

GUTs and so on

The Urth list — 11 messages, 9 voices, 24 Aug 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5726>

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Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 24 Aug 2010, 20:34

Sometimes ... and I want to be clear that I'm not singling anyone out here ... nor is this a recent but rather a recurring thing ... I get the feeling that there's a competition going on, whose rules I am unaware of, but the objective of which seems to be the erection and successful support of the most baroque and prima facie implausible theory concerning some Lupine matter; the prize being simply the gasps and awed admiration of our fellow Wolfeans, and that this competition is rather like a circus act, in that the value is not in the thing done but in its difficulty.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Craig Brewer — 24 Aug 2010, 21:02 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

I think (almost) all of us have been guilty of that at some point, myself included. (I know I've got some weird ideas about TWK and Sorcerer's House.)

But one thing that I always want to know is how the details or the baroque theories do more than point out some hidden plot point. As much as I disagree with MOST of Borski's stuff, say, one thing I appreciate about him is that he will occasionally take a step back and reflect on why his theories matter and how they might change our general understanding and even thematic interpretations. One thing I like about Wolfe is that the puzzles that I'm pretty sure are there and are there to be solved are usually there for a pretty interesting reason, rather than just being puzzles to be solved. That Severian may have died and come back (either resurrected or as an eidolon) multiple times in BotNS, say, has all kinds of philosophical and theological ramifications for the story. Guessing that some minor character may be his second cousin once removed by hidden marriage on his step mother's side, however...not so much.

In the most recent case, I'd want to know not just IF Fava is Hy, but I'd also want to know how that changes what we're supposed to think about Silk/Silkhorn in terms of his prophet-status, etc.

----- Original Message -----

From: Dan'I Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com>

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

Sent: Tue, August 24, 2010 3:34:48 PM

Subject: (urth) GUTs and so on

Sometimes ... and I want to be clear that I'm not singling anyone out here ... nor is this a recent but rather a recurring thing ... I get the feeling that there's a competition going on, whose rules I am unaware of, but the objective of which seems to be the erection and successful support of the most baroque and prima facie implausible theory concerning some Lupine matter; the prize being simply the gasps and awed admiration of our fellow Wolfeans, and that this competition is rather like a circus act, in that the value is not in the thing done but in its difficulty.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Ryan Dunn — 24 Aug 2010, 21:06 · in reply to Craig Brewer

On Aug 24, 2010, at 5:02 PM, Craig Brewer wrote:

That Severian

may have died and come back (either resurrected or as an eidolon) multiple times in BotNS, say, has all kinds of philosophical and theological ramifications for the story. Guessing that some minor character may be his second cousin once removed by hidden marriage on his step mother's side, however...not so much.

Then how do we justify the fact that Wolfe spends more than a couple pages explaining in clues how Dorcas is Severian's grandmother. What bigger ramifications does this have to the story? Family tree encounters from another time and place, mayhap?

Dan'I, I think there's credence to what you say. I personally like to throw an idea that I cannot decipher out to a group of intelligent people who happen to read the same author from time to time. Where the hell else can I do THAT?

...ryan

James Wynn — 24 Aug 2010, 21:23 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

On 8/24/2010 3:34 PM, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:

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I am feeling a little singled out.

Look, it's not really a baroque or complicated explanation. It's not intuitive, but it's founded on one pretty well-known event in text. And lots of little clues that many people have agreed were clues without an answer to unify them into anything. It doesn't require supposing vast histories that are undescribed or unalluded to. I'm surprised large parts of it was even a big mystery to anyone who has read to In Green's Jungles, even though it was a couple years after I first read "Short Sun" that the the bit about Hy occurred to me. But I can be a little slow.

The reason I'm not just laying it out on the fly is that I do know in advance that some people will hate it -- on purely philosophical grounds, regardless of what the text says. And I want to make it clear that I'm not singling anyone out here. ;-)

So, I am at least going to get the textual references down before present it as a whole--although I mentioned parts before. Dave Tallman asked me to explain it and that's why I'm explaining it. If I'm performing a circus act, I'm performing on request. Wait. Then throw eggs.

J

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 24 Aug 2010, 21:30 · in reply to James Wynn

On Tue, Aug 24, 2010 at 2:23 PM, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:

I am feeling a little singled out.

Honest, you shouldn't. That post has been gradually brewing ever since "the Neighbors are the Trees."

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Jane Delawney — 24 Aug 2010, 21:33 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On 24/08/10 21:34, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

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+1

James Wynn — 24 Aug 2010, 22:08 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

James Wynn -

I am feeling a little singled out.

