

Short Sun blog

The Urth list — 100 messages, 14 voices, 22 Sep 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5747>

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Lee Berman — 22 Sep 2010, 11:30

Dan'l: 4. Wolfe thought, "Wouldn't it be cool if the chief god was Typhon...?" and thus tied the whole thing to tBotNS.

James Wynn: In that case, "Long Sun" is like "Urth of the New Sun". It offers additional (perhaps vain) helps to divine the original story.

Mo Holkar- Do the rest of you feel that it all ties together brilliantly?

No, not bad but not brilliant. I agree with Dan'l that the connection to Urth seems an add-on, not the original inspiration. And I agree with James that it allows for somewhat vain attempts to explicate (or successful attempts to confuse?) elements from BotNS.

Gerry Quinn — 22 Sep 2010, 12:28 · in reply to Lee Berman

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

Dan'l: 4. Wolfe thought, "Wouldn't it be cool if the chief god was Typhon...?" and thus tied the whole thing to tBotNS.

James Wynn: In that case, "Long Sun" is like "Urth of the New Sun". It offers additional (perhaps vain) helps to divine the original story.

Mo Holkar- Do the rest of you feel that it all ties together brilliantly?

No, not bad but not brilliant. I agree with Dan'l that the connection to Urth seems an add-on, not the original inspiration.

I agree too. I don't think it hurts the story, but given Wolfe's style of writing and the enthusiasms of Wolfe fans, I think it provides dangerously fertile ground for over-interpretation!

- Gerry Quinn

Lee Berman — 22 Sep 2010, 18:20 · follows Gerry Quinn

Roy C. Lackey: Typhon was raw ego. Mt. Typhon's sole purpose was to flaunt his face and gratify his ego. He did not deprecate his memory or that of his family among the colonists, he just changed the family names to reflect the new reality of their digitized existence as gods in Mainframe. On Urth they had been flesh and blood, and the first walking Cargo on the ship had known and remembered that, until their memories were tampered with. To go from royalty to deity is hardly a step down in status.

I lean toward Roy's explanation of Typhon's "self-aggrandizement". I think his primary audience was the people of the Whorl.

Lee Berman — 23 Sep 2010, 02:39 · follows Lee Berman

David Stockhoff: Plus, the fact that he "chose to make Urth his capitol" at least opens up the possibility that he's from somewhere else, not to mention that the source of his powers is still unknown.

I concur with David that these items are important hints that Typhon is extra-terrestrial in origin.

At least as important is Typhon's statement that "I was not born as I am, or born at all, as you meant it."

But for me, most important is his name. Everyone else from Urth in his time period has saint names, Declan, Zama, Ymar, Burgundofora, Hadelin, etc. etc. (Ceryx is the exception but that merits a different thread). No St. Typhon.

I think name "Typhon" places him quite firmly in the category of Abaia and Erebus and Scylla and Arioeh and other mythological monster/demon named characters. I think those characters are fairly clear as extra-terrestrial in origin. Add the naming to the other evidence and I don't see much that argues that he is human and from Urth, other than his appearance.

[FWIW, I think much of the same logic applies to Baldanders. I place quite a bit of stock in the story about how he just appeared one day on the lakeshore. I don't think his advanced scientific knowledge comes solely from the hierodules. Moreover, monstrous behavior is seen from both these guys in their treatment of humanity, including their own bodies.

Severian's musings on utopian society includes "worlds in which all the people, knowing themselves descended from a single pair of colonists, treated one another as brothers and sisters...". But that ties into my "grand unified theory" involving an alien corruption of humanity on Urth. Enough has been said on that subject already.]

Jeff Wilson — 23 Sep 2010, 07:01 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 9/22/2010 9:39 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

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"Typhon" shares human anatomy with Piaton, who *is* saint-named (the original was martyred by having the top of his skull sawed off, per the physicians' original plan), and his mind powers are impressively strong but don't put him categorically into nonhuman status with folks like Decuman and the Pelerine in the tent running around.

His nonbornness makes him a candidate for a eugenical test tube baby, who could perfectly well be from outer space where that sort of thing is in fashion but he needn't literally be an alien monster when a human tyrant is more than sufficiently monstrous. Human tyrants also have a habit of ruling under acquired names, like Stalin and Augustus.

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I can believe Balanders the giant first appeared on the lakeshore one day, but we have no way to know what name the smaller castle builder he "chased away" went by.

I don't think his advanced scientific knowledge comes solely from the hierodules.

Dr Talos mentions how Baldanders does primary research of his own, and of course Urth is littered with bits and pieces of ancient technology he can learn from.

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Lee Berman — 23 Sep 2010, 12:41 · follows Jeff Wilson

Jeff Wilson: "Typhon" shares human anatomy with Piaton, who *is* saint-named (the original was martyred by having the top of his skull sawed off, per the physicians' original plan), and his mind powers are impressively strong but don't put him categorically into nonhuman status with folks like Decuman and the Pelerine in the tent running around.

Some intriguing points in your post Jeff. For me, Decuman's and Domnicellae's powers seem as only slightly hyper-versions of the person-to-person human interactions of hypnosis and lie detection. Typhon's and the Mandragora's ability to have verbally complex, detailed mental conversations (sans sensory contact for Mandragora) and to accurately see things far beyond the scope of human perception puts them in a different, superhuman category.

I can believe Baldanders the giant first appeared on the lakeshore one day, but we have no way to know what name the smaller castle builder he "chased away" went by

I'm assuming you are not calling into question the assumption that Baldanders is, as he says, the smaller man who appeared by the lake. Perhaps you are suggesting that his original name was a saint name and that he was originally a Commonwealth denizen? If it is so, I think it would have been more fair for Wolfe to give us more of a hint of that.

Human tyrants also have a habit of ruling under acquired names, like Stalin and Augustus.

Are you are suggesting that, in BotNS, a human can acquire a monster name, joining the ranks of aliens like Abaia and Erebus, simply through monstrous behavior, hence Typhon and Baldanders? Or are you thinking that all these characters with monster names have human origins?

Given the history of interstellar human empire, it could be a moot point whether superhuman creatures are alien in nature or mutated but pure humans returning to the home planet. I lean toward there being at least a partial alien component (with the understanding that there are various ways aliens could blend their beings with humans, shapeshifting, interbreeding, bloodsucking..).

Normally, I suppose it is the default assumption that a character who looks human is human. But for me, follow-up BotNS characters such as Zak/Tzadkiel and Quetzal and Fava (and the fore-shadowing of 5HoC) trumpet the idea that "in this story there are aliens wearing human guise among us. Be alert for them!".

It was Roy who dubbed it my "grand unified theory". Not sure how grand it is, but for me, it does unify a few themes including Typhon, Abaia/Erebus, Inire and their fate, Dr. Talos' play and the need for Ushas.

Lee Berman — 23 Sep 2010, 14:35 · follows Lee Berman

Gerry Quinn: Not a strong 'Spring' association. And if we lose the 'typhoon' association, the wind connection is even weaker.

Agreed. But if the sirrocco winds of Typhon-Set were a spring-only phenomenon my skepticism on this theory would be significantly erased. Typhon-Set was a god of wind.

The drought (as well as any unexpectedly hot winds) is a consequence of the blockage of some of the Whorl's ventilation tunnels over time; it is an indication of the decrepitude of the Whorl. The Whorl as built by Pas/Typhon did not suffer from drought.

There are some who feel the Whorl's failures are the result of planned obsolescence. i.e. Typhon/Pas wanted it to fail to discourage the residents from staying on. (FWIW- the Babylonian cognate to Typhon, Pazuzu, was also a god/demon of winds. I suspect this is at least a partial inspiration for the name "Pas")

If there were strong associations between Spring Wind and Typhon, such as a suggestion of two heads, I'd credit it. But I think it's a stretch to read an identification into what we see here.

Surely it is a stretch. But many think that stretching one's intuition is necessary to understand these stories. If all the implied associations were strong, obvious ones, it wouldn't be a Gene Wolfe book.

On the other hand, guarding against over-stretching is surely also a necessary function of understanding. Finding a balance is the reason we are here, is it not? Happily the decision on where to draw the line is quite individualized for each person and for each Wolfe mystery.

António Pedro Marques — 23 Sep 2010, 15:27 · in reply to Lee Berman

Lee Berman wrote (23-09-2010 13:41):

It was Roy who dubbed it my "grand unified theory". Not sure how grand it is, but for me, it does unify a few themes including Typhon, Abaia/Erebus, Inire and their fate, Dr. Talos' play and the need for Ushas.

I hope I am not being insulting (or wrong) in noting that the bit Roy takes issue with is not the 'grand', but precisely the 'unified'. What you undoubtedly see as the significant merit in it, is what others view as a straitjacket or even a reality distortion field.

James Wynn — 23 Sep 2010, 15:31 · in reply to Lee Berman

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Lee Berman-

Agreed. But if the sirrocco winds of Typhon-Set were a spring-only phenomenon my skepticism on this theory would be significantly erased. Typhon-Set was a god of wind.

Wolfe doesn't just create easy allegories of other stories. He is interested in mythology as he is interested in pulp literature. But even more, he seems interested in the way their themes and icons span the globe. And he's interested in words.

The word typhon is directly connected to the word typhoon. It might well be that the connection was originally erroneous. It might be that the association was real but the supposition for how they were connected was erroneous. None of this disassociates the words from one another.

Typhon

--the mythical one(s)-- is a wind or closely associated with winds (but it might be that name for Egypt's typhon wind was as much originally based on erroneous etymology as

typhon/typhoon--much of language is metaphor). To insist that Spring Wind (typhoons _do_ come in the Spring) ought to be Summer Wind if we were expected to associate him to Typhon would be like ME answering Andrew thus: "How can you say Rhea Silvia is Bird of the Woods? Rhea Silvia was not a bird."

This is a myth that has been subsumed into an historical character in the same way that King Arthur and Alexander the Great subsumed myths from much more ancient periods. Those who translated the story knew nothing of Roman mythology or Kipling. So they did not use the "authentic" terms. I'm not sure how to explain this better. I can only recommend to you Weer's conversation with Louis Gold in "Peace".

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 23 Sep 2010, 15:52 · in reply to Lee Berman

On Thu, Sep 23, 2010 at 5:41 AM, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:
Are you are suggesting that, in BotNS, a human can acquire a monster name, joining the ranks of aliens like Abaia and Erebus, simply through monstrous behavior, hence Typhon and Baldanders? Or are you thinking that all these characters with monster names have human origins?

I don't know what Jeff had in mind, but to me Typhon's and Baldanders's names suggest that they have left the human race and become monsters.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Lee Berman — 23 Sep 2010, 18:25 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

James Wynn: Wolfe doesn't just create easy allegories of other stories. He is interested in mythology as he is interested in pulp literature. But even more, he seems interested in the way their themes and icons span the globe.

I agree with this. The field of comparative mythology seems so fascinating to me. Perhaps Gene Wolfe has no interest in it but hard to believe.

We have Flood and Ark myths all around the Middle East area. If the Bible has a raven and dove, Sumerians have a dove, sparrow and raven, and the Masai have a dove and a vulture I suppose it could be evidence that the flood stories were unrelated. But so much more interesting to guess each culture faced the same flood and interpreted it in a slightly different way.

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Yes, leaders, like floods can be the shared historical reference which gives rise to similar myths and legends in a given area. I'd want to add that the shared human condition itself also gives rise to parallel stories and legends from around the world.

I hope it is not too sacriligious to suggest that the stories of sexless pregnancy found for Early Summer and plant juice, Juno and foxglove, Shing Ma and Waterlilly etc. share a cognate in the Mary/Jesus story, all rooted in the cultural roles for women and sex in human society.

Some think that the mythology of dwarfs, sprites, giants and dragons etc. has its basis in primate and earlier mammalian genetic memories from when various sized human species co-existed and earlier times when there were flying reptilian creatures in the sky.

DAVID STOCKHOFF — 23 Sep 2010, 19:48 · in reply to James Wynn

In a nutshell, Wolfe loves puns.

--- On Thu, 9/23/10, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:

From: James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com>
Subject: Re: (urth) Short Sun blog
To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>
Date: Thursday, September 23, 2010, 11:31 AM
Gerry Quinn: Not a strong 'Spring' association. And if we lose the 'typhoon' association, the wind connection is even weaker.

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Jane Delawney — 23 Sep 2010, 21:27 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On 23/09/10 08:01, Jeff Wilson wrote:

"Typhon" shares human anatomy with Piaton, who **is** saint-named (the original was martyred by having the top of his skull sawed off, per the physicians' original plan), and his mind powers are impressively strong but don't put him categorically into nonhuman status with folks like Decuman and the Pelerine in the tent running around.

