state of the Sun in the New Sun books can not be justified scientifically. It's actually a "Dying Earth" type sun like that in Clark Ashton Smith or The Night Land. It's not explainable by real physics.

Thus, the Long Sun books started as in a completely different universe from the New Sun. Typhon popped up and the whole Long Sun connection was retconned subsequently.

Fundamentally science fiction is ****not**** based on science, whatever analysts of the genre try to pretend. It's a sub-class of wonder tale that uses science, not magic, as bullshit/excuse/enabler: nothing more.

Scientific inconsistencies are inevitable and, really, irrelevant. Unless they are just stupid and graceless. Which Wolfe is not.

I'm not posting this because I think it will be news to anyone, but because we need to be regularly reminded.

- hartshorn

<http://www.thenightland.co.uk>

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thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 23 Dec 2007, 09:52 · follows Andy Robertson

On Fri, 21 Dec 2007 18:57:40 +1100 "Roy C. Lackey"
<rclackey at stic.net> wrote:

I don't know if Wolfe really thought SS would be "lame" without the visit to Urth or if he was just bowing to pressure from readers, particularly those on this list. I think LS/SS was confusing enough without muddying the waters even further with the NS link.

LS/SS was surely more confusing than it had to be, peaking at something not far off maximal confusion in RTTW.

Would Wolfe really be influenced by his audience in that way? If so, I doubt he'd simply give the crowd what it thinks it wants. But I can see him messing with people's expectations (as he does, I think, in PF). That might bring you back to wondering if the inconsistencies are deliberate.

I've said before that I think the visit to Urth is actually a very important event. Sev's story after it will not be the NS story. The Outsider has come inside, fixing a unique reality, ending no doubt the depressing and futile Hiero/human cycles.

I want to go over this again, from a different angle. Start at the beginning: Sev saving Vodalus in the necropolis. Sev presents this as the kick-off event for the whole story. Without it, everything would have been different.

But meeting Vodalus actually relied on a slightly earlier event: Sev's near drowning. Without that, the apprentices wouldn't have been late coming back from Gyoll, and the meeting wouldn't have happened.

No near-drowning means no Vodalus meeting and no NS story.

I think that Juturna actually caused the near-drowning. Her motivations: to cause the delay and hence the meeting with Vodalus, Abaia's ally and servant - and presumably also to influence Sev to be well disposed to her.

Evidence? Never before had Sev encountered a tangle of nenuphar roots as dense as that which he believes trapped him. He describes the roots as "black ... as fine and strong as hair". In fact, the tangle **was** hair - Juturna's. She tangled him in her hair, and then freed him & shot him to the surface. It's a large, green mass of hair, in the UOTNS scene where he tells of her of the incident. In Gyoll, her hair seemed black, not green, because it was underwater (ref the scene in UOTNS where Sev prepares to torture Idas).

But if the incident only happened because Juturna caused it, then no NS story means no near-drowning and no Vodalus meeting.

When Juturna says, "It hasn't yet occurred. It will, because you spoke," I believe it's not really a matter of Juturna going back in time and causing things to happen. Instead, I have an image of Juturna et al as beings conscious of the whole quantum-ish many- worlds-ish manifold of potential universes. Sev as New Sun has the power to collapse the manifold into his chosen reality, which includes the Gyll incident. His Word is Reality, if you like - at least over his time span.

If that part of my story is wrong, and Juturna actually does go back in time to cause the Gyll incident, you still have the same conclusion: Sev has to become the New Sun for the near-drowning in his past to have occurred. (It's just that in this picture, it's harder to discern a clear set of motivations for Juturna. Mainly: why would she go into the past to promote an outcome which is evidently sub-optimal from her point of view?)

So my first conclusion is that there was no near-drowning for "Sev1". What was Sev1's history? Sev has some guesses at the end of Citadel, but I think we can also add something to these. Specifically: Triskele.

Sev says, "I felt that [finding T] could have and should have changed everything, but it was only the episode of a few months ..." When those few months were over: "I like to think [T's new owner] was someone who took him away with him in the spring, perhaps north to ... the campaigns among the mountains."

