

Urth Digest, Vol 71, Issue 48

The Urth list — 9 messages, 6 voices, 07 Jul 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5649>

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Tim O'Donnell — 07 Jul 2010, 16:13

From: Ant?nio Pedro Marques <antonio at gmail.com>

I'll have to ask yet again - clues to *what*, please? IF some of the characters that appear throughout the book are Inire in disguise, then what? What happens? What doors open? What new understanding of the story is enabled? What's the net worth of such a knowledge? What is it that we don't grasp about the book that we'd begin to grasp that way? No one has answered this so far.

Well, in the case of Inire, it depends on how much time travelling influence outer elements have had on Severian's life and specifically the difference between Sev1 (not optimised) and Sev2 (optimised).

Was Sev1 almost but not quite the candidate for New Sun in which case he only needed a little gentle prodding or was he way off in which case he needed quite a lot of help?

If he was close to being the New Sun then we can theorise that appearances by Inire are moments where Sev1 needed a little push perhaps and Inire wants to be sure that these moments occur.

If the second option then do we believe that the forces of entropy are also interfering with Severian's progress in which case Inire's presence may be to ward off such negative influence?

Far from having a single reading of these books (which I have reread many times now) I value the variety of interpretations that can be extracted from readings and rereadings.

I don't want to go off topic but has anyone seen the film Primer? If so they will know that a key scene is the bench scene, multiple viewings of the film have convinced me that there is no correct reading of this scene. I don't want to say more as we are getting into spoiler territory but I feel the same way about Wolfe - to reduce the books to a single correct reading is to cast aside the wonderful multiplicity of interpretations one can find within.

On Wed, Jul 7, 2010 at 5:08 PM, <urth-request at lists.urth.net> wrote:
Send Urth mailing list submissions to
urth at lists.urth.net

To subscribe or unsubscribe via the World Wide Web, visit
<http://lists.urth.net/listinfo.cgi/urth-urth.net>
or, via email, send a message with subject or body 'help' to
urth-request at lists.urth.net

You can reach the person managing the list at
urth-owner at lists.urth.net

When replying, please edit your Subject line so it is more specific than "Re: Contents of Urth digest..."

Today's Topics:

1. Re: The mystery of the image of an astronaut cleaned by Rudesind (Adam Thornton)
2. Re: The mystery of the image of an astronaut cleaned by Rudesind (John Watkins)
3. Re: The mystery of the image of an astronaut cleaned by Rudesind (John Watkins)
4. Re: The mystery of the image of an astronaut cleaned by Rudesind (antonio at gmail.com)
5. Re: The mystery of the image of an astronaut cleaned by Rudesind (Ryan Dunn)
6. Re: The mystery of the image of an astronaut cleaned by Rudesind (Ant?nio Pedro Marques)
7. Re: The mystery of the image of an astronaut cleaned by Rudesind (brunians at brunians.org)

Message: 1

Date: Wed, 07 Jul 2010 08:17:46 -0500

From: Adam Thornton <adam at io.com>

To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>

Subject: Re: (urth) The mystery of the image of an astronaut cleaned by Rudesind

Message-ID: <4C347E7A.7030700 at io.com>

Content-Type: text/plain; charset=ISO-8859-1; format=flowed

On 07/07/2010 08:09 AM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

Good insights, Lee.

The problem with this list is that there are a certain number of pedants.

"FOURTEEN!" shouted the....

oh, never mind.

Also, see "The House of Asterion."

Adam

Message: 2

Date: Wed, 7 Jul 2010 09:48:10 -0400

From: John Watkins <john.watkins04 at gmail.com>

To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>

Subject: Re: (urth) The mystery of the image of an astronaut cleaned by Rudesind

Message-ID:

<AANLkTinO13kXlFi7uYpAwJE4KXcFmFnf-hAJrmivF-B at mail.gmail.com>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="iso-8859-1"

On Wed, Jul 7, 2010 at 4:09 AM, Gerry Quinn <gerryq at indigo.ie> wrote:

On the other hand: "[Old Odilo saw] Father Inire bent nearly double, like
a
gnome in a nursery book, with no more nose than an alouatte" ('The Cat')

This seems to me to settle the matter. Rudesind is not Inire--they have
very different physical appearances and no evidence for them being one and
the same besides physical appearances has been presented.