There is no seed of doubt sown anywhere that Piaton is anything other than a human being - so it may be notable (perhaps) that there's no suggestion in any of Typhon's speechifying to Sev that there might have been a danger of rejection of the transplant ie. Piaton's body rejecting Typhon's head as foreign tissue - all Typhon appears to have been concerned about is the mastery of bodily functions.

Anti-rejection drugs are available nowadays for transplant recipients and are moderately effective, and of course such could undoubtedly have been given to Typhon/Piaton by his

physicians. However, such medications are designed for prevention of rejection of *human* tissue by *human* recipients. I would imagine the problems would be duh, 'somewhat' greater if Typhon were un-human; and would outweigh any problems regarding mastery of the last autonomic functions by quite a bit. One can only speculate on the putative state of medical science in Typhon's era, but the fact that mastery of bodily functions is mentioned by Typhon while tissue rejection is not strongly suggests to me that Typhon must have been just as human, by origin, as his 'organ donor' Piaton; if not in fact of the same blood group and tissue type.

His nonbornness makes him a candidate for a eugenical test tube baby, who could perfectly well be from outer space where that sort of thing is in fashion but he needn't literally be an alien monster when a human tyrant is more than sufficiently monstrous.

agreed.

jd

ps I'm making an assumption that GW would have been very well aware of the assorted problems associated with organ transplantation and rejection - these were well known even in the 1970s, though medical means of dealing with them have advanced since then.

Jeff Wilson — 23 Sep 2010, 21:53 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

On 9/23/2010 10:52 AM, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:

On Thu, Sep 23, 2010 at 5:41 AM, Lee Berman<severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:

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I don't know what Jeff had in mind, but to me Typhon's and Baldanders's names suggest that they have left the human race and become monsters.

I think that is the right subtext, but in-character it makes sense for "Typhon" to be an adopted name that is kept by virtue and itself becomes a source of more virtue as the owner ascends in a way that a common name like the equivalent of "Bob" just can't.

The milder "Baldanders" suits, as it dissociates him from his former life and dissuades Commonwealthers newly met from being too friendly. His size alone is more than enough virtue to sell the name as appropriate, and he has the witty and charming Dr Talos for anything that requires congenial relations, and the play company "legitimizes" the creature appellations as stage names.

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Jeff Wilson — 23 Sep 2010, 22:17 · in reply to Jane Delawney

On 9/23/2010 4:27 PM, Jane Delawney wrote:

On 23/09/10 08:01, Jeff Wilson wrote:

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ps I'm making an assumption that GW would have been very well aware of the assorted problems associated with organ transplantation and rejection - these were well known even in the 1970s, though medical means of dealing with them have advanced since then.

The rejection issues are swept with the same hand wave that includes all the sublime biological technology on Urth. The old autarch's detail on the way the analepict works includes a transfer of brain cells that take up residence within the recipient; this along with the physician at the ziggurat's repeated use of a single donor implies a rejection solution so robust that no prior preparation (other than the one dose) and no regimen afterward is needed and the concern is passe. So indeed Typhon would be free to choose his donor from all his slaves, not just those who are part of his alleged clone cohort.

Jonas is an example of a similar rejection-passe scenario: apparently the hollow androids' remnant occupant-serving features include some kind of physical as well as inductive interface to let the man operate the limbs after trauma, that has been reversed to let the limbs operate the man in the shepherd's case.

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Jeff Wilson — 24 Sep 2010, 04:01 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 9/23/2010 7:41 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

Jeff Wilson: "Typhon" shares human anatomy with Piaton, who **is** saint-named (the original was martyred by having the top of his skull sawed off, per the physicians' original plan), and his mind powers are impressively strong but don't put him categorically into nonhuman status with folks like Decuman and the Pelerine in the tent running around.

Some intriguing points in your post Jeff. For me, Decuman's and Domnicellae's powers seem as only slightly hyper-versions of the person-to-person human interactions of hypnosis and lie detection. Typhon's and the Mandragora's ability to have verbally complex, detailed mental conversations (sans sensory contact for Mandragora) and to accurately see things far beyond the scope of human perception puts them in a different, superhuman category.

I don't see a lot of textev for this; if Typhon's mental mojo is all that, why does he bother to physically drag Severian up to the observation windows to tempt him with a vision of the world's powers, thrones, and dominions? I see that he has some kind of compelling power of suggestion, but his repeated attempts to get Sev to swear on the Claw suggest to me that his psionic transmissions are **not** complex mental conversations but more like some narrow gears to comply with the command of the moment that has to build on some volition of the subject to commit to service to be truly effective.

Typhon's assertion that he has sent his thought into far places, still-functional machinery at the site, his knowledge of the state of current monstrous affairs, and Severian's overhearing him moving about but not speaking suggests to me that he can mentally assert control over machines in his presence as well, and gathers this intelligence from the remaining

communications gear at the mountain fortress and such distant mechanized stations as still operate after centuries of neglect, like the voices in the uppermost floor or the Matachine tower.

Perhaps both abilities are the same ability, coercing electrical impulses in circuitry as well as in grey matter.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
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Lee Berman — 24 Sep 2010, 13:23 · follows Jeff Wilson

Jeff, your argument below on the more modest, machine assisted abilities of Typhon is a good one. What isn't addressed, for me, are the similar abilities of the Mandragora. Within your framework of thinking are you saying the Mandragora has similar machinery to Typhon's at his disposal? Or that Typhon and the Mandragora are unrelated? Or something else?

(I had originally also assumed Typhon's powers were machine assisted but my thoughts have been swayed by the Mandragora connection and the persistence of the lupine theme of non-human beings in human form).

Jeff Wilson: I don't see a lot of textev for this; if Typhon's mental mojo is all that, why does he bother to physically drag Severian up to the observation windows to tempt him with a vision of the world's powers, thrones, and dominions? I see that he has some kind of compelling power of suggestion, but his repeated attempts to get Sev to swear on the Claw suggest to me that his psionic transmissions are **not** complex mental conversations but more like some narrow geas to comply with the command of the moment that has to build on some volition of the subject to commit to service to be truly effective.

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David Stockhoff — 24 Sep 2010, 13:27 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

I like the theory that Typhon's powers are largely machine-based. It fits with what we know: machines' ability to create aquastors, the Autarchs' words of power (which could be mental as much as audible) that let them control at least some machines while preventing others from doing so, and Cyriaca's tale of robotic star empires.

It also fits with Typhon's access to plainly advanced mechanical/electronic/robotic technology as found in the Whorl. His technology isn't bio-psionic, though it is genetic as well.

Most of all, it fits with the fact that Wolfe gives us no hints whatsoever about the source of any mental powers Typhon might have---he doesn't need to, because Typhon doesn't particularly have any. But we know that mental powers are possible (Mucor, the Mandragora), so his use and control of machines is easily explained.

That's also one less reason to think Typhon is not from Urth, though I still think so.

On 9/24/2010 12:01 AM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

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Gerry Quinn — 24 Sep 2010, 14:14 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

From: "Jeff Wilson" <jwilson at io.com>

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I always thought of him as just having a very dominant personality, and using technology to get the information. Indeed, doesn't he claim himself that his power over people is associated with them recognising his face? This doesn't suggest psychic powers, though of course it doesn't rule them out either.

As for trying to make Severian swear fealty, doesn't this tie in with Severian's thoughts about Vodalus's coin very early in the story? There is power in oaths even if the swearer does not fully intend to keep them.

- Gerry Quinn

Dave Tallman — 24 Sep 2010, 16:29 · follows Gerry Quinn

Lee Berman wrote:

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Typhon is a good one. What isn't addressed, for me, are the similar abilities of the Mandragora. Within your framework of thinking are you

saying the Mandragora has similar machinery to Typhon's at his disposal? Or that Typhon and the Mandragora are unrelated? Or something else?

I am not persuaded that the Mandragora has anything to do with Typhon. There are a couple of unanswered questions with this theory.

1) Why would a clone of Typhon be stored in the Autarch's visiting room? Typhon wasn't an Autarch -- the title wasn't invented in his time. The Matachin Tower was just part of a prison then.

2) Why did the Mandragora ask about a memory of Severian being in a basket as a child?

My theory is that the Mandragora is a spare clone brother of Severian himself. Two clone embryos could have been transported downriver in a basket to the Citadel (possibly by the Cyriaca of the previous iteration) and sent back in time to be implanted in Catherine. Then it would make sense for both brothers to share this memory. The unused clone, as a would-be autarch of sorts, could be given the honor of being stored in the Autarch room.

In my theory, this is Severian's missing "twin" and the Fish to his Frog.

Jeff Wilson — 24 Sep 2010, 23:49 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 9/24/2010 8:23 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

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I'm very suspicious of the mandragora and how similar Severian finds them; I'd bet my flyer to your villa that it's only echoing Sev's expectations back to him and is otherwise an inert lump without a living mind's thoughts and aspirations to make it go.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
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Jeff Wilson — 25 Sep 2010, 05:14 · in reply to Dave Tallman

On 9/24/2010 11:29 AM, Dave Tallman wrote:

Lee Berman wrote:

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I am not persuaded that the Mandragora has anything to do with Typhon. There are a couple of unanswered questions with this theory.

1) Why would a clone of Typhon be stored in the Autarch's visiting room? Typhon wasn't an Autarch -- the title wasn't invented in his time. The Matachin Tower was just part of a prison then.

I just posted a quote from URTH that seems to say that there were Autarchs before Typhon, and in SWORD Typhon answers to the title of Autarch without correction or comment to Severian.

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Lee Berman — 25 Sep 2010, 06:40 · follows Jeff Wilson

Some interesting thoughts being thrown around about these characters.

Typhon not only refers to Urth as "this world" a couple times, he also calls the sun "this sun". Not proof positive but to me he really doesn't talk like a native. Then there is his name. In origin, it seems closer to Erebus than any other character. If Erebus has an Urthly, human origin I could see the same argument for Typhon. If not, not. I think the naming similarity locks these two characters together in origin and essence, whatever they may be.

Has been posted more than once before but maybe okay to do it again. In the McCaffrey interview Wolfe says:

I also gave the people and other beings in the book real names ("Severian," "Vodulus," and "Agilus," for example, are all ordinary, if now uncommon, names for men.....As for the monsters' names, I simply named them for monsters.

Someone earlier noted that Baldanders' name implies a milder form of monstrosity and I agree. The original protean meaning is of a being who is transforming, "soon to be another". I can see him, perhaps, as being originally human, but changing into a monster. But the names Erebus and Typhon convey essential monstrosity for me.

David Stockhoff- Wolfe gives us no hints whatsoever about the source of any mental powers Typhon might have---he doesn't need to, because Typhon doesn't particularly have any. But we know that mental powers are possible (Mucor, the Mandragora),

Typhon could have taken Severian to the mountaintop to access ESP machinery but seems to me his primary goal was to take Severian to where there was food. Severian hears Typhon use a word of power to command the flyer but he doesn't hear anything similar as Typhon looks all the way to the battle at Orithiya and forces Severian to see through his own eyes.

I think Mucor is a very relevant name to bring up here. She is human in origin but has superhuman, even god-like powers of projection and human possession. But perhaps because she is human in origin (like Baldanders?), she can't be given a greek mythological name like the other gods (I think it is more than just that she isn't part of Pas' family). She is Vironese but she doesn't get a plant name, perhaps because she isn't really human. So she ends up with a name from a different biological Kingdom, mucor being a sort of fungal mold. Foul, parasitic and always intruding where it isn't wanted.

The Mandragora has been mentioned already. He has a rather authoritarian personality (given his circumstances) and his almost successful attempt to manipulate Severian via the Thecla portion of his mind might associate him with Typhon as I think his telepathy and clairvoyance and name do.

Dave Tallman asks:

Why would a clone of Typhon be stored in the Autarch's visiting room?

Well, Severian does list the Mandragora among the "treasures" of the room.

Wikipedia says-

Mandragoras are thought to be little dolls or figures given to sorcerers by the Devil for the purpose of being consulted by them in time of need;

Devil, hm...Anyway, I can imagine an autarch (or the "sorcerer" ruling behind the autarch) finding an advisory use for a helpless being with the power of clairvoyance.

Dave also asks:

Why did the Mandragora ask about a memory of Severian being in a basket as a child?
My theory is that the Mandragora is a spare clone brother of Severian himself. Two clone embryos could have been transported downriver in a basket to the Citadel (possibly by the Cyriaca of the previous iteration) and sent back in time to be implanted in Catherine.

