

Looking for an Interview ...

The Urth list — 5 messages, 4 voices, 03 Aug 2011

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6043>

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Antonin Scriabin — 03 Aug 2011, 13:15

Hello! I just finished **The Fifth Head of Cerberus**, and loved it. It is one of the best science fiction stories I have read ... it isn't very often I feel completely immersed in a world, but reading this book really made me feel like I was wandering through some eerie, mysterious realm where nothing was as it seemed. Absolutely fantastic.

Anyways, I remember reading in an interview with Wolfe in which he said that Saint Croix and Saint Anne were **not** the Green and Blue planets in the **Short Sun** books. Does anyone have any idea where I can find that interview? Thanks!

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James Wynn — 03 Aug 2011, 15:33 · in reply to Antonin Scriabin

Nothing so emphatic. I think you are conflating two interviews:
<http://www.infinityplus.co.uk/nonfiction/intgw.htm>

James Jordan: I might as well at least /ask/ one of the \$64,000 questions, so I'll just go for broke. (Hmm. I've gotta be very precise here. Okay, here goes:) Which of the following, if any, are physically (not in some merely literary or symbolic sense) the same planets as Blue and Green, in the same order?:

Ushas and Lune
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Two Urths
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Wolfe: None.

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Nick Gevers: When I began reading **/Short Sun/**, I, like many others, was struck by the new work's resonance of location with earlier novels [**The Fifth Head of Cerberus**; **/New Sun/**]. Twin worlds, with respective blue and green associations: St Croix/St Anne; Urth/Lune; Blue/Green. Not that these are literally the same planets; but why this repeated pattern? (I should add that Joan Gordon, and I myself, have speculated on an allusion in **/Short Sun/** to Kim Stanley Robinson's colour-sequenced **/Mars/** novels...)

Wolfe: At the time I first brought in Blue and Green, I didn't know about Stan's books. Nothing of that kind was intended.

Gevers: [Trying again:] Can your readers usefully view *The Fifth Head of Cerberus* as being set in the same science-fictional universe as */New Sun/*, */Long Sun/*, and */Short Sun/*? Why does Fifth Head's pattern of blue/green sister worlds recur so tantalizingly in Urth/Lune, Blue/Green?

Wolfe: I don't know.

When Wolfe says he "doesn't know", he is surely answering the first of Gever's two shot : "Can readers *usefully* view tFHoC as set in the same universe as Severian and Silk."

I simply refuse to believe that Wolfe doesn't know why the Blue/Green pattern recurs. And following this line leads to the conclusion that Wolfe is deliberately dodging the question. Two conclusions open to us are:

1) Blue is St. Croix thousands of years later. Problem: No Neighbors as such nor Mother make obvious appearances in tFHoC.

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On 8/3/2011 8:15 AM, Antonin Scriabin wrote:

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Craig Brewer — 03 Aug 2011, 15:51 · in reply to Antonin Scriabin

I've always thought that the similarity was pretty obvious, but that it wasn't a point about connected plots or conjoined. It's more of a symbolic pattern that Wolfe likes where double planets and blue/green coloring are ways that he thinks about creation, re-creation, "Garden of Eden" myths and their corruption, etc. The double-planet motif always becomes important at the same time that the themes of natural/innocent states of being do, alongside the possibility of returning to or recreating that innocence, and the failures that usually go along with it. In that sense, it's *incredibly* useful to think about their similarities, but it doesn't (necessarily or even most interestingly) lead to conclusions that Fifth Head and the Sun books happen in the same fictional universe.

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Gerry Quinn — 04 Aug 2011, 14:31 · in reply to James Wynn

From: James Wynn

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I'm not so sure of that. Perhaps he views the first question as trivial. After all, even if Fifth Head is set in the same universe as New Sun, the events precede it by an enormous stretch of time. And the planets don't seem alike at all except for being twins and habitable by humans. So what would be useful about it?

Wolfe has used human twins in his novels, and also planetary twins. Perhaps there is some commonality in purpose. But it may be in part simply a way to have two separate but interacting civilisations which do not need to have a long history of interaction as would two civilisations confined on the same planet if at least one were technologically advanced.

- Gerry Quinn