I think Sev here is "remembering" a Sev1 who formed a closer attachment to Triskele which led him to leaving or being ejected from the Guild and following the armies. Imagine what Gurloes would do if & when he found out about Triskele, and what effect that might have had on Sev1.

Our Sev is ambivalent towards Triskele. The key event occurs on the first night after finding him: he has a dream in which "I walked the fourth level again, and found a huge friend there with dripping jaws. It spoke to me." The next morning, Sev is hoping T had died during the night.

I think this dream comes from Abaia etc, and it's purpose is to block a true bond from forming between boy & dog. (Or perhaps it's from the Hiero-dudes: both sides want him on the same track, at least up to this point, and that track doesn't include him running away with T.)

The result is that Sev seems to take only cursory care of Triskele, who runs away after a week.

Turn now to SilkHorn's Urth visit at the end of RTTW. As I wrote a while ago, the timing is not consistent with NS. In RTTW, Sev has Triskele on both the occasions SilkHorn meets him, and those occasions are surely more than a week apart. Also, the RTTW Sev seems more attached to Triskele - his rather odd insistence that SilkHorn see the dog, the nest he's made for him. I think this isn't a slip by Wolfe. The RTTW Sev has kept Triskele for longer, and cared more for him.

I think, in fact, that the RTTW Sev is Sev1. SilkHorn's visit is the event which causes him to leave the guild with Triskele and presumably follow the armies north. No New Sun, no encounter with Juturna in Gyll, no meeting with Vodalus, no Triskele nightmare

As I've said before, I can't believe that Sev could go on being a Guild apprentice after the events of SilkHorn's last visit. Gurloes flees from what he takes to be Malrubius' ghost, in Sev's presence; Sev's allowed strange people into the oubliette; after Gurloes flees, Sev ignores him

and goes to show SilkHorn his dog ... If he doesn't run away after that, he'll be lucky if Gurloes kicks him out with all his limbs intact.

And then Wolfe piles it on. The Merryn incident, which makes it impossible for this Sev not to recognize her if a meeting with her in Apu Panchu's ruined town does lie in his future. What stories would the crew of the Samru have to tell after the Scylla incident, of which we hear nothing in NS?

Sev saying that he's not going to write about any of this, because nobody would believe it - I think that might be the biggest tell-tale. At his worst, I can't imagine Wolfe being that artless, if it is to be taken at face-value. And the Sev of the NS describes many events which are no more believable than SilkHorn's visits, including the earlier encounter with Juturna in Gyll (which of course did not happen for the RTTW Sev, on my reading).

So I see a kind of wrestling to choose the "real" reality and Sev's fate, between SilkHorn on the one hand and the Hiero-dudes plus Abaia et al on the other. SilkHorn has the really-truly God on his side, and so of course wins. The dreary, brutal, obscene, pointless Hiero/human cycles are broken. The NS story with its blasphemous non-god and possible anti-christ, Sev the New Sun, dissolves back into the quantum soup.

(As a footnote, you could say it all comes down to a boy & his dog, which I vaguely recall as the theme of Gaiman and Pratchett's "Good Omens" published some years after NS but before LS/SS. I wonder if that's just a coincidence?)

Steven — 23 Dec 2007, 18:33 · in reply to thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

All I can say is 'Wow'. That is a masterpiece of a post and cleared up numerous issues I've had. Thanks so much for taking the time to write it.

On Dec 23, 2007, at 4:52 AM, <thalassocrat at nym.hush.com> wrote:

LS/SS was surely more confusing than it had to be, peaking at something not far off maximal confusion in RTTW.

Steven

<http://bowenfineart.com/>

Marc Aramini — 23 Dec 2007, 18:41 · in reply to thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

great stuff, and I especially was always puzzled by the zen like koan where Ymar gets up and follows the dog (remember, he sits under a tree, and all manner of men and women come by, but he only moves to follow the dog) -but this idea makes it very, very important and masterfully relevant. otherwise, it is inscrutable. Sev1's bond with Triskele ... yet would Sev1 have the power to return Triskele from the dead, as Sev 2 did - ie - "he was the smallest of those dead", to paraphrase?