Another fantastical theory to explain this could be based on Dorcas having a basket ("not small yet not large either") with her as she mourns the boatman. Perhaps Severian impregnated her with himself, and some time travel trick ensued.

Also regarding the screaming baby memory, Severian says he remembers being "encircled by brown walls".

I think the Matachin Tower cells have walls of gray. Typhon's room is circular but has shiny metal walls.

I really don't have anything close to a good answer for this one. Maybe someone else does.

Jeff Wilson — 25 Sep 2010, 08:05 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On 9/23/2010 11:01 PM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

Typhon's assertion that he has sent his thought into far places, still-functional machinery at the site, his knowledge of the state of current monstrous affairs, and Severian's overhearing him moving about but not speaking suggests to me that he can mentally assert control over machines in his presence as well, and gathers this intelligence from the remaining communications gear at the mountain fortress and such distant mechanized stations as still operate after centuries of neglect, like the voices in the uppermost floor or the Matachine tower.

Reviewing the passage in SWORD, Typhon explicitly uses a whispered word to command the floating boat, counting against his mental command over the inanimate. Typhon may have been speaking more figuratively about sending his thought into distant places, or the drift in language over the thousand years between the eras may compound the translation difficulty, so that he really means something more like will or notion.

The display of all the Commonwealth could be a mental projection, or it could be a hologram of some kind - it's possible that Typhon's mojo and the spectacle distract Sev from noticing whatever controls or command gestures are being used to operate the projection.

There seem to be a *lot* of curious lacunae in the Typhon sequence. He doesn't seem particularly affected by his resurrection, and at different times treats Sev as a stranger and as a forgetful acquaintance, but doesn't seem to realize he is the Conciliator til near the end. Weird.

David Stockhoff — 25 Sep 2010, 12:29 · in reply to Lee Berman

My impression is that the mandragora was simply making a comparison. In doing so, he shows that he has better access to Severian's memories than he does himself.

On 9/25/2010 2:40 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

Dave also asks:

Why did the Mandragora ask about a memory of Severian being in a basket as a child?

My theory is that the Mandragora is a spare clone brother of Severian himself. Two clone embryos could have been transported downriver in a basket to the Citadel (possibly by the Cyriaca of the previous iteration) and sent back in time to be implanted in Catherine.

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I think the Matachin Tower cells have walls of gray. Typhon's room is circular but has shiny metal walls.

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Roy C. Lackey — 25 Sep 2010, 18:45 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Jeff Wilson quoted and wrote:

1) Why would a clone of Typhon be stored in the Autarch's visiting room?

Typhon wasn't an Autarch -- the title wasn't invented in his time. The Matachin Tower was just part of a prison then.

I just posted a quote from URTH that seems to say that there were Autarchs before Typhon, and in SWORD Typhon answers to the title of Autarch without correction or comment to Severian.

Dave is right about Typhon not being an autarch. Typhon was the last monarch, Ymar the first autarch. The title autarch is used by a number of people in the Commonwealth in Severian's era to mean ruler, because they know no other word for one. Cyriaca uses autarch in that way in her story about the founding of Ultan's library, and there are other cases, such as Nicaret explaining to Severian why pastries and coffee were served to people in the antechamber, a custom that began before the reign of Ymar.

Jonas, answering a question about the weird soldiers in the Wall, said, "The old autarchs, who were not autarchs or called so, did use human soldiers." (CLAW, chap. VIII) Typhon would have answered to "Imperator or something of the sort" as readily as to autarch.

The autarch's quarters were in the oldest part of the Citadel and may have antedated the autarchy. Not that I'm buyin' any stinkin' clones.

-Roy

Jeff Wilson — 25 Sep 2010, 19:14 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

On 9/25/2010 1:45 PM, Roy C. Lackey wrote:

Jeff Wilson quoted and wrote:

1) Why would a clone of Typhon be stored in the Autarch's visiting room? Typhon wasn't an Autarch -- the title wasn't invented in his time. The Matachin Tower was just part of a prison then.

I just posted a quote from URTH that seems to say that there were Autarchs before Typhon, and in SWORD Typhon answers to the title of Autarch without correction or comment to Severian.

Dave is right about Typhon not being an autarch. Typhon was the last monarch, Ymar the first autarch.

Then whose memories lie behind Ymar's?

The title autarch is used by a number of people in the Commonwealth in Severian's era to mean ruler, because they know no other word for one.

It might be the most familiar and the only commonly used one, but I find it hard to believe it is the only one during a time of active war; surely people talk about the Ascians soldiers and the Periscii raiders and must have words for their rulers other than "autarch" if only to avoid dishonoring the autarch by association. "King" appears in the brown book, which was popular closer to Sev's time than to Typhon's.

Cyriaca uses autarch in that way in her story about the founding of Ultan's library, and there are other cases, such as Nicaret explaining to Severian why pastries and coffee were served to people in the antechamber, a custom that began before the reign of Ymar.

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Yes, this is what I mean, "autarch" or something very similar like "autocrat" must be known to Typhon and accepted as a suitably respectful or flattering title, seeing as he is such a stickler for respect for his authority!

The autarch's quarters were in the oldest part of the Citadel and may have antedated the autarchy. Not that I'm buyin' any stinkin' clones.

Yeah; the general solution of tissue rejection makes clones obsolete for medical reasons, time travelers don't need them because there are already a succession of Severians, and you seem only to need them when you want someone who looks just like the original but isn't, and even that seems to be a fading tradition.

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Jane Delawney — 26 Sep 2010, 01:46 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On 23/09/10 23:17, Jeff Wilson wrote:

The rejection issues are swept with the same hand wave that includes

all the sublime biological technology on Urth. The old autarch's detail on the way the analepict works includes a transfer of brain cells that take up residence within the recipient; this along with the physician at the ziggurat's repeated use of a single donor implies a rejection solution so robust that no prior preparation (other than the one dose) and no regimen afterward is needed and the concern is *passé*. So indeed Typhon would be free to choose his donor from all his slaves, not just those who are part of his alleged clone cohort.

OK, got all that, and granted; but the point I was attempting to address was not re: the notion of clones/'test tube (human) babies' or a putative clone cohort (of which I know nothing!), but re: Typhon possibly being /nonhuman/, which was someone else's hypothesis entirely - was it Lee's, or are we all actually arguing with the blog writer? I've kind of forgotten in the twists and turns of this conversation.

On this point only then (Typhon's possible nonhuman origin) - the transfers/transplants mentioned in this post (Jeff's, the one quoted) are all within the human species. In other words, these examples all support my point and in fact if anything tell /against/ the notion that Typhon might be of unUrthly origin.

I know it wasn't you (Jeff) that advanced the notion that Typhon might not be human, and in fact we agree I think.

regards

jd

Jonas is an example of a similar rejection-*passé* scenario: apparently the hollow androids' remnant occupant-serving features include some kind of physical as well as inductive interface to let the man operate the limbs after trauma, that has been reversed to let the limbs operate the man in the shepherd's case.

Roy C. Lackey — 26 Sep 2010, 05:18 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Jeff Wilson wrote and quote:

I just posted a quote from URTH that seems to say that there were Autarchs before Typhon, and in SWORD Typhon answers to the title of Autarch without correction or comment to Severian.

Dave is right about Typhon not being an autarch. Typhon was the last monarch, Ymar the first autarch.

Then whose memories lie behind Ymar's?

Don't know. But the Age of Myth is older even than the Age of the Monarch and probably includes Apu-Punchau, who was Severian, who used time travel.

> The title autarch is used by a number of people in the Commonwealth in Severian's era to mean ruler, because they know no other word for one.

It might be the most familiar and the only commonly used one, but I find it hard to believe it is the only one during a time of active war; surely people talk about the Ascians soldiers and the Periscii raiders and must have words for their rulers other than "autarch" if only to avoid dishonoring the autarch by association. "King" appears in the brown book, which was popular closer to Sev's time than to Typhon's.

Autarch might not be the only word used by people in Sev's era to mean ruler, but it is a word used as a catch-all for ruler. People in Typhon's day referred to him as monarch.

> Cyriaca uses autarch in that way in her story about the founding of Ultan's library, and there are other cases, such as Nicaret explaining to Severian why pastries and coffee were served to people in the antechamber, a custom that began before the reign of Ymar.

Jonas, answering a question about the weird soldiers in the Wall, said, "The old autarchs, who were not autarchs or called so, did use human soldiers."

(CLAW, chap. VIII) Typhon would have answered to "Imperator or something of the sort" as readily as to autarch.

Yes, this is what I mean, "autarch" or something very similar like "autocrat" must be known to Typhon and accepted as a suitably respectful or flattering title, seeing as he is such a stickler for respect for his authority!

Sev said to Ymar: "Ymar, someday you will become the ruler. You'll be the monarch, although I don't think you'll call yourself that." (URTH, chap. XXXVIII, 269)

-Roy

Jeff Wilson — 26 Sep 2010, 05:47 · in reply to Jane Delawney

On 9/25/2010 8:46 PM, Jane Delawney wrote:

On this point only then (Typhon's possible nonhuman origin) - the transfers/transplants mentioned in this post (Jeff's, the one quoted) are all within the human species. In other words, these examples all support my point and in fact if anything tell /against/ the notion that Typhon might be of unUrthly origin.

I know it wasn't you (Jeff) that advanced the notion that Typhon might not be human, and in fact we agree I think.

I mostly brought it up because it had slipped my mind earlier the last time Typhon's notional clones came up, and someone mentioned tissue rejection in support of Piaton being a clone or close family member.

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Lee Berman — 26 Sep 2010, 11:10 · follows Jeff Wilson

Jane Delawney: On this point only then (Typhon's possible nonhuman origin) - the transfers/transplants mentioned in this post (Jeff's, the one quoted) are all within the human species. In other words, these examples all support my point and in fact if anything tell /against/ the notion that Typhon might be of unUrthly origin.

In Typhon we see a dried out, thousand year old human body, cells destroyed proteins degraded, somehow able to come to life, rehydrate, re-establish neural connections, organ integration etc. all within hours. In Tzadkiel we see the cells of a finger manage to re-organize themselves into heart, lung, brain, liver and bone cells and become a fully organized and

integrated person within seconds. We have man-apes and dogmen and lord knows what else going on in the oceans and Baldanders labs and the witches tower.

All these fantastic biological processes are casually accepted yet a slight protein readjustment in the histamines of a human-appearing alien by the best doctors of an interplanetary empire to suppress organ rejection is deemed impossible?

I have to guess that Typhon-as-alien-in-origin just doesn't feel right to some people. In my view, such a feeling is sufficient to reject it as a working concept. No need for post hoc biological or other sorts of objections, especially those from outside the text. It works for my view of BotNS but it isn't meant as a foreign contaminant or monkey wrench in the working interpretations of others.

Gerry Quinn — 26 Sep 2010, 11:22 · in reply to Jane Delawney

From: Jane Delawney

On this point only then (Typhon's possible nonhuman origin) - the transfers/transplants mentioned in this post (Jeff's, the one quoted) are all within the human species. In other words, these examples all support my point and in fact if anything tell against the notion that Typhon might be of unUrthly origin.

I know it wasn't you (Jeff) that advanced the notion that Typhon might not be human, and in fact we agree I think.

Of course Typhon could well be a human from beyond Urth.

- Gerry Quinn

David Stockhoff — 26 Sep 2010, 13:03 · in reply to Lee Berman

Severian made the assassin in the corridor come back to life, IIRC, after years. Why not Typhon? He was mummified; you can only be so dead once that happens.

On 9/26/2010 7:10 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

Jane Delawney: On this point only then (Typhon's possible nonhuman origin) - the transfers/transplants mentioned in this post (Jeff's, the one quoted) are all within the human species. In other words, these examples all support my point and in fact if anything tell /against/ the notion that Typhon might be of unUrthly origin.

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Jeff Wilson — 26 Sep 2010, 21:30 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 9/26/2010 6:10 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

In Typhon we see a dried out, thousand year old human body, cells destroyed proteins degraded, somehow able to come to life, rehydrate, re-establish neural connections, organ integration etc. all within hours. In Tzadkiel we see the cells of a finger manage to re-organize themselves into heart, lung, brain, liver and bone cells and become a fully organized and integrated person within seconds. We have man-apes and dogmen and lord knows what else going on in the oceans and Baldanders labs and the witches tower.

