

lupine crisis of faith

The Urth list — 10 messages, 6 voices, 29 Dec 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5861>

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Lee Berman — 29 Dec 2010, 19:10

I think I'm currently having a disturbing crisis of faith and I think Marc Aramini is mostly to blame (heh). I am not much of a fan of horror stories. I can take a short story or a movie because there is a short recovery time but horror novels which end badly are a bit disturbing. I like being happy and optimistic! Long ago I was both awestruck and disturbed after reading the novel 5HoC but I gave Gene Wolfe another chance due to his genius but also hoping he might get a bit more positive. I thought BotNS and Short Sun ended on sort of a positive note. Now I'm not so sure.

I'd recently noticed that the end of UotNS, while sunny, is pretty gnostic in its world-view with four paired opposites for gods and a demon in the ocean. Now I have Marc suggesting that Urth/Ushas has a connection (urban or planetary) to that hellish horror called Green.

Also someone's recent haunting question: "Who says the Megatherians were killed on Ushas?".

Who indeed. Just a little common sense should tell me that earth-bound, immortal Megatherians would welcome Ushas and be mortally fearful of the future of ice, the one thing that could trap them for eternity.

If Wolfe was truly trying to imply that the Ragnarok future was a bad one, I would think he would include a small hint of it to be found in Master Ash. But nope. The guy is completely, and entirely a cool and righteous dude.

Then we have the androgynous Green Man who represents the Ushas future. In their first meeting the Green Man describes himself as: "A great seer, a great liar, like every man whose foot is in a trap.". Should we believe anything else he says about himself? When someone tells us they are a liar we should not believe them any further. But in this case we end up doing so, anyway.

Later,

The green man threw back his head and laughed. Much later I was to hear the sound the alzado makes as it ranges the snow-swept tablelands of the high country; its laughter is horrible, but the green man's was more terrible, and I drew away from him. "You're not a human being," I said. "Not now, if you ever were."

Why would Wolfe include this passage? Worse than the alzado! Why??? I'm afraid I now know.

More and more I am fearing that I have been duped for years into enjoying a horror series and cheering for the genocide of humanity and a finale in which demonic evil triumphs. (likewise the swarm of Inhumans that attack the wedding on Blue at the end of RttW does not bode well).

James Wynn — 29 Dec 2010, 19:25 · in reply to Lee Berman

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From "How To Read Gene Wolfe" by Neil Gaiman
<http://www.sfsite.com/fsf/2007/gwng0704.htm>

3) Reread. It's better the second time. It will be even better the third time. And anyway, the books will subtly reshape themselves while you are away from them./Peace/ really was a gentle Midwestern memoir the first time I read it. It only became a horror novel on the second or the third reading.

Gerry Quinn — 29 Dec 2010, 21:23 · in reply to Lee Berman

From: "Lee Berman" <severiansola at hotmail.com>
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However, the book explicitly indicates that they orbit different, distant stars.

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Who indeed. Just a little common sense should tell me that earth-bound, immortal Megatherians would welcome Ushas and be mortally fearful of the future of ice, the one thing that could trap them for eternity.

Nor is it indicated anywhere that they try to stop Severian - indeed, they seem to help him. As to how things go after the coming of the New Sun, we are not told, although the presence of the Green Man suggests life will at least at some future time be tolerable.

Wolfe never suggested that the coming of the New Sun would solve all human problems. But without it, Urth dies.

If Wolfe was truly trying to imply that the Ragnarok future was a bad one, I would think he would include a small hint of it to be found in Master Ash. But nope. The guy is completely, and entirely a cool and righteous dude.

Righteous he may be, but he's still the last guy left alive on a snowball. His character is irrelevant.

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doing so, anyway.

Actually he is demonstrated to speak the truth.

The green man threw back his head and laughed. Much later I was to hear the sound the alzado makes as it ranges the snow-swept tablelands of the high country; its laughter is horrible, but the green man's was more terrible, and I drew away from him. "You're not a human being," I said. "Not now, if you ever were."

Why would Wolfe include this passage? Worse than the alzado! Why??? I'm afraid I now know.

His laughter is of despair at the current state of Urth. This doesn't indicate any secret horror in his future.

- Gerry Quinn

Son of Witz — 29 Dec 2010, 22:50 · in reply to Lee Berman

Don't sweat it Lee.

Urth ain't Green or Blue.

On Dec 29, 2010, at 11:10 AM, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:
I think I'm currently having a disturbing crisis of faith and I think Marc Aramini is mostly to blame (heh). I am not much of a fan of horror stories. I can take a short story or a movie because there is a short recovery time but horror novels which end badly are a bit disturbing. I like being happy and optimistic! Long ago I was both awestruck and disturbed after reading the novel 5HoC but I gave Gene Wolfe another chance due to his genius but also hoping he might get a bit more positive. I thought BotNS and Short Sun ended on sort of a positive note. Now I'm not so sure.