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com wrote:

LS/SS was surely more confusing than it had to be, peaking at something not far off maximal confusion in RTTW. Turn now to SilkHorn's Urth visit at the end of RTTW. As I wrote a while ago, the timing is not consistent with NS. In RTTW, Sev has Triskele on both the occasions SilkHorn meets him, and those occasions are surely more than a week apart. Also, the RTTW Sev seems more attached to Triskele - his rather odd insistence that SilkHorn see the dog, the next he's

made for him. I think this isn't a slip by Wolfe. The RTTW Sev has kept Triskele for longer, and cared more for him.

I think, in fact, that the RTTW Sev is Sev1. SilkHorn's visit is the event which causes him to leave the guild with Triskele and presumably follow the armies north. No New Sun, no encounter with Juturna in Gyll, no meeting with Vodalus, no Triskele nightmare

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 24 Dec 2007, 01:06 · follows Marc Aramini

On Mon, 24 Dec 2007 05:41:48 +1100 Marc Aramini

<marcaramini at yahoo.com> wrote:

great stuff, and I especially was always puzzled by the zen like koan where Ymar gets up and follows the dog (remember, he sits under a tree, and all manner of men and women come by, but he only

moves to follow the dog) -but this idea makes it very, very important and masterfully relevant. otherwise, it is inscrutable.

Sev1's bond with Triskele ... yet would Sev1 have the power to return Triskele from the dead, as Sev 2 did - ie - "he was the smallest of those dead", to paraphrase?

I thought of the Ymar story right after posting the message - one of those nice little flashes which can fool you into thinking that what you've said actually makes sense :)

Triskele *looked* dead but Sev doesn't say that he actually was dead. He doesn't seem to have any of the vagueness resurrected humans seem to experience.

On a different note, I think Sev's little episodes where he thinks he might be insane could point to key Sev1/Sev2 divergences. Something to look out for on my next trawl through NS ...

Marc Aramini — 24 Dec 2007, 01:36 · in reply to thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

--- thalassocrat at nym.hush.com wrote:

Triskele *looked* dead but Sev doesn't say that he actually was dead. He doesn't seem to have any of the vagueness resurrected humans seem to experience.

Here is the quote:

"Our guild buries its own dead beside the wall ... but the keepers of the Bear Tower leave theirs to be taken away by others. He was the smallest of those dead."
(p 29 shadow and claw)

which, the second time I read it, screamed to me that Sev's powers worked BEFORE the claw was his.

then ...

"I went over and put my hand on his head - I don't know why. He seemed as dead as the rest, but he opened one eye then and rolled it at me, and there was a confidence in it that the worst was over now"

This is ambiguous because he is classified as the smallest of those dead and only evinces life ONLY AFTER Severian touches him. I have always read this as definitive proof that it is not the claw but Severian who carries these powers.

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 24 Dec 2007, 02:51 · follows Marc Aramini

On Mon, 24 Dec 2007 12:36:48 +1100 Marc Aramini
<marcaramini at yahoo.com> wrote:
--- thalassocrat at nym.hush.com wrote:

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This is ambiguous because he is classified as the smallest of those dead and only evinces life ONLY AFTER Severian touches him. I have always read this as definitive proof that it is not the claw but Severian who carries these powers.

Maybe he was in fact dead, and Sev1 had just enough New Sun-mojo to resurrect his little doggie life.

As I said before, I think of Sev and his timelines as being some kind of quantum-ish superposition of different possibilities. After Yesod, he is 100% New Sun and can act like a god in some respects. Before then, the timeline hasn't been fully determined; it will probably turn out to be one with him becoming New Sun, but some other reality might prevail. (Master Ash fades, he doesn't just pop out of existence - and so on.) So he's not as powerful - he's only X% New Sun (and, I suppose, there's only X% wormhole speeding towards Urth's sun etc etc).

On my story, at the time of the Triskele incident even on a Sev1- ish timeline there would still I guess be a small probability of a New Sun final resolution - so perhaps Sev1 is Y% New Sun for some Y which is small but big enough to do the trick for Triskele.

But anyway, I prefer to think that Triskele wasn't actually dead.

David Duffy — 24 Dec 2007, 04:22 · in reply to thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

On Mon, 24 Dec 2007 05:41:48 +1100 Marc Aramini
<marcaramini at yahoo.com> wrote:
great stuff, and I especially was always puzzled by the zen like
koan where Ymar gets up and follows the dog (remember, he sits
under a tree, and all manner of men and women come by, but he only
moves to follow the dog) -but this idea makes it very, very
important and masterfully relevant. otherwise, it is inscrutable.