All these fantastic biological processes are casually accepted yet a slight protein readjustment in the histamines of a human-appearing alien by the best doctors of an interplanetary empire to suppress organ rejection is deemed impossible?

Typhon's resurrection by Severian is not reasonably believable as a biological process, and I certainly did not casually accept it as one when I first read the books, or the third time. But it is just as believable as the result of Severian's time-bending superpowers as any other resurrection in the books.

Tzadkiel's transmogrifications are likewise accompanied by an alien origin and a sublime command of time and space - it looks like seconds, but but it could be equally exempt from the plodding pace and irreversibility of Briah's temporal arrow, as is spelled out for other processes in Yesod.

The man-apes and dog-men are just as believable as any other genetic engineering writ large. Baldanders's gadgets and self-modifications are pretty outre, but there is the requisite appeal to the authority of science for suspension of disbelief in those matters.

A nonhuman origin for Typhon or anyone else who appears basically human however, is without precedent or suggestion of possibility in the first five volumes, at least remotely close to the Urthly ages. If Typhon's "really" a space vampire, it's by retroactive continuity from the later books.

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Jane Delawney — 27 Sep 2010, 00:56 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 26/09/10 12:10, Lee Berman wrote:

All these fantastic biological processes are casually accepted yet a slight protein readjustment in the histamines of a human-appearing alien by the best doctors of an interplanetary empire to suppress organ rejection is deemed impossible?

Not impossible; just very very improbable :)

Unless it is to be believed that all lifeforms everywhere in the universe share a common biochemistry, it's about as believable that an alien Typhon would be able to receive human organs (or body parts, whatever) as it is that a human woman would be able to bear the child of an alien being with copper-based blood, as occurs in that well known /fantasy/ series Star Trek.

I'd have no objection at all to the notion if Typhon were alleged to be an individual of human bloodstock who happened to have been born off world - but that does not seem to be the hypothesis under discussion.

jd

Jeff Wilson — 27 Sep 2010, 05:09 · in reply to Jane Delawney

On 9/26/2010 7:56 PM, Jane Delawney wrote:

I'd have no objection at all to the notion if Typhon were alleged to be an individual of human bloodstock who happened to have been born off world - but that does not seem to be the hypothesis under discussion.

I've always thought that was the case.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com

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Roy C. Lackey — 27 Sep 2010, 06:59 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Jeff Wilson quoted and wrote:

On 9/26/2010 7:56 PM, Jane Delawney wrote:

I'd have no objection at all to the notion if Typhon were alleged to be an individual of human bloodstock who happened to have been born off world - but that does not seem to be the hypothesis under discussion.

I've always thought that was the case.

Same here. There is no direct proof that Typhon's home world was not Urth, but there is an indirect indication. If you accept that Typhon ruled some number of worlds outside the Red Sun solar system -- which proposition I find compelling -- then it is not likely that he began his career on Urth. Kypris (in Chenille) said of him, "And he came to rule the whole--whorl. Our whorl, bigger than this. So fast. All in a few years. No one could believe it." (LAKE, chap. 4, p- 91) Mamelta, surely, was born on Urth, so the our "whorl" Typhon conquered in a few years was Urth, and he came from somewhere else to do it.

-Roy

Roy C. Lackey — 27 Sep 2010, 07:04 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Oops! I wrote:

Mamelta, surely, was born on Urth, so the our "whorl" Typhon conquered in a few years was Urth, and he came from somewhere else to do it.<

I meant Kypris, not Mamelta.

-Roy

David Stockhoff — 27 Sep 2010, 11:48 · in reply to Jane Delawney

Actually, the assumption that at least most life in the NS/LS/SS universe has the same biochemistry. The inhumis feed on both humans and Neighbors, for example. And then you have the alzabo.

Copper-based life seems to prove the rule by not existing here.

However, seamless transplantation does go too far.

On 9/26/2010 8:56 PM, Jane Delawney wrote:

On 26/09/10 12:10, Lee Berman wrote:

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I'd have no objection at all to the notion if Typhon were alleged to be an individual of human bloodstock who happened to have been born off world - but that does not seem to be the hypothesis under discussion.

jd

Gerry Quinn — 27 Sep 2010, 12:14 · in reply to Jane Delawney

From: Jane Delawney

On 26/09/10 12:10, Lee Berman wrote:

All these fantastic biological processes are casually accepted yet a slight protein readjustment in the histamines of a human-appearing alien by the best doctors of an interplanetary empire to suppress organ rejection is deemed impossible? Not impossible; just very very improbable :)

Unless it is to be believed that all lifeforms everywhere in the universe share a common biochemistry, it's about as believable that an alien Typhon would be able to receive human organs (or body parts, whatever) as it is that a human woman would be able to bear the child of an alien being with copper-based blood, as occurs in that well known fantasy series Star Trek. Of course, it is not very probable according to conventional evolutionary theory (admittedly, Wolfe has a penchant for Lamarckism) that the native animals and plants of St.Anne would be edible to humans, or that humans would be edible to alzabo, for that matter. Indeed, the alzabo seems to have evolved a solution which is radically more effective and biologically implausible than the transplantation of human organs!

Personally, I don't much care where Typhon came from. I don't see it as important. He looks human (or at least if he doesn't, Severian doesn't see fit to burden us with the details of any horns or tentacles he might sport) so I assume he is human. Perhaps there is a 'birther' faction dedicated to resisting his rule on the grounds that he was not born on Urth, but if so I suspect they mainly object to him for other reasons.

- Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn — 27 Sep 2010, 12:23 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

From: "Roy C. Lackey" <rclackey at stic.net>

Same here. There is no direct proof that Typhon's home world was not Urth, but there is an indirect indication. If you accept that Typhon ruled some number of worlds outside the Red Sun solar system -- which proposition I find compelling -- then it is not likely that he began his career on Urth. Kypris (in Chenille) said of him, "And he came to rule the whole--whorl. Our whorl, bigger than this. So fast. All in a few years. No one could believe

it." (LAKE, chap. 4, p- 91) Mamelta, surely, was born on Urth, so the our
"whorl" Typhon conquered in a few years was Urth, and he came from
somewhere
else to do it.

Why could he not have come to rule it having been born on it? It may seem implausible to you, but Mamelta has already pointed out that it seemed implausible to everyone!

- Gerry Quinn

David Stockhoff — 27 Sep 2010, 12:47 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

If he was born on Urth, and had to conquer Urth, that would tend to rule out any previous association with the existing empire, either for him or for Urth. But it's still possible.

Another angle is that, in a novel filled with backstory and plots revolving around an Epitome of Urth, it might be thematically consistent to assume Typhon was Urthly and was at the time the "best" of Urth.

If he did not directly inherit the star empire, and Urth did not come with it, then either (a) he joined and brought the empire to Urth or (b) he conquered Urth himself (consistent with Mamelta) and then went on to the other planets. I admit "b" is more surprising. than "a."

On 9/27/2010 8:23 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: "Roy C. Lackey" <rclackey at stic.net>
Same here. There is no direct proof that Typhon's home world was not Urth,
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- Gerry Quinn

Lee Berman — 27 Sep 2010, 13:33 · follows David Stockhoff

David Stockhoff- Actually, the assumption that at least most life in the NS/LS/SS universe has the same biochemistry. The inhumi feed on both humans and

Neighbors, for example. And then you have the alzabo.

Yep. And The Mother and Seawrack are down there eating drowned human sailors and, I think, Neighbor sailors before that. That's the picture I get from the Sun series- a galaxy of creatures able to eat each other and share their physical and mental being and existence.

Is this because Urthly humans spread out across the galaxy and mutated into a myriad of creatures? Or is it because a parasitic race feeding on multiple species serve as a vector for genetic sharing and splicing, like a virus for bacteria cells or even oncogenes in humans. Perhaps some combination of these processes?

I think the suggestions for this stuff are clear to see in the story. Identifying exactly which process created each superhuman character is probably not so important. Only the possibilities matter, which is all I've ever argued for.

For me, the underpinnings of BotNS are as an exploration of the interaction between pagan gods and Judeo-Christianity. Wolfe did this by creating an Earth twin where The Flood and Jesus never happened, allowing the pagan gods to have continued dominion far into the future of where we on Earth are now.

I'm glad Wolfe gave us various possibilities for the origin of such creatures as Erebus, Zeus, Typhon, Gabriel, Odin, Arioch, Abaia, Tzadkiel, etc. But at the end of the day, for the purpose of this story, I think it is more important to understand what they are rather than where they came from.

Daniel Petersen — 27 Sep 2010, 14:43 · in reply to Lee Berman

Lee Burman wrote:

'For me, the underpinnings of BotNS are as an exploration of the interaction between pagan gods and Judeo-Christianity. Wolfe did this by creating an Earth twin where The Flood and Jesus never happened, allowing the pagan gods to have continued dominion far into the future of where we on Earth are now.' Yes, it seems clear this is a central theme of the entire Solar Cycle (and possibly of the Soldier series as well, which I haven't read yet; and also Wolfe explicitly stated that in The Wizard Knight saga he was exploring chivalry in a world without Christianity [paraphrase from online video, easy to google]). My question is just *how* does he do this in BotNS? How does a non-existent faith (in the world of Urth where 'The Flood and Jesus never happened' - assuming this is a correct assumption) 'interact' with a sort of alternate 'paganism'? Is this a more or less *allegorical* move on Wolfe's part, where we see Severian the Christ-*like* figure in the midst of pagan 'lostness' and draw the parallels to our own experienced history of earth?

Or is it just all wrong to assume this is happening in some other galaxy or universe or what have you and that we are indeed witnessing a far future of our own earth with often vague but persistent traces of the Catholic faith (that is then parodied in BotLS)?

I believe it is said Wolfe himself said BotNS was happening in our remote past. But do we have to trust him on this?

On Mon, Sep 27, 2010 at 2:33 PM, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:

David Stockhoff- Actually, the assumption that at least most life in the NS/LS/SS

universe has the same biochemistry. The inhum feed on both humans and Neighbors, for example. And then you have the alzabo.

Yep. And The Mother and Seawrack are down there eating drowned human sailors and, I think, Neighbor sailors before that. That's the picture I get from the Sun series- a galaxy of creatures able to eat each other and share their physical and mental being and existence.

Is this because Urthly humans spread out across the galaxy and mutated into a myriad of creatures? Or is it because a parasitic race feeding on multiple species serve as a vector for genetic sharing and splicing, like a virus for bacteria cells or even oncogenes in humans. Perhaps some combination of these processes?

I think the suggestions for this stuff are clear to see in the story. Identifying exactly which process created each superhuman character is probably not so important. Only the possibilities matter, which is all I've ever argued for.

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I'm glad Wolfe gave us various possibilities for the origin of such creatures as Erebus, Zeus, Typhon, Gabriel, Odin, Arioeh, Abaia, Tzadkiel, etc. But at the end of the day, for the purpose of this story, I think it is more important to understand what they are rather than where they came from.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 27 Sep 2010, 15:58 · in reply to David Stockhoff

On Mon, Sep 27, 2010 at 4:48 AM, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:
Copper-based life seems to prove the rule by not existing here.

Hemocyanins (also spelled haemocyanins) are respiratory proteins in the form of metalloproteins containing two copper atoms that reversibly bind a single oxygen molecule (O₂). Oxygenation causes a color change between the colorless Cu(I) deoxygenated form and the blue Cu(II) oxygenated form. Hemocyanins carry oxygen in the hemolymph of most molluscs, and some arthropods, including the horseshoe crab, *Limulus polyphemus*. They are second only to hemoglobin in biological popularity of use in oxygen transport.[1] Unlike the hemoglobin in red blood cells found in vertebrates, hemocyanins are not bound to blood cells but are instead suspended directly in the hemolymph.

(from Wikipedia)

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Nicholas Jost — 27 Sep 2010, 16:19 · follows Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

From: Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com>

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Nicholas Jost

Lee Berman — 27 Sep 2010, 17:33 · follows Nicholas Jost

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I find the strongest clues to this in Dr. Talos' play (which I admit I found almost impenetrable in my earlier readings of this story). It is laced with demons and giants, Nephilim, Adam and Eve types, hints at human-demon matings, etc. Reading Genesis:6 helped me a lot in understanding this play. From a Bible Answers site:

The Nephilim ("fallen ones, giants") were the offspring of sexual relationships between the sons of God and daughters of men in Genesis 6:1-4. There is much debate as to the identity of the "sons of God." It is our contention that the "sons of God" were fallen angels (demons) who mated with human females and/or possessed human males and then mated with human females. These unions resulted in offspring, the Nephilim, that were "heroes of old, men of renown"

Greek (and some other) mythology is full of monsters but also pagan gods who sometimes came down to earth in human form to mate with real humans. The result of such matings was quite often a hero, like Hercules, Theseus and Perseus. Same story as Genesis 6 but from a different perspective.