Lee Berman — 29 Dec 2010, 23:31 · follows Son of Witz

James Wynn: I don't think I'd draw so close a correlation between Fifth Head and Short Sun. Wolfe is reusing parts, but I don't think the Neighbors/Inhumi are Shadow Children/abos.

Yes, sorry if I overstated the connection. I don't really think Shadow Children are literally the same as Inhumi. They are only thematically very similar. Once Wolfe was asked if St. Croix/Ste. Anne were in the same universe as Urth and he answered either, "I don't know" or "I'm not sure".

Son O' Witz: Don't sweat it Lee. Urth ain't Green or Blue.

LMAO. Hey, I'd only really be sweating it if any of them were Earth.

I'm interested in Marc's theory but I'm not convinced Urth is Blue or Green. Nessus may exist on more than one of them (perhaps all three?) but I don't think that is the central issue any more than I think these books were written to focus on astronomy.

I think the primary point is the religious philosophy of demons (which includes false gods, angels and demiurges). So, I am open to all evidence suggesting that demons inhabit Urth, in the form of Inhumi, aliens imitating human form or giant blobs in the sea (or space) who can pinch off human-shaped agents for themselves.

In other words I think Gene Wolfe is like Aunt Jeannine. He is a man wishing he could believe in demons as a way of explaining the horror and cruelty he sees in the world around him. So while in disguise ("Veiled") as an author he is willing to treat them as real and explore the consequences.

Jeff Wilson — 30 Dec 2010, 08:16 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 12/29/2010 1:10 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

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Who indeed. Just a little common sense should tell me that earth-bound, immortal Megatherians would welcome Ushas and be mortally fearful of the future of ice, the one thing that could trap them for eternity.

Not even. Erebus and his periscii already operate just fine in the frozen south. They contribute to the cooling of the earth by appropriating the geothermal energy of Urth, and Abaia's outfit might well also, being ideally suited to exploit the majority of the volcanic vents under the sea. They would seem to have been doing so for some time, leading to Malrubius' mis-teaching that the internal fires of Urth had died down as well as the similar error of Typhon's scientists that the decline of the solar input would be inconsequential.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
Computational Intelligence Laboratory - Texas A&M Texarkana
< <http://www.tamut.edu/CIL> >

Lee Berman — 30 Dec 2010, 12:07 · follows Jeff Wilson

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Not even EVEN! In Urth's Antarctica there is still some water and land around. In BotNS Ragnarok, not only are the oceans completely frozen solid but so is Urth's atmosphere. I dare even Erebus and his mighty, cold, pale pandour warriors to operate in that environment. Try moving and breathing in a mile-thick layer of frozen air. I DOUBLE dare them. :-)

Jeff Wilson — 30 Dec 2010, 12:20 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 12/30/2010 6:07 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

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I wasn't thinking of quite *that* far ahead into the not-Ushas future, but...

http://www.webscription.net/chapters/0743498747/0743498747__6.htm

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
Computational Intelligence Laboratory - Texas A&M Texarkana
< <http://www.tamut.edu/CIL> >

Marc Aramini — 30 Dec 2010, 15:38 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Flipping through Short Sun haphazardly last night, noticed two things: pretty sure that the 3rd person of RTTW are mostly Horn in that body, and the chapter HE IS SILK refers to Pig. So I think to get a full Silk reboot in there he has to give up the eye, as Silk really has tried to kill himself.

Second point: I believe James Wynn has hinted Mora is Hyacinth (or maybe someone who will become Kypris, not sure) and I saw it last night as I was flipping through. The Rajan KNOWS what is going to happen to her, saying, you won't find her, you won't find her, unless I'm very wrong, after she leaves her family. He says she reminds him of someone very strongly, and asks her to be careful with the kind of men she likes, and in his dream she transforms into Hyacinth while Fava transforms into maybe the prostitute stabbed by Chenille in the back seat, as it is Chenille's knife, but remember that she was possessed doing that killing. So yeah, Mora is going to disappear, Silk knows what is going to happen to her, she reminds him of somebody, and she turns into Hyacinth in the dream. The question is, is she going to turn into straight up Hyacinth or into the original of Kypris, as this does not seem like Kypris possession. Interesting.

Marc

James Wynn — 30 Dec 2010, 16:13 · in reply to Marc Aramini

Marc Aramini-
Second point: I believe James Wynn has hinted Mora is Hyacinth (or maybe someone who will become Kypris, not sure) and I saw it last night as I was flipping through.

Actually, I believe Hyacinth is Fava (the inhuman whose body died during dream-travel). I think she was collected by the Rajan and taken to the Whorl to take part in her story (just as the Rajan travels to the grandmother's past because he knows he's in that story). Since you believe the Rajan IS Silk, you will find this hard to credit. Since I believe he is more than Silk or Horn, this presents to revulsion regarding characters. but I'm still collating all the refutations Dave Tallman offered during my last go 'round with this. My expedition so far has been fruitful.

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Mora's story is significant. I've often wanted to connect her to physically Hy without success. Although, it should be noted that I believe Fava's mother fed on Mora when she was a baby.

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