

Urth Digest, Vol 75, Issue 24

The Urth list — 5 messages, 4 voices, 27 Nov 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5780>

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Andrew Mason — 27 Nov 2010, 23:13

Lee Berman wrote:

I don't see the need for being parsimonious and embracing ambiguity here. I think the clues are pointing to a specific answer- there were Inhumani on the Whorl from the beginning, meaning there were Inhumani on Urth.

I had thought Wolfe had said in an interview that the inhumani were late arrivals on the Whorl. Having checked it, I think that strictly speaking he only said that Quetzal was, which I suppose allows other inhumani to have been around earlier. (But does not _Short Sun_ contain an explanation of how they got on to the Whorl?)

There may, I suppose, have been inhumani on Urth which did not get on to the Whorl. The fact they aren't apparent in _New Sun_ doesn't disprove this; there are no doubt many things on Urth that Severian isn't aware of,

But I agree with Gerry Quinn that what we are told of devils doesn't really fit inhumani very closely. I would think one of two things more likely. Perhaps devils are just figures of myth (as far as the compliers knew, at least), mentioned in some of the historic texts used to make up the Chrasnologic writings. Or perhaps they are people like Mucor. If she was genetically enhanced to produce her abilities, it seems likely that she was not the first person ever to have them - there would have been such people on Urth, though not on the Whorl until the special embryos started appearing on the market.

The Bible implies that

the Flood here on Earth was necessary because fallen angels/demons had come down and mated with human women, creating a giant race of Nephilim and all manner of wickedness among humans. Dr. Talos' play contains allusions to all this.

Wolfe, however, reads the Nephilim differently; he explains this in 'Castle of the Otter'. He thinks they were the children of human women with non-rational hominid fathers (who, being non-rational, were incapable of sin and so could be called 'sons of God'). If anything in the foreground story of _New Sun_ relates to this, I would think it's the man-beast hybrids.

I find it most improbable that inhumani can breed with humans. Perhaps some aliens can (there's a passage in _Urth_ which illuminates this, though somewhat obscurely). But inhumani are reptiles; the difference seems too great.

Jerry Friedman — 28 Nov 2010, 02:14 · in reply to Andrew Mason

From: Andrew Mason <andrew.mason53 at gmail.com>

Lee Berman wrote:

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wickedness among humans.

Dr. Talos' play contains allusions to all this.

This got me interested. In a bit of looking around, I found there's no agreement on this passage (Gen. 6:1-4): what the word "Nephilim" means; what the Nephilim were, including whether they were literally gigantic; whether they were the "sons of God" or the sons' children with "the daughters of Adam/man"; whether they were notably good or evil; and whether this passage is related to the story of Noah where it appears or is one of the many extraneous interruptions found in Genesis. So I think, Lee, that "the Bible implies" may be a bit strong, though if Wolfe can believe an unconventional interpretation of the passage or make an original one, you can too.

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...

Thanks, I'd forgotten that (and most of the rest of _Castle of the Otter_). One interpretation of the Nephilim is that they were descendants of Cain, which leads us through Beowulf and Michael Crichton to the Neandertals! (I hope I didn't spoil anything for anyone.)

Another possibly amusing connection is that if Genesis 6:4 is part of the story of Noah, it appears to say that at least some of the Nephilim survived the flood (apparently stated explicitly in the apocryphal _Book of Jubilees_). Now who do we know that can live under water?

Jerry Friedman

Jane Delawney — 28 Nov 2010, 02:32 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

On 28/11/10 02:14, Jerry Friedman wrote:

Another possibly amusing connection is that if Genesis 6:4 is part of the story of Noah, it appears to say that at least some of the Nephilim survived the flood (apparently stated explicitly in the apocryphal _Book of Jubilees_). Now who do we know that can live under water?

Uh.... Severian? :)

James Wynn — 29 Nov 2010, 19:03 · in reply to Andrew Mason

Andrew Mason -

I had thought Wolfe had said in an interview that the inhumi were late arrivals on the Whorl. Having checked it, I think that strictly speaking he only said that Quetzal was, which I suppose allows other inhumi to have been around earlier. (But does not _Short Sun_ contain an explanation of how they got on to the Whorl?)

It would be very fitting indeed for inhumi or Neighbors to have had a hand in Typhon's decision to launch the Whorl. <http://urth.org/whorlmap/midas.htm> (There are a lot of arguable associations between Typhon to Midas and the inhumi to Dionysus in the Long/Short cycle.)

Since the Rajan can travel through Time --and since the Rajan can choose to go back in Time and insert himself into the grandmother's story because he recognized himself in it-- it is quite possible for the Neighbors to reach Urth through dream travel at a Time before the Whorl's launch and influence Typhon to launch it.

I say, this is all POSSIBLE -- not stated in the story-- although it could be seen as implied thematically.

But I agree with Gerry Quinn that what we are told of devils doesn't really fit inhumi very closely. I would think one of two things more likely. Perhaps devils are just figures of myth (as far as the compliers knew, at least), mentioned in some of the historic texts used to make up the Chrasmologic writings. Or perhaps they are people like Mucor.

A daemon, note the spelling, is merely a disembodied spirit. Inhumi contain the spirits of others, living and dead. Mucor, at times, meets this criteria. Also, an important theme is in the book is that if a demon imitates a god, he becomes, in some sense, a god. Quetzal becomes a holy man, sacrificing his life for his flock. Horn becomes Silk. Inhumi become, in a metaphysical sense, Horn's son and Silk's sister.

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James Wynn — 29 Nov 2010, 19:06 · in reply to Andrew Mason

Andrew Mason-

I find it most improbable that inhumi can breed with humans. Perhaps some aliens can (there's a passage in *_Urth_* which illuminates this, though somewhat obscurely). But inhumi are reptiles; the difference seems too great.

We know that Jahlee copulated with humans during soul travel. What would have prevented a child from being born of such a union?

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