It was The Flood which rid earth of most of its evil; Nephilim and presumably most of the fallen angels and their demon offspring. I (and perhaps Gene Wolfe) consider The Flood as allegory for how Judeo-Christianity swept away the earlier pagan religions.

My interpretation of Gene Wolfe's view is that The Flood was a far more significant event in the removal of evil from Earth than the coming of Jesus. Thus Severian's role on Urth is far more about being the New Sun and creating Ushas than providing personal salvation.

The pagan gods/demons of old were far too powerful for human beings to resist if they took a

mind to possessing, raping and/or corrupting a person. After the Flood it was more of a fair fight and the salvation of Jesus is enough to fight off evil, for those who accept it.

In BotNS we have some alien beings who come down to Urth and get directly involved with the people, getting mixed up in politics and witchcraft and stirring up wars etc. I suspect some human/alien matings also, though they are hidden. They get names like Erebus and Abaia and Arioch and perhaps those of 14 other megatherians . (Arioch is a fallen angel name, the rest are mythological).

We have other alien beings in BotNS who seem to keep their distance from direct interference with human beings working mostly indirectly to provide ways to keep the bossy aliens in check. These guys get angelic appearances and even angelic names, like Tzadkiel.

After the Flood turns Urth into Ushas, as on Earth, the demons/monsters like Abaia and Erebus have apparently been destroyed (this is hard to believe since they live under the ocean but I think the allegory is more important than the boring plot details here). A minor demon, Juturna, remains. Perhaps Severian's continuing function will be to provide something like personal salvation in the face of the surmountable evil she represents.

My interpretation, FWIW.

Lee Berman — 27 Sep 2010, 17:45 · follows Lee Berman

Dan'l: Hemocyanins carry oxygen in the hemolymph of most molluscs, and some arthropods.

Heh, Dan'l is such a meanie. They are on a Search For Spock and he gives them slugs and bugs.
;-)

DAVID STOCKHOFF — 27 Sep 2010, 18:27 · in reply to Lee Berman

Another possibility is that Wolfe simply chose to ignore those complications. As an engineer, he is sometimes very technical---see the remarkably elegant explanation presented in this list for the Long Sun. But he is not really a hard-SF kind of guy, not when details might get in the way, and maybe especially in terms of biology. And he's never proposed non-carbon life or non-iron blood in any story, as far as I know.

Even if he considered one of those possibilities (we do know gene transfer is possible), he wouldn't put them out front. I suppose the inhumi do make it impossible to rule out any theory like that.

--- On Mon, 9/27/10, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:

From: Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com>

Subject: (urth) note Re: Short Sun blog

To: urth at lists.urth.net

Date: Monday, September 27, 2010, 9:33 AM

David Stockhoff- Actually, the assumption that at least most life in the NS/LS/SS universe has the same biochemistry. The inhumi feed on both humans and Neighbors, for example. And then you have the alzabo.

Yep. And The Mother and Seawrack are down there eating drowned human sailors and, I think, Neighbor sailors before that. That's the picture I get from the Sun series- a galaxy of creatures able to eat each other and share their physical and mental being and existence.

Is this because Urthly humans spread out across the galaxy and mutated into a myriad of creatures? Or is it because a parasitic race feeding on multiple species serve as a vector for genetic sharing and splicing, like a virus for bacteria cells or even oncogenes in humans. Perhaps some combination of these processes?

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I'm glad Wolfe gave us various possibilities for the origin of such creatures as Erebus, Zeus, Typhon, Gabriel, Odin, Arioch, Abaia, Tzadkiel, etc. But at the end of the day, for the purpose of this story, I think it is more important to understand what they are rather than where they came from. ??? ???????? ?????? ??? ?

DAVID STOCKHOFF — 27 Sep 2010, 18:34 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Aha! Remarkable.

Bad example, then. Let's say "silicon-based."

--- On Mon, 9/27/10, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:

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

Subject: Re: (urth) note Re: Short Sun blog

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

Date: Monday, September 27, 2010, 11:58 AM

On Mon, Sep 27, 2010 at 4:48 AM, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:
Copper-based life seems to prove the rule by not existing here.

Hemocyanins (also spelled haemocyanins) are respiratory proteins in the form of metalloproteins containing two copper atoms that reversibly bind a single oxygen molecule (O₂). Oxygenation causes a color change between the colorless Cu(I) deoxygenated form and the blue Cu(II) oxygenated form. Hemocyanins carry oxygen in the hemolymph of most molluscs, and some arthropods, including the horseshoe crab, *Limulus polyphemus*. They are second only to hemoglobin in biological popularity of use in oxygen transport.[1] Unlike the hemoglobin in red blood cells found in vertebrates, hemocyanins are not bound to blood cells but are instead suspended directly in the hemolymph.

(from Wikipedia)

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

DAVID STOCKHOFF — 27 Sep 2010, 18:46 · in reply to Nicholas Jost

Perhaps, but I believe Severian observes that Little Sev was pretty well fried. That suggests that energies were expended in frying him, causing the flash, whether or not some kind of soul

extraction occurred.

Since we know the frying occurred, you'd be proposing a doubled event consuming doubled energies and producing doubled results (death and scanning). That's too complicated. And there is no evidence that "soul" scanning requires death.

--- On Mon, 9/27/10, Nicholas Jost <nickjost at yahoo.com> wrote:

From: Nicholas Jost <nickjost at yahoo.com>

Subject: Re: (urth) note Re: Short Sun blog

To: urth at lists.urth.net

Date: Monday, September 27, 2010, 12:19 PM

From: Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com>

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Nicholas Jost

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

António Pedro Marques — 27 Sep 2010, 18:46 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote (27-09-2010 16:58):

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The relevant issue here are carbon-based lifeforms. Carbon-based means that they're structured around compounds of carbon (and oxygen and hydrogen). As long as they are carbon-based, they are able to interact with each other at a molecular level (i.e., digestion, immunitary response, etc). Just what kind of molecule carries oxygen to cells isn't that much important, as long as it too interacts as an organic molecule. ('Organic' is precisely the name Chemistry gives to carbon/hydrogen/oxygen compounds, and the properties they exhibit and the ways they play together and so on.)

In fact, the way the Universe is, there is just not much room for other possibilities. The specific traits of hydrogen and oxygen make it that they are more or less irreplaceable, that is, the matter we consider as living can't not depend on them. Carbon is not exactly the same, but almost. Carbon can be replaced by elements with similar chemical properties, but the fact that they don't behave identically renders them unsuitable for the purpose. For instance, arsenic is poisonous precisely because it can bind to molecules the same way as carbon, but then changes their behaviour. Silicon is another element that could replace carbon, but the compounds it enters in don't have the flexibility needed for life.

That's to say, differently-based lifeforms probably would be very different from the ones we know, not just somewhat different.

DAVID STOCKHOFF — 27 Sep 2010, 18:47 · in reply to Nicholas Jost

Follow-up: I think Mr Million died when he was scanned. So it's not impossible. But Typhon did not.

--- On Mon, 9/27/10, Nicholas Jost <nickjost at yahoo.com> wrote:

From: Nicholas Jost <nickjost at yahoo.com>
Subject: Re: (urth) note Re: Short Sun blog
To: urth at lists.urth.net
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Gerry Quinn — 27 Sep 2010, 19:13 · in reply to DAVID STOCKHOFF

There's a story in the 'Endangered Species' collection involving some sort of 'dark matter' life.

- Gerry Quinn

From: DAVID STOCKHOFF

Another possibility is that Wolfe simply chose to ignore those complications. As an engineer, he

is sometimes very technical---see the remarkably elegant explanation presented in this list for the Long Sun. But he is not really a hard-SF kind of guy, not when details might get in the way, and maybe especially in terms of biology. And he's never proposed non-carbon life or non-iron blood in any story, as far as I know.

DAVID STOCKHOFF — 27 Sep 2010, 19:23 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Which kind of proves my point, doesn't it?
Sounds like the biological equivalent of handwavium!

--- On Mon, 9/27/10, Gerry Quinn <gerryq at indigo.ie> wrote:

From: Gerry Quinn <gerryq at indigo.ie>
Subject: Re: (urth) note Re: Short Sun blog
To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>
Date: Monday, September 27, 2010, 3:13 PM

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Roy C. Lackey — 27 Sep 2010, 19:33 · in reply to Nicholas Jost

Nicholas Jost wrote:

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Typhon had been revived before Little Sev died. That's how he knew Sev had the Claw. He said he was watching when Sev tried to use it to bring back the boy.

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Nick Lee — 27 Sep 2010, 19:46 · follows Roy C. Lackey

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Wolfe wrote about a species of mechanical life forms early in his career. The story appears in the collection *The Island of Dr. Death and Other Stories and Other Stories*. The name escapes me, and I'm not near my bookshelf at the moment. Wolfe's written about non-humanoid, bizarre creatures, but those creatures in the Sun cycle tend to have certain basic similarities. I hate to use a Star Trek explanation, but the Sun series appears to be set more or less in the Earth neighborhood, and the similarities seem to be excused in part by this and by genetic tampering by advanced races (gods). This is creation myth with the gods as aliens.

The inhumis seem to me to just be a sort of reverse-virus. Instead of them infecting humans, the humans (or other prey) "infect" them with genetic information. Blood is just the medium. Also, this idea that aliens could be non-carbon based is just wild theory. We have no idea what aliens would look like, and in all likelihood they are carbon-based because that's easiest way for life to arise.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 27 Sep 2010, 19:51 · in reply to Nick Lee

On Mon, Sep 27, 2010 at 12:46 PM, Nick Lee <starwaterstrain at gmail.com> wrote:
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While it's true that 100% of the life forms we know are carbon based, we are looking at a very localized sample. We have no idea what chemical or other bases may actually produce life. Any physical structure which can replicate itself (just-slightly-imperfectly), and exists in an environment in which it can do so, is likely to become some sort of life.

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Nicholas Jost — 27 Sep 2010, 20:10 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

David Stackoff:

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and producing doubled results (death and scanning). That's too complicated. And there is

no evidence that?"soul" scanning requires death.

This doesn't have to be the same as any previous event and in a sacrifice the victim has a good chance of being consumed in the act. Little Sev is a blood Sacrifice at what can only be called the Temple of the Demi-God Typhoon. At that point Typhon appears. No more energy is required in the consumption than a pillar of fire descending to eat a goat (a traditional effect). Is

there more evidence for Severian doing it? I'm not aware of any in the text.

Nicholas Jost

Nicholas Jost — 27 Sep 2010, 20:50 · follows Nicholas Jost

Nicholas Jost wrote:

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-Roy

Assuming Typhoon isn't lying through his teeth, how does that effect my theory? Since: Lil' Sev dies and then Big Sev tries to resurrect? If Typhoon is brought back via the

sacrifice and has access to a good old fashioned security camera his story pans out. I'm

not finding a temporal issue here.

Nicholas Jost

Daniel Petersen — 27 Sep 2010, 21:27 · in reply to Lee Berman

Ok, Lee, thanks for your thoughts. You've got me thinking more about the flood, especially considering *Urth of the New Sun* features the realisation of this. The meddling/protecting aliens to some extent representing dark/light angels is also interesting.

However, that Wolfe finds the Flood more significant than the coming of Jesus seems very hard to swallow indeed, especially considering the centrality of the 'bread and wine' (body and blood) of the minor 'wine god' who is said to be another aspect of the Outsider in Long and Short Suns, the sharing of which (bread and wine) seems to always bring an epiphany or theophany (supernatural not digitized). Even in BotNS Severian muses that the Conciliator uses his Claw on himself not others (self-sacrifice to save others). And surely we're meant to hear echoes of the coming of The Son in the bringing of the New Sun. (See also the real-life contemporary hymn on this theme that Wolfe incorporated into his Evil Guest novel.)

Perhaps we should see Flood and Jesus/Cross/Reconciliation themes coming together in the concept of the Ark that shelters and saves from the flood those who are 'hidden' in it/Him. Does Wolfe's work bring this out at all? At any rate, with a central name like Conciliator in New Sun and the theme of blood in Long and Short, the 'person and work of Jesus Christ' (what theologians call 'christology') really seems like the major *theological*category and theme to Wolfe's Solar Cycle. (I know there are also major

psychological, sociological, philosophical and perhaps other categories and themes as well.)