- Gerry Quinn

Urth Mailing List

To post, write urth at urth.net

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URL: <

<http://lists.urth.net/pipermail/urth-urth.net/attachments/20100707/72d9c23b/attachment-0001.htm>

Message: 3

Date: Wed, 7 Jul 2010 09:53:58 -0400

From: John Watkins <john.watkins04 at gmail.com>

To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>

Subject: Re: (urth) The mystery of the image of an astronaut cleaned
by Rudesind

Message-ID:

<AANLkTilmhDxSyH8ul7mZ9BtCEuSrFgDropmfqCrARgo_ at mail.gmail.com>

Content-Type: text/plain; charset="iso-8859-1"

On Wed, Jul 7, 2010 at 9:04 AM, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com>
wrote:

Father Inire is an alien. Hethor was a sailor on an
interstellar/universal
spaceship. Both show suggestions of an unhealthy attraction to young
human
women.

Should we connect these two characters based on that and the mirror
connection?

Or should we not connect them because it disrupts our image of Father
Inire
and

doesn't fit with the story we know and love?

Actually, I thought we'd decided that Hethor's attraction is to sex
dolls/robots, but that he might possibly settle for the right kind of human
woman (maybe one who role-plays as a sex doll). As for Inire, it's not
clear to me that his fondness for little girls is a sexual interest at all
(or even that he is, properly speaking, capable of such sexual interest).

FWIW I find much of Greek mythology to have a similar weird
understructure.

Was Zeus
the mighty, heroic god that I (and Gene Wolfe?) admired as a child, who
defeated the
monstrous Titans, including Typhon, and ruled among the clouds with
fatherly grace?
Or was he a creepy guy who killed his father and married his sister and
spent his
spare time using his power to seduce/rape young girls and boys like
Europa
and
Ganymede? He is both, right? But I had to mature as a reader and as a
person before
I could see both sides.

For me, BotNS is built (NOT coincidentally) like House Absolute. There is
a
main
structure and a second, secret house which has been built co-extensively
within it.
As the Secret House was constructed by Father Inire, I find it
appropriate
to think
the secret structure of BotNS is centered on that character. If you don't
think there
are undiscovered mysteries in the story or don't find the search
enjoyable
I can
understand that. The main story is really great and I spent years
enjoying
it on that
level alone. But I always felt there was more.

The New Busy is not the old busy. Search, chat and e-mail from your
inbox.

http://www.windowslive.com/campaign/thenewbusy?ocid=PID28326::T:WLMTAGL:ON:WL:en-US:WM_HMP:042010_3

António Pedro Marques — 07 Jul 2010, 16:39 · in reply to Tim O'Donnell

Tim O'Donnell wrote (07-07-2010 17:13):

From: António Pedro Marques <antonio at gmail.com
<mailto:antonio at gmail.com>>

I'll have to ask yet again - clues to *what*, please? IF some of the
characters that appear throughout the book are Inire in disguise, then
what? What happens? What doors open? What new understanding of the
story is enabled? What's the net worth of such a knowledge? What is it
that we don't grasp about the book that we'd begin to grasp that way?
No one has answered this so far.

Well, in the case of Inire, it depends on how much time travelling
influence outer elements have had on Severian's life and specifically

the difference between Sev1 (not optimised) and Sev2 (optimised). Was Sev1 almost but not quite the candidate for New Sun in which case he only needed a little gentle prodding or was he way off in which case he needed quite a lot of help? If he was close to being the New Sun then we can theorise that appearances by Inire are moments where Sev1 needed a little push perhaps and Inire wants to be sure that these moments occur. If the second option then do we believe that the forces of entropy are also interfering with Severian's progress in which case Inire's presence may be to ward off such negative influence?

What I don't see is how Rudesind and other characters being FI in disguise has much to do with any of those questions.

Far from having a single reading of these books (which I have reread many times now) I value the variety of interpretations that can be extracted from readings and rereadings. I don't want to go off topic but has anyone seen the film Primer? If so they will know that a key scene is the bench scene, multiple viewings of the film have convinced me that there is no correct reading of this scene.