It is, IIRC, a classic Buddhist parable (or is it Hindu? I have read it, but can't find it at the moment), so I always thought it just another example of reattribution a la medieval Alexander stories etc.

I am always reminded, when reading this list, of _Gigamesh_ (in Lem's _A Perfect Vacuum_). Maybe the dog is masterfully relevant, maybe the dog is actually a wolf(e), etc.

Anyway, seasonal greetings and all that.

David Duffy.

| David Duffy (MBBS PhD) ,_-|\n
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Roy C. Lackey — 24 Dec 2007, 06:48 · follows David Duffy

Andrew wrote:

[snip]

I think, in fact, that the RTTW Sev is Sev1. SilkHorn's visit is
the event which causes him to leave the guild with Triskele and
presumably follow the armies north. No New Sun, no encounter with
Juturna in Gyoll, no meeting with Vodalus, no Triskele nightmare
[snip]

And in a follow-up:

[snip]

On my story, at the time of the Triskele incident even on a Sev1-
ish timeline there would still I guess be a small probability of a
New Sun final resolution - so perhaps Sev1 is Y% New Sun for some Y
which is small but big enough to do the trick for Triskele.

I'm confused. In your theory did Sev1 bring a New Sun or not? If the answer is no, and if Sev2's timeline went poof with Silkhorn's astral visit, so that he didn't bring a New Sun either, as your theory contends, then Urth was doomed to the ice future. If the answer is yes, then what is the ultimate difference whether he brought the New Sun or if Sev2 brought it, as it happens in the Urth Cycle? No matter who fetches the white fountain, the result is Ushas and the Hierogrammates get what they wanted and the cycle of repeating universes goes on.

-Roy

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 24 Dec 2007, 12:28 · follows Roy C. Lackey

On Mon, 24 Dec 2007 17:48:33 +1100 "Roy C. Lackey"
<rclackey at stic.net> wrote:

I'm confused. In your theory did Sev1 bring a New Sun or not? If the answer is no, and if Sev2's timeline went poof with Silkhorn's astral visit, so that he didn't bring a New Sun either, as your theory contends, then Urth was doomed to the ice future. If the answer is yes, then what is the ultimate difference whether he brought the New Sun or if Sev2 brought it, as it happens in the Urth Cycle? No matter who fetches the white fountain, the result is Ushas and the Hierogrammates get what they wanted and the cycle of repeating universes goes on.

Sorry, didn't make that clear. I think that Sev1 did not bring the New Sun. If there was still a possibility that he might have for some time, it indeed went poof with SilkHorn's visit, if not before.

Urth presumably dies the ice death, but so what? No mega-deaths, and at least one human world probably flourishing - Blue - if not Green & others as well.

thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 28 Dec 2007, 14:02 · follows thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

A little while ago Roy agreed with me on something:

Abaia etc are in the oceans of Urth during Typhon's reign [according to SS/LS], and given that his family knows about them, presumably he does too (whereas in NS their presence seems to be a new thing for the "resurrected" Typhon).

Exactly right.

But actually, this problem crops up even in UOTNS. From his cell, Sev tells Herena et al: "Great Erebus, who has established his kingdom [in the southern ice] ... will unite his strength with Abaia's, whose kingdom is in the warm waters".

If you want to harmonize UOTNS with the rest of NS, then I guess you're forced to conclude that Abaia was there but T didn't know it, back in the day. The relevant words from Sword Ch XXVI (after T's resurrection): "There are powers in the seas now who would rule". It doesn't seem like something T would say if he had known of those powers before his death, at the time Sev's speech to Herena et al.

I guess it's possible that Abaia etc had just recently arrived and/or were successfully concealing themselves from him. By the time of Sword, Typhon has been replaced by Autarchs, with much less power, and so concealment is unnecessary.

If you want to harmonize all of NS/UOTNS/LS/SS, I suppose you can extend this to construct a story in which Abaia etc suborned (some of?) Typhon's children (and wife?) without revealing their existence to him.