Hm, I'm starting to wonder if perhaps this theological area is like the discussions on biology and other scientific aspects of the cycle. Maybe we shouldn't press for too many highly consistent details and instead simply 'feel' the resonances of the works as a whole and allow them to do their literary and imaginative work on us.

On Mon, Sep 27, 2010 at 6:33 PM, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:

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My interpretation, FWIW.

James Wynn — 27 Sep 2010, 21:35 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On 9/27/2010 2:51 PM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

On Mon, Sep 27, 2010 at 12:46 PM, Nick Lee<starwaterstrain at gmail.com> wrote:

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we are looking at a very localized sample. We have no idea what
chemical or other bases may actually produce life. Any physical
structure which can replicate itself (just-slightly-imperfectly), and
exists in an environment in which it can do so, is likely to become
some sort of life.

Still there's presumably nothing to have prevented a non-carbon-based life form from having
occurred on Earth along side a carbon-based version. On the other hand, even though the
carbon-based version appeared on Earth --in geologic terms-- as soon as the planet was cool
enough to do so, it only happened here once in 3.5 billion years. So maybe carbon isn't all that
likely an element either.

~u+16b9

Jane Delawney — 28 Sep 2010, 00:27 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

On 27/09/10 20:33, Roy C. Lackey wrote:

Typhon had been revived before Little Sev died. That's how he knew Sev had the Claw. He said he was watching when Sev tried to use it to bring back the boy.

-Roy

Yes, Big Sev actually asks Typhon why he didn't warn them about the ring, acknowledging that Typhon was revived and aware and watching them even as they stumbled about the lower slopes of Mt. Typhon. (Typhon replies that he had no interest in them at the time.)

If Severian is responsible for Typhon's revival, it happened a tad earlier, during his first visit to the Cursed Town immediately before Little Sev's demise, when they both view the dessicated corpse of a two headed monster in the round building. After that they have a weary climb to the mountain's left shoulder and arm, leaving plenty of time for a revived Typhon to watch them.

The chapter (3:24) is entitled 'The Corpse'. One is left uncertain whether this title refers to Typhon, to Little Sev, or to both.

jd

Jeff Wilson — 28 Sep 2010, 01:15 · in reply to David Stockhoff

On 9/27/2010 6:48 AM, David Stockhoff wrote:

Actually, the assumption that at least most life in the NS/LS/SS universe has the same biochemistry. The inhumis feed on both humans and Neighbors, for example. And then you have the alzabo.

Copper-based life seems to prove the rule by not existing here.

However, seamless transplantation does go too far.

These are not representative samples of a virgin field; there's been at least one intergalactic empire carrying Urth's genome and human chauvanism outward, and that same chauvanism along with exploitation, greed, enterprise, philanthropy, and sentimentality affect what is brought back and sought for further study aside from whatever scientific objectivity may remain. Blue and Green could have been chosen from previous records of compatible biology even if it had somehow gone untainted after chiliads of empire, and the alzabo and destrier are clearly useful for certain purposes, though the alzabo apparently escaped into the wild before it could be domesticated.

The truly alien things that Hethor summons could have all sort of weird biochemistries - the notules may not even *be* biochemical in the strict sense.

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Lee Berman — 28 Sep 2010, 01:31 · follows Jeff Wilson

Daniel Petersen: Ok, Lee, thanks for your thoughts. You've got me thinking more about the flood, especially considering *Urth of the New Sun* features the realisation of this. The meddling/protecting aliens to some extent representing dark/light angels is also interesting.

My pleasure :-).

However, that Wolfe finds the Flood more significant than the coming of Jesus seems very hard to swallow indeed.

I feared this misunderstanding but, as usual, I also fear overexplaining in any given post. Quite the contrary; as a devout Catholic I must guess Wolfe finds the coming and continued presence of Jesus to be of primary importance.

What I suggest is that Wolfe finds The Flood as more important to ridding the world of evil (an evil which produced our legends of monster, fallen angels and pagan gods). That was a battle beyond our human abilities. But clear in the BotNS text is an admonition to Severian that the war, the battle, his life is about more than a simple struggle between good and evil.

The Flood taking out our superhuman enemies was necessary but it merely set the stage for Jesus and his impact. I think maybe, for Wolfe, the impact of Jesus is more individualized. He assists us in our battle against personal demons and thus in our modern world he holds far more significance than the Titanic, Olympian battles of the ante-diluvian period.

(I see a parallel to this in Tolkein also, with the cosmic Silmarillion wars vs. the somewhat smaller, more personal battles found in the Trilogy, then the even smaller, more personal battle at the end, The Scouring of the Shire)

If I may indulge a little in meta-analysis I find it interesting that I find Severian to be an old friend...someone I know well and feel I understand. In contrast I find his Creator to be cryptic, baffling and quite elusive to my understanding.

Maybe we shouldn't press for too many highly consistent details and instead simply 'feel' the resonances of the works as a whole and allow them to do their literary and imaginative work on us.

I tend to agree with this. Yet still I spend time trying to winnow out details. BotNS was written in a time period rather significantly before the internet. And, imho, the majority of deep analysis has only been accomplished after the internet and the incredible assistance it provides for both research and inter-personal communication and idea-sharing.

Wolfe must surely have known that very, very few readers would have been able to match his paired scholarship and devious, puzzle-making mind, back then. So perhaps he never expected us to really get it. But perhaps another part of him always hoped we would.

Short Sun was written in the internet age and I tend to think its intensely cryptic nature is partly a response to the success of analysis of BotNS that was being achieved. Part of him surely doesn't want

us to fully get it, after all ;-).

Jeff Wilson — 28 Sep 2010, 01:46 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

On 9/27/2010 7:14 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: Jane Delawney <mailto:jane_delawney@sky.com>

On 26/09/10 12:10, Lee Berman wrote:

All these fantastic biological processes are casually accepted yet a slight protein readjustment in the histamines of a human-appearing alien by the best doctors of an interplanetary empire to suppress organ rejection is deemed impossible?

Not impossible; just very very improbable :)

Unless it is to be believed that all lifeforms everywhere in the universe share a common biochemistry, it's about as believable that an alien Typhon would be able to receive human organs (or body parts, whatever) as it is that a human woman would be able to bear the child of an alien being with copper-based blood, as occurs in that well known /fantasy/ series Star Trek.

Of course, it is not very probable according to conventional evolutionary theory (admittedly, Wolfe has a penchant for Lamarckism) that the native animals and plants of St.Anne would be edible to humans, or that humans would be edible to alzabo, for that matter. Indeed, the alzabo seems to have evolved a solution which is radically more effective and biologically implausible than the transplantation of human organs!

The memories supposedly only last a few days in the living beast, which could be in line with "normal" tissue rejection. It's also probable that the alzabo of Urth is altered from its native alien form, if it isn't actually the descendant of bear-men upon whom the memory-assimilation was grafted after being reverse engineered.

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David Stockhoff — 28 Sep 2010, 01:51 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

With which no one ever tried to mate, one hopes.

On 9/27/2010 9:15 PM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

On 9/27/2010 6:48 AM, David Stockhoff wrote:

Actually, the assumption that at least most life in the NS/LS/SS universe has the same biochemistry. The inhumi feed on both humans and Neighbors, for example. And then you have the alzabo.

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However, seamless transplantation does go too far.

These are not representative samples of a virgin field; there's been at least one intergalactic empire carrying Urth's genome and human chauvanism outward, and that same chauvanism along with exploitation, greed, enterprise, philanthropy, and sentimentality affect what is brought back and sought for further study aside from whatever

scientific objectivity may remain. Blue and Green could have been chose from previous records of compatible biology even if it had somehow gone untainted after chiliads of empire, and the alzado and destrier are clearly useful for certain purposes, though the alzado apparently escaped into the wild before it could be domesticated.

The truly alien things that Hethor summons could have all sort of weird biochemistries - the notules may not even *be* biochemical in the strict sense.

Jeff Wilson — 28 Sep 2010, 01:58 · in reply to Nicholas Jost

On 9/27/2010 11:19 AM, Nicholas Jost wrote:

**

From: Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com <mailto:jwilson at io.com>>

Typhon's resurrection by Severian is not reasonably believable as a biological process, and I certainly did not casually accept it as one when I first read the books, or the third time. But it is just as believable as the result of Severian's time-bending superpowers as any other resurrection in the books.

Why is it always assumed that Severian brought him back? There is none of the mythic special effects around his contact with Typhon.

There don't need to be, any more than when Dorcas or Triskele revived.

However, there is a blood sacrifice and associated special effects when Little Sev dies. On my reading I always assumed that the "magic" ring sucked down Little Sev's soul and used it to power the monster Typhon.

Were you reading the book manga-style? Typhon is already up and around and watching when Little Severian is incinerated.

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Lee Berman — 28 Sep 2010, 12:29 · follows Jeff Wilson

Jeff Wilson- Typhon's resurrection by Severian is not reasonably believable as a biological process, and I certainly did not casually accept it as one.

I find this to be a puzzling sentiment. Surely it doesn't imply that Typhon is not a living being. It could imply the process is outside our current scientific capabilities but we already knew that.

Does it mean there is some magic or divine power present in BotNS which somehow bypasses the role of cells, proteins, DNA and goes directly to some mystical life essence? I don't find this to be in the spirit of BotNS or SF in general.

(even Tzadkiel's finger transformation gets compared to sponge cellular action)

Jeff Wilson — 28 Sep 2010, 13:59 · in reply to David Stockhoff

On 9/27/2010 8:51 PM, David Stockhoff wrote:

With which no one ever tried to mate, one hopes.

Probably not, but their alien nature may be a plus in that they are not recognized as foreign matter. If they are something like animated sheets of graphite, a human body's innards would only gradually antagonize them, like a tattoo that takes years to fade. A canny victim might escape smothering by gashing their arm and covering their nose and mouth, so that the notules enter the wound as the hottest exposed flesh.

If the notules heal, grow, and/or reproduce by adding carbon from living compounds to their graphite sheet, you'd have a tattoo that would actually darken as time went by, and one hell of a story to go with it.

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Jeff Wilson — 28 Sep 2010, 14:14 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 9/28/2010 7:29 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

Jeff Wilson- Typhon's resurrection by Severian is not reasonably believable as a biological process, and I certainly did not casually accept it as one.

I find this to be a puzzling sentiment. Surely it doesn't imply that Typhon is not a living being. It could imply the process is outside our current scientific capabilities but we already knew that.

Does it mean there is some magic or divine power present in BotNS which somehow bypasses the role of cells, proteins, DNA and goes directly to some mystical life essence? I don't find this to be in the spirit of BotNS or SF in general.

Hello?! The Conciliator?!? Wields the Increate-given power to selectively turn back the clock? Jader's sister's illness doesn't subside and heal, it's just suddenly gone and she looks as healthy as if she had never been ill. Other healing and resurrections are less complete, but in their limited extent they remain nigh-instantaneous.

(even Tzadkiel's finger transformation gets compared to sponge cellular action)

His transformations may be basically biological, but they defy anything like the rate of biological processes. But since he/she is a genetically altered alien being that strides across the universes and dwells where entropy is reversed even without divine intervention, it's not hard to see there might be more to it than the days it takes for a caterpillar to digest itself and grow new parts. Tzad doesn't even have a sandwich.

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Lee Berman — 28 Sep 2010, 16:27 · follows Jeff Wilson

Jeff Wilson: Hello?! The Conciliator?!? Wields the Increate-given power to selectively turn back the clock? Jader's sister's illness doesn't subside and heal, it's just suddenly gone and she looks as healthy as if she had never been ill. Other healing and resurrections are less complete, but in their limited extent they remain nigh-instantaneous.

I'm not sure of your point, Jeff. Is it that Wolfe's work contains powers and processes which are "Increate-given" making them, by definition, beyond science, math or any other possible system of human understanding?

Or do you mean that if time is reversed or skipped over, then that becomes a function of physics and not biology?

I think the first may be an individualized issue, partly dependent on one's own view of God and the supernatural. I would agree with the second.

I think I'll disagree with your premise that speeding up biological processes up the point of appearing instantaneous transforms them out of the realm of biology. There are many examples in the animal kingdom of behavior so rapid and instantaneous it seems magical until slowed by photography (bombadier beetles, bumble bee wings and cuttlefish color patterns come to mind).

By analogy, what modern computers can do might seem magical to most people from the 40's even if they had heard of computers. But I suspect the creators of ENIAC, while impressed by the speed of our computers, would still recognize them as electronic in nature.