Yes - the pervasive idea that there must be correct readings of a given situation is wrong. Sometimes several readings are correct. Sometimes non is (rarer, but happens).

Thanks for the movie tip.

I don't want to say more as we are getting into spoiler territory but I feel the same way about Wolfe - to reduce the books to a single correct reading is to cast aside the wonderful multiplicity of interpretations one can find within.

And that is precisely my beef with the drive to reduce characters to some specific trait that doesn't mean anything by itself.

- Agia must be a robot because blablabla - but at a certain point, what is the relevance of her precise nature?

- Rudesind must be FI in disguise because Fechin is a ranga - but what does that gain us?

If there is a common theme in the GW works I've read so far - I'm not fortunate enough to have done significant rereading already - is how characters break free from their native, starting conditions. Trying to pin down exactly what those conditions are, and trying to come up with (or outright invent) a definite answer, as if it had in itself a deep significance, is in my view misguided - and harmful when it blinds the mind to the rest. Their precise nature may be explanative of something else, but I just can't see that it can be an interesting fact all by itself.

DAVID STOCKHOFF — 07 Jul 2010, 17:23 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

"- Rudesind must be FI in disguise because Fechin is a ranga - but what does that gain us?"

No one has made that argument, as far as I can tell

As for the (ultimately, failed) theory I built concerning Agia, I made the narrative implications very clear. That was indeed the point of the exercise---to take the perceived possibility of a connection between Agia and the doll and test it against the principle that it must add meaning. But it required making up too much stuff---more than it explained---which is a different principle entirely.

--- On Wed, 7/7/10, Ant?nio Pedro Marques <entonio at gmail.com> wrote:

From: Ant?nio Pedro Marques <antonio at gmail.com>
Subject: Re: (urth) The mystery of the image of an astronaut cleaned by Rudesind To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net> Date: Wednesday, July 7, 2010, 12:39 PM

Tim O'Donnell wrote (07-07-2010 17:13):

From: Ant?nio Pedro Marques <antonio at gmail.com
<mailto:antonio at gmail.com>>

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John Watkins — 07 Jul 2010, 17:25 · in reply to DAVID STOCKHOFF

On Wed, Jul 7, 2010 at 1:23 PM, DAVID STOCKHOFF <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:
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Actually, it at least gave me the insight that the "things" Agia "does" for Hethor probably involve lying very, very still...(shudder)

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DAVID STOCKHOFF — 07 Jul 2010, 17:27 · in reply to John Watkins

So it wasn't a complete waste! ;)

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Subscription/information: <http://www.urth.net>

-----Inline Attachment Follows-----

brunians at brunians.org — 07 Jul 2010, 18:08 · in reply to John Watkins

That's an interesting insight.

What is the source of it?

As far as I know there are three or four different kinds of pervert that Hethor could be.

My source is ten years employment by clinicians treating sex offenders.

.

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<dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:

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From: Antonio Pedro Marques

<antonio at gmail.com<http://mc/compose?to=antonio at gmail.com>

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brunians at brunians.org — 07 Jul 2010, 18:09 · in reply to DAVID STOCKHOFF

That is seriously a matter of opinion.

.

So it wasn't a complete waste! ;)

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DAVID STOCKHOFF wrote (07-07-2010 18:23):

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No one has made that argument, as far as I can tell

I was satyrising it, but aside from the straightness and use of slang it's the one reliable piece of evidence that has been adduced.

Lee Berman — 08 Jul 2010, 04:18 · follows Tim O'Donnell

Tim O'Donnell- Far from having a single reading of these books (which I have reread many times now) I value the variety of interpretations that can be extracted from readings and rereadings.

I can agree with this. I'll further suggest that in reading this work of science fiction, we have a spectrum of preferences ranging from the more scientific to the more fiction/artistic. Some prefer to understand this story with the tools of science- objective observation of the "facts" and parsimony (Occam) in interpretation. Others enjoy artistic interpretation which relies on in-depth cultural understanding and intuitive leaps of faith. Credit to Gene Wolfe for creating literature which appeals to both ends of the spectrum and those in between.