Dan'l- Honest, you shouldn't. That post has been gradually brewing ever since "the Neighbors are the Trees."

LOL

Well, *I* think the Neighbors *are* at least some of the trees, so there ya are. And the Rajan did refer to the trees as "sleepy" which is what you'd expect from dream-travelers. IIRC someone claimed the Rajan's staff made from a vine was an inhum and that the Rajan talked to it. So it gets worse. It's easy for me to imagine how the Neighbors could be trees. It's impossible for me to see how the inhum could be vines. But the second is more plainly stated than the first. I don't really understand how all that fits together.

I don't think a tree ate Horn. I have my own despicable explanation for what happened in the pit.

Craig Brewer -- [snip]As much as I disagree with MOST of Borski's stuff, say, one thing I appreciate about him is that he will occasionally take a step back and reflect on why his theories matter and how they might change our general understanding and even thematic interpretations. [snip]In the most recent case, I'd want to know not just IF Fava is Hy, but I'd also want to know how that changes what we're supposed to think about Silk/Silkhorn in terms of his prophet-status, etc.

Well, there's this metaphor that I noted in "The Book of the Long Sun" that befuddled me for a long time. And Hy as Fava resolved that riddle. So maybe you'll like this. I'm not sure Hy being Fava reveals *in itself* anything thematically about Silk or the Rajan. But isn't Hy an important enough character to warrant her own thematic vehicles? Although it does fit nicely with the little play of Silk and Hyacinth as Simon Magus and Helena, it is hardly necessary to it.

u+16b9

Stuart Hamm — 24 Aug 2010, 22:13 · in reply to James Wynn

I don't think a tree ate Horn. I have my own despicable explanation for what happened in the pit.

o, please feel free to reply offline to me on this one, or point me o the link..!! I think Silk/Horn became the "3rd quill in the pencease" ???????? ? ? ?Mobile — (415) 786-3624 STUHAMM.COM FACEBOOK/STUARTHAMM myspace.com/stuhamm Skype? stuart.hamm ? ??

--- On Tue, 8/24/10, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:

From: James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com>
Subject: Re: (urth) GUTs and so on
To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>
Date: Tuesday, August 24, 2010, 3:08 PM
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u+16b9

David Stockhoff — 24 Aug 2010, 23:57 · in reply to James Wynn

You want those eggs with salmonella or without?

I for one won't be critical. I've only read Short Sun once and am almost completely confused by it.

James Wynn wrote:

On 8/24/2010 3:34 PM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

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Lee Berman — 25 Aug 2010, 03:37 · follows David Stockhoff

James Wynn: *I* think the Neighbors *are* at least some of the trees, so there ya are. And the Rajan did refer to the trees as "sleepy" which is what you'd expect from dream-travelers. IIRC someone claimed the Rajan's staff made from a vine was an inhum and that the Rajan talked to it.

Sleepy trees? Hm, sounds a bit like a nod to Ents.

Anyway, I don't find this theory overly fantastic at all. To me it makes sense both metaphorically and scientifically. Trees are multi-limbed creatures. Vines are parasitic to them.

I think we are given evidence that all these lupine shape-shifting creatures, Shadow Children, Inhum and Hierogrammates had their origins in very simple, almost formless organisms. They gained their eventual shape and intelligence by successive imitation of other, progressively more advanced creatures. Perhaps Neighbors and Inhum started out as simple trees and vines.

I think the Shadow Children of St. Croix got their first taste of humanity and intelligence and shape with a single crash landing. This allowed them to turn into abos. Later, with colonization, they just hit the jackpot with regard to people to imitate.

Perhaps something similar happened on Green during Urth's First Empire exploring out in space. What impact would the presence of human beings have arriving on a planet of

shapeshifting trees and parasitic vines? (keeping in mind that humans parasitize each other).

Not sure how Blue might fit into that. Inhumans can't fly through space. But could tree seeds or vine spores make the trip, somehow? Black beans?

Gerry Quinn — 04 Sep 2010, 19:22 · in reply to Lee Berman

From: "Lee Berman" <severiansola at hotmail.com>

I think the Shadow Children of St. Croix got their first taste of humanity and intelligence and shape with a single crash landing. This allowed them to turn into abos. Later, with colonization, they just hit the jackpot with regard to people to imitate.

As I read it, the Shadow Children are the degenerate remnants of the original human discoverers of St. Croix. The hillmen and marshmen are the St. Croix aborigines who took on the discoverers' original form. They were already of human appearance when the psychic shield surrounding the twin planets was removed and the French colonists came.

To some degree they merged with the incoming colonist population and in select cases such as Marsch they replaced individuals.

- Gerry Quinn