[I think cuttlefish pattern changes are amazing. This video shows an instantaneous switch from the strobing used to confuse prey to the camouflage used to hide from predators]

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dF-jHp-5XfU>

Jeff Wilson — 28 Sep 2010, 19:29 · in reply to Lee Berman

I think I'll disagree with your premise that speeding up biological processes up the point of appearing instantaneous transforms them out of the realm of biology. There are many examples in the animal kingdom of behavior so rapid and instantaneous it seems magical until slowed by photography (bombadier beetles, bumble bee wings and cuttlefish color patterns come to mind).

[I think cuttlefish pattern changes are amazing. This video shows an instantaneous switch from the strobing used to confuse prey to the camouflage used to hide from predators]

Their chromatophores are quick, but not so quick they transcend entropy and conservation of mass-energy, unlike Jader's sister and Tzadkiel. Unless the fingerling was only hidden in the finger, pre-transformed, which is a possibility.

DAVID STOCKHOFF — 28 Sep 2010, 19:33 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

I took the sponge comparison as a metaphor. It does not strike me as a biological process. But at least it isn't hostile to life---as so many sci-fi-physics transformations must be, from scanning to teleporting.

--- On Tue, 9/28/10, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:

From: Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com>

Subject: Re: (urth) note Re: Short Sun blog

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

Date: Tuesday, September 28, 2010, 3:29 PM

I think I'll disagree with your premise that speeding up biological processes up the point of

appearing instantaneous transforms them out of the realm of biology. There

are many examples
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Their chromatophores are quick, but not so quick they transcend entropy and conservation of mass-energy, unlike Jader's sister and Tzadkiel. Unless the fingerling was only hidden in the finger, pre-transformed, which is a possibility.

Roy C. Lackey — 28 Sep 2010, 21:10 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Jeff Wilson wrote:

Hello?! The Conciliator?!? Wields the Increate-given power to
selectively turn back the clock? Jader's sister's illness doesn't
subside and heal, it's just suddenly gone and she looks as healthy as if
she had never been ill. Other healing and resurrections are less
complete, but in their limited extent they remain nigh-instantaneous.

Dorcas is the one who came up with the theory that Sev's powers involved turning back time to a point before the injury or illness occurred. That theory is disproved by Sev's refashioning of Herena's withered arm into a normal arm. Her withered arm was a birth defect; there had never been a time when the arm had been normal. That power, and the power to bring the dead back to life, was a supernatural power.

-Roy

Jeff Wilson — 29 Sep 2010, 01:28 · in reply to DAVID STOCKHOFF

On 9/28/2010 2:33 PM, DAVID STOCKHOFF wrote:

I took the sponge comparison as a metaphor. It does not strike me as a
biological process.

But at least it isn't hostile to life---as so many sci-fi-physics
transformations must be, from scanning to teleporting.

Thinking more about it, it makes sense for a size-changing, detachable-body-part giant to have decentralized viscera. There might already be hearts and lung tissue, notochords, etc distributed through out a Hierogrammate's body to assist in perfusion and reflexive movement, but it's still a stretch to have giants who suffer square-cube law problems like Baldanders and Juturna in the same book as beings who can reformulate huge finger bones into a normal-scale full skeleton in seconds without even a hint of waste heat or other biological side effects, if both are equally biological in nature.

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Jeff Wilson — 29 Sep 2010, 02:07 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

On 9/28/2010 4:10 PM, Roy C. Lackey wrote:

Jeff Wilson wrote:

Hello?! The Conciliator?!? Wields the Increate-given power to selectively turn back the clock? Jader's sister's illness doesn't subside and heal, it's just suddenly gone and she looks as healthy as if she had never been ill. Other healing and resurrections are less complete, but in their limited extent they remain nigh-instantaneous.

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Of course it's supernatural - but it can also be a time-bending effect, just like Sampson's strength was supernatural but also was physical manipulation. If there are other Severians, there can be other Herenas with good arms.

There's similar effect in "What Rough Beast", by Wolfe's cultivator, Damon Knight: the "great rabbi" heals a shut-in girl's disfiguring burn by replacing the cells from not-burned timelines. However, the healed skin is browner than the rest of her because in those timelines she was comfortable with her body image and went sunbathing at the beach.

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Lee Berman — 29 Sep 2010, 03:13 · follows Jeff Wilson

Roy C. Lackey- That power, and the power to bring the dead back to life, was a supernatural power.

Jeff Wilson- Of course it's supernatural

Supernatural only to 21st century primitives who managed to use their puny millenium or two of scientific study to advance their understanding of the universe past alchemy, phlogiston and luminiferous aether to their quasi-religious beliefs in "entropy" and "conservation of mass-energy"

We of Urth's First Empire have 30,000 more years of science at our disposal and thus have over 15x more advanced knowledge of the universe and its possibilities. Yet we should not debase ourselves with hubris and should decline to snicker at the neo-Neanderthals who struggled desperately with their simple Einsteinian-Planckian-Hawkinsian knowledge of physics and felt they had it all figured out, even as they needed a supreme effort just to travel to Lune. ;-)

Jeff Wilson — 29 Sep 2010, 06:10 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 9/28/2010 10:13 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

Roy C. Lackey- That power, and the power to bring the dead back to life, was a supernatural power.

Jeff Wilson- Of course it's supernatural

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The only problem with that is it would make the First Imperials more transcendent than the Yesodis. I also find it funny that trillions of people on millions of worlds progress at the same rate as we poor benighted earthlings paddling around the kiddie pool of the universe.

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Roy C. Lackey — 29 Sep 2010, 07:16 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Jeff Wilson wrote, quoted and wrote:
Hello?! The Conciliator?!? Wields the Increate-given power to selectively turn back the clock? Jader's sister's illness doesn't subside and heal, it's just suddenly gone and she looks as healthy as if she had never been ill. Other healing and resurrections are less complete, but in their limited extent they remain nigh-instantaneous.

Dorcas is the one who came up with the theory that Sev's powers involved turning back time to a point before the injury or illness occurred. That theory is disproved by Sev's refashioning of Herena's withered arm into a normal arm. Her withered arm was a birth defect; there had never been a time when the arm had been normal. That power, and the power to bring the dead back to life, was a supernatural power.

Of course it's supernatural - but it can also be a time-bending effect, just like Sampson's strength was supernatural but also was physical manipulation. If there are other Severians, there can be other Herenas with good arms.

If there are other Herenas, they aren't in the books. Anyway, I was agreeing with you that Sev's power is divine in nature, not strictly biological.

I shouldn't even mention other biological oddities like this:

"Ever since I sat under Master Malrubius's instruction as a child, I have known that the space between the suns is far from empty; many hundreds and perhaps many thousands of voyages are made there. As I learned later, there are other things too--the undine I twice encountered had told me that she sometimes swam the void, and the winged being I had glimpsed in Father Inire's book flew there." (URTH, chap. I, p-4)

I don't think either Juturna or Tzadkiel wore spacesuits when they swam in the cold vacuum of space. Tzadkiel had magical powers, so we can dismiss him, but I would pay to see Juturna take a flying leap and achieve escape velocity. Given her size, it must have been a lot harder to do than for an inhum. But at least they would be breathing the same rarefied air. Eh?

I knew I shouldn't have brought it up, but I missed my nap today and I'm feeling mean. <g>

-Roy

David Stockhoff — 29 Sep 2010, 11:40 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

It seems to me that the whole idea of TBotNS is that there is a lot going on in the universe that seems supernatural but isn't. So this is an important point.

But another idea of TBotNS is that you (we) can't necessarily tell when you (and Severian) have encountered the single needle in the haystack that truly is. And Severian is a creature of the Yesodi "Wizards of Oz."

So can we ever really tell whether the Conciliator's miracles are supernatural or not?

On 9/29/2010 2:10 AM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

On 9/28/2010 10:13 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

Roy C. Lackey- That power, and the power to bring the dead back to life, was a supernatural power.

Jeff Wilson- Of course it's supernatural

Supernatural only to 21st century primitives who managed to use their puny millenium or two of scientific study to advance their understanding of the universe past alchemy, phlogiston and luminiferous aether to their quasi-religious beliefs in "entropy" and "conservation of mass-energy"

We of Urth's First Empire have 30,000 more years of science at our disposal and thus have over 15x more advanced knowledge of the universe and its possibilities. Yet we should not debase ourselves with hubris and should decline to snicker at the neo-Neanderthals who struggled desperately with their simple Einsteinian-Planckian-Hawkingsian knowledge of physics and felt they had it all figured out, even as they needed a supreme effort just to travel to Lune. ;-)

The only problem with that is it would make the First Imperials more transcendent than the Yesodis. I also find it funny that trillions of people on millions of worlds progress at the same rate as we poor benighted earthlings paddling around the kiddie pool of the universe.

Lee Berman — 29 Sep 2010, 11:58 · follows David Stockhoff

Roy C. Lackey: Dorcas is the one who came up with the theory that Sev's powers involved turning back time to a point before the injury or illness occurred.

That theory is disproved by Sev's refashioning of Herena's withered arm into a normal arm. Her withered arm was a birth defect; there had never been a time when the arm had been normal. That power, and the power to bring the dead back to life, was a supernatural power.

Severian's power seems to express itself differently at different times. There is Herena. Then there is the assassin we see pass backwards through the stages of mummification and putrefaction on his/her path to resurrection. We have the Apu Punchau resurrection also to consider.

There is Severian himself whose (as I assume) self-resurrection on the Sanguinary Field left him with a scar on his chest. Scar for Jonas also, I think. These seem like an incorporation of biological processes using forward and backward time shifts. Fie on the divine, supernatural power that relies on tissue fibrosis and maggots for healing and resurrection.

(p.s. don't dis my girl Dorcas ;-))

I don't think either Juturna or Tzadkiel wore spacesuits when they swam in the cold vacuum of space.

Neither did Severian or any of the sailors or jibbers on the deck of the Ship. I don't see the suggestion that the necklaces of air are directly manufactured by the Increate or supernatural in any way (though I suppose they'd appear magical to Jacques Cousteau).

I don't find it impossible that the mechanism of these necklaces could be disguised or further miniaturized to appear invisible while used by a giant being, or (more likely in my mind) have their function duplicated by the advanced biology of highly evolved beings.

Tzadkiel had magical powers

Like the youngest suitor of the Armiger's Daughter, I don't think we were meant to take the easy path, in seeking to understanding the text of this story.

Along with science, lying is an alternative explanation for what appears to be magic. I agree that dishonesty is probably the explanation for inhumani space travel. Not sure about undines. Their swimming between the stars could refer to the sort of dream travel that we see in other Wolfe stories.

Jeff Wilson — 30 Sep 2010, 02:15 · in reply to David Stockhoff

On 9/29/2010 6:40 AM, David Stockhoff wrote:

It seems to me that the whole idea of TBotNS is that there is a lot going on in the universe that seems supernatural but isn't. So this is an important point.

Severian disagrees; **everything** in his story is supernatural to some degree: "if the Eternal Principle had rested in that curved thorn...then it might rest in anything, and in fact probably did rest in everything, in every thorn on every bush, in every drop of water in the sea. The thorn was a sacred Claw because all thorns were sacred Claws; the sand in my boots was sacred sand because it came from a beach of sacred sand. The cenobites treasured up the relics of the sannyasins because the sannyasins had approached the Pancreator. But everything had approached and even touched the Pancreator, because everything had dropped from his hand. Everything was a relic. All the world was a relic. I drew off my boots, that had traveled with me so far, and threw them into the waves that I might not walk shod on holy ground." CITADEL XXXI

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Jeff Wilson — 30 Sep 2010, 02:30 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 9/29/2010 6:58 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

There is Severian himself whose (as I assume) self-resurrection on the Sanguinary Field left him with a scar on his chest. Scar for Jonas also, I think. These seem like an incorporation of biological processes using forward and backward time shifts.

Fie on the divine, supernatural power that relies on tissue fibrosis and maggots for healing and resurrection.

Considering even Jesus Christ Himself still had wounds visible to the disciples after rising from death and a couple of days of decomposition, I'd say your standards are a tad high.

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Lee Berman — 30 Sep 2010, 11:57 · follows Jeff Wilson

Your posts bring up some interesting issues, Jeff.

JW- Considering even Jesus Christ Himself still had wounds visible to the disciples after rising from death and a couple of days of decomposition, I'd say your standards are a tad high.

Are my (and your and all others') religious beliefs and standards in issue in here? My intention is to focus very narrowly and solely on Gene Wolfe's religious standards, beliefs and what they mean to his work. But surely my own beliefs bias my interpretation of Wolfe sometimes.

