

Video reviews of "Home Fires" and "The Sorcerer's House"

The Urth list — 29 messages, 10 voices, 30 Aug 2011

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6054>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

James Wynn — 30 Aug 2011, 15:56

<http://blip.tv/planetman-entertainment/novelties-the-sorcerer-s-house-by-gene-wolfe-5213667>

<http://blip.tv/planetman-entertainment/novelties-home-fires-by-gene-wolfe-5491084>

David Stockhoff — 07 Oct 2011, 21:33 · in reply to James Wynn

(1) What the hell was that about Ellen Woodward, Connell, and Auciello? The leader she shoots is not the hijacker's, because he (I can't find his name) is subdued by Soriano. Was Skip once someone else? (Why did Chelle think he had a cane at one point?)

(2) Charles is emphatically Chelle's father (unless he is not). At the formal dinner, his family reunites. All three have trouble recognizing one another (except when they don't). Two are known to be not entirely who they think they are. Surely the third is also not entirely who he is. It has been suggested Blue is an Os, but surely the Os are not sexually/genetically compatible with humans. Was Charles abnormally tall previously? Chelle says he would do anything to get ahead; he was quite old. To complete the trio of "spirit mounts," is Mr White Charles in an Os body (or some Os-tech amalgam that lets him keep his blue eyes)?

(3) Someone mentioned the loa; someone else also wondered about a mythic family containing a resurrected mother and a tricky father. I don't know about that but has anyone checked out the Ogun angle? From the Wiki:

(a) In a ritual the Loa are summoned by the Houngan <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Houngan>> (Priest), Mambo <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mambo_%28voodoo%29> (Priestess) or Bokor <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bokor>> (Sorcerers) to take part in the service, receive offerings, and grant requests. The Loa arrive in the peristyle (ritual space) by mounting (possessing) a horse (ritualist) - who is said to be "ridden."

Certain Loa display very distinctive behaviour by which they can be recognized, specific phrases, and specific actions. As soon as a Loa is recognized, the symbols appropriate to them will be given to them. For example Erzulie Freda <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erzulie>> will be given a mirror and a comb, fine cloth or jewelry (Vanessa?!); Legba will be given his cane, straw hat and pipe (Charles?); Baron Samedi <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baron_Samedi> will be given his top hat, sunglasses (Charles again?) and a cigar.

Further, as to why Wolfe would suddenly write a voodoo novel:

(b) As a way to keep their European <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europea>> masters from interfering, and to appease the authorities who prevented them from practising their own religions, the African slaves <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavery>> in

Haiti syncretised <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syncretism>> the Loa with the Roman Catholic <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic> saints - so Vodoun altars will frequently have images of Catholic figures displayed. For example, Papa Legba <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papa_Legba> is alternately St. Peter <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Peter> or St. Lazarus <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Lazarus>, ^[/disambiguation needed <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Disambiguation/Fixing_links/]/ Ayizan <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayizan>> is Saint Clare <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clare_of_Assisi>, and so on. Syncretism also works the other way in Haitian Vodou <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haitian_Vodou> and many Catholic <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholicism> saints <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint>> have become Loa in their own right, most notably St. Philomena <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Philomena>, St. Michael the Archangel <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Michael_the_Archangel>, St. Jude <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude_the_Apostle>, and St. John the Baptist <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._John_the_Baptist>.

And finally:

(c) The Rada Loa <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rada_loa> are generally the older, more beneficent spirits, and are associated with the gods of Africa. They include Legba <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papa_Legba>, Loko <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loco_%28loa%29>, Ayizan <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayizan>>, Anaisa Pye <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anaisa_Pye>, Dhamballah Wedo <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Damballah>> and Ayida-Weddo <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayida-Weddo>>, Erzulie Freda <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erzulie>>, La Sir ne <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Sir%C3%A8ne>, and Agwe <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agwe>>. Their traditional colour is white <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White>> (as opposed to the specific colours of individual Loa).