Others take a different view on this issue. I remember a discussion I had with James Jordan in here a number of years ago. He seemed truly upset at the idea that the Nephilim in Genesis and Eschatology and Genesis might be the product of fallen angels mating with human women because it violated his deeply held modern/fundamentalist Christian beliefs. Steering the discussion toward the idea that demon/human matings were assumed by the ancients and could have been an idea contemplated by a middle-aged, Catholic SF author from the 70's with an interest in mythology was no solace to him.

I think my question above may be important to our discussion.

Jeff Wilson: Severian disagrees; *everything* in his story is supernatural to some degree.

I think most Wolfe readers would agree that the passage from the beach (below) that you cite is one of the most poignant in all his work. But what does it mean?

To me, it means this: Animals have no sense of the natural/supernatural distinction. Water your garden or part the Red Sea, it is all the same sort of process to them. Likewise, for God/The Pancreator/Increate. Intrinsic, omniscient understanding that all things flow from one source, one's own hand, erases the distinction between natural and supernatural. Jesus healing the sick and a doctor healing the sick are the same thing- My Work.

Human beings, find their level of consciousness somewhere between that of animals and God. Thus, only human beings have the need to create the distinction between natural and supernatural as they struggle with what they feel they understand and what they don't understand; what they can create and what is beyond their ability to create.

I find Severian's flash of understanding of the supernatural of all things to be a brush with complete humility and God-like consciousness. I find Jeff's qualifer, "supernatural to some degree" to be a very human one.

"if the Eternal Principle had rested in that curved thorn...then it might rest in anything, and in fact probably did rest in everything, in every thorn on every bush, in every drop of water in the sea. The thorn was a sacred Claw because all thorns were sacred Claws; the sand

in my boots was sacred sand because it came from a beach of sacred sand. The cenobites treasured up the relics of the sanniyasins because the sanniyasins had approached the Pancreator. But everything had approached and even touched the Pancreator, because everything had dropped from his hand. Everything was a relic. All the world was a relic. I drew off my boots, that had traveled with me so far, and threw them into the waves that I might not walk shod on holy ground." CITADEL XXXI

David Stockhoff — 30 Sep 2010, 11:59 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

But of course. If the Principle is in everything, then it is in all machines, aquastors, monsters, starships, timeships, hierodules, Yesod, and so on, without affecting whether those things operate according to supernatural or simple physical/biological/mechanical laws. They remain what they are.

I should note that I meant SEVERIAN'S universe---not ours.

On 9/29/2010 10:15 PM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

On 9/29/2010 6:40 AM, David Stockhoff wrote:

It seems to me that the whole idea of TBotNS is that there is a lot going on in the universe that seems supernatural but isn't. So this is an important point.

Severian disagrees; *everything* in his story is supernatural to some degree: "if the Eternal Principle had rested in that curved thorn...then it might rest in anything, and in fact probably did rest in everything, in every thorn on every bush, in every drop of water in the sea. The thorn was a sacred Claw because all thorns were sacred Claws; the sand in my boots was sacred sand because it came from a beach of sacred sand. The cenobites treasured up the relics of the sanniyasins because the sanniyasins had approached the Pancreator. But everything had approached and even touched the Pancreator, because everything had dropped from his hand. Everything was a relic. All the world was a relic. I drew off my boots, that had traveled with me so far, and threw them into the waves that I might not walk shod on holy ground." CITADEL XXXI

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 30 Sep 2010, 15:20 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On Wed, Sep 29, 2010 at 7:30 PM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:

Considering even Jesus Christ Himself still had wounds visible to the disciples after rising from death and a couple of days of decomposition, I'd say your standards are a tad high.

That's a little confusing - He seems to have had the wounds only when they were convenient. On a couple of occasions, people who knew Him well would not recognize Him after the resurrection, and you'd think the wounds would have been a dead giveaway.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Thomas Bitterman — 30 Sep 2010, 16:37 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On Wed, Sep 29, 2010 at 10:15 PM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:

Severian disagrees; *everything* in his story is supernatural to some degree: "if the Eternal Principle had rested in that curved thorn...then it might rest in anything, and in fact probably did rest in everything, in every thorn on every bush, in every drop of water in the sea. The thorn was a sacred Claw because all thorns were sacred Claws; the sand in my boots was

sacred sand because it came from a beach of sacred sand. The cenobites treasured up the relics of the sannyasins because the sannyasins had approached the Pancreator. But everything had approached and even touched the Pancreator, because everything had dropped from his hand. Everything was a relic. All the world was a relic. I drew off my boots, that had traveled with me so far, and threw them into the waves that I might not walk shod on holy ground." CITADEL XXXI

I always felt bad for his boots at this point. They've been good boots and didn't deserve such treatment. Heck, they're relics. It seems like one could walk on holy ground with holy boots.

I have always thought that Severian went back and fished his boots out. He never mentions being barefoot later on that I can remember.

James Wynn — 30 Sep 2010, 16:48 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Considering even Jesus Christ Himself still had wounds visible to the disciples after rising from death and a couple of days of decomposition, I'd say your standards are a tad high.

Dan'I-

That's a little confusing - He seems to have had the wounds only when they were convenient. On a couple of occasions, people who knew Him well would not recognize Him after the resurrection, and you'd think the wounds would have been a dead giveaway.

Well, imprints from the nails in his wrists and ankles would not be readily apparent, I think. It could be that the ability to recognize him at all was the miracle...not the inability of the disciples to recognize him.

u+169b

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 30 Sep 2010, 16:53 · in reply to James Wynn

On Thu, Sep 30, 2010 at 9:48 AM, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:
Well, imprints from the nails in his wrists and ankles would not be readily apparent, I think. It could be that the ability to recognize him at all was the miracle...not the inability of the disciples to recognize him.

We're talking about something more than imprints in the case of Thomas putting his fingers and hand into the wounds...

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

James Wynn — 30 Sep 2010, 17:23 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Well, imprints from the nails in his wrists and ankles would not be readily apparent, I think. It could be that the ability to recognize him at all was the miracle...not the inability of the disciples to recognize him.

Dan'I -

We're talking about something more than imprints in the case of Thomas putting his fingers and hand into the wounds...

Not really. Or so I would think. Drive spikes through the flesh. Pull them out. You have a hole that someone could put their fingers through but the flesh would be closed up otherwise. Either way, wounds on the wrists and ankles would not be apparent if one wore sleeves and his robe reached to the ground.

u+16b9

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 30 Sep 2010, 17:27 · in reply to James Wynn

On Thu, Sep 30, 2010 at 10:23 AM, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:
Either way, wounds on the wrists and ankles would not be apparent if one wore sleeves and his robe reached to the ground.

Crown of thorns would leave some pretty distinctive scars I should think...

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

James Wynn — 30 Sep 2010, 17:35 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Either way, wounds on the wrists and ankles would not be apparent if one wore sleeves and his robe reached to the ground.

Crown of thorns would leave some pretty distinctive scars I should think...

They probably made a bloody mess, but --assuming they weren't scabby on the resurrected Christ-- once you cleaned them they would probably be no more than scratches on the forehead.

u+16b9

Lee Berman — 30 Sep 2010, 18:03 · follows James Wynn

Thomas Bitterman- I always felt bad for his boots at this point. They've been good boots and didn't deserve such treatment. Heck, they're relics. It seems like one could walk on holy ground with holy boots.

Hah, Thomas. Thanks for my daily chuckle. You'll rarely find me complaining about someone's need to puncture sanctimony. Perhaps there are varying degrees of supernaturality and there's more God in sand than in shoes and boots.

I don't remember the boots being brought up again. Since the Samru crew thought of him as sort of a crazed holy man, being barefoot would go along with the image. Since the cap'n gave him a sword, maybe he got some boots also. Walking barefoot through the wreckage of old Nessus while he tracked down Dorcas doesn't seem like a good idea.

"if the Eternal Principle had rested in that curved thorn...then it might rest in anything, and in fact probably did rest in everything, in every thorn on every bush, in every drop of water in the sea. The thorn was a sacred Claw because all thorns were sacred Claws; the sand in my boots was sacred sand because it came from a beach of sacred sand. The cenobites treasured up the relics of the sannyasins because the sannyasins had approached the Pancreator. But everything had approached and even touched the Pancreator, because everything had dropped from his hand. Everything was a relic. All the world was a relic. I drew off my boots, that had traveled with me so far, and threw them into the waves that I might not walk shod on holy ground." CITADEL XXXI

Gerry Quinn — 30 Sep 2010, 19:08 · in reply to Thomas Bitterman

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

From: Thomas Bitterman

On Wed, Sep 29, 2010 at 10:15 PM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:

Severian disagrees; *everything* in his story is supernatural to some degree: "if the Eternal Principle had rested in that curved thorn...then it might rest in anything, and in fact probably did rest in everything, in every thorn on every bush, in every drop of water in the sea. The thorn was a sacred Claw because all thorns were sacred Claws; the sand in my boots was sacred sand because it came from a beach of sacred sand. The cenobites treasured up the relics of the sannyasins because the sannyasins had approached the Pancreator. But everything had approached and even touched the Pancreator, because everything had dropped from his hand. Everything was a relic. All the world was a relic. I drew off my boots, that had traveled with me so far, and threw them into the waves that I might not walk shod on holy ground." CITADEL XXXI

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I have always thought that Severian went back and fished his boots out. He never mentions being barefoot later on that I can remember.

He's the Autarch. He has more boots now than Imelda Marcos.

- Gerry Quinn

DAVID STOCKHOFF — 30 Sep 2010, 20:23 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

And some of them are the color that is more red than red.

--- On Thu, 9/30/10, Gerry Quinn <gerryq at indigo.ie> wrote:

From: Gerry Quinn <gerryq at indigo.ie>
Subject: Re: (urth) note Re: Short Sun blog
To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>
Date: Thursday, September 30, 2010, 3:08 PM

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

From:

Thomas

Bitterman

?On Wed, Sep 29, 2010 at 10:15 PM,
Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:

Severian disagrees; *everything* in his story is supernatural to some degree: "if the Eternal Principle had rested in that curved thorn...then it might rest in anything, and in fact probably did rest in everything, in every thorn on every bush, in every drop of water in the sea. The thorn was a sacred Claw because all thorns were sacred Claws; the sand in my boots was sacred sand because it came from a beach of sacred sand. The cenobites treasured up the relics of the sannyasins because the sannyasins had approached the Pancreator. But everything had approached and even touched the Pancreator, because everything had dropped from his hand. Everything was a relic. All the world was a relic. I drew off my boots, that had traveled with me so far, and threw them into the waves that I might not walk shod on holy ground." CITADEL XXXI

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He's the Autarch. He has more boots now than Imelda Marcos.

- Gerry Quinn

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

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 30 Sep 2010, 20:27 · in reply to DAVID STOCKHOFF

On Thu, Sep 30, 2010 at 1:23 PM, DAVID STOCKHOFF <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:
And some of them are the color that is more red than red.

The Autarch wears Prada?

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

DAVID STOCKHOFF — 30 Sep 2010, 20:52 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

The Pope does.

--- On Thu, 9/30/10, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:

From: Dan'I Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com>
Subject: Re: (urth) note Re: Short Sun blog
To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>
Date: Thursday, September 30, 2010, 4:27 PM

On Thu, Sep 30, 2010 at 1:23 PM, DAVID STOCKHOFF <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:

And some of them are the color that is more red than red.

The Autarch wears Prada?

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

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

Lee Berman — 01 Oct 2010, 13:00 · follows DAVID STOCKHOFF

David Stockhoff- And some of them are the color that is more red than red.

For some reason this prompted a Google search and I mostly got references to this propaganda poster- <http://file.vintageadbrowser.com/8lcpejdehzdu8d.jpg>

Reads: The reddest, reddest, red sun in our heart, Chairman Mao, and us together (1968)

Apparently Red Sun was a popular nickname for Mao. I wonder how much of that symbolism was intended by Wolfe for Urth.

David Stockhoff — 01 Oct 2010, 16:45 · in reply to Lee Berman

Very little, I'm sure. But it fits, doesn't it? Severian is the New (White) Sun, also called the Conciliator, the Black Sun. Why not a hidden meaning for the Red Sun?

On 10/1/2010 9:00 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

David Stockhoff- And some of them are the color that is more red than red.

For some reason this prompted a Google search and I mostly got references to this propaganda poster- <http://file.vintageadbrowser.com/8lcpejdehzdu8d.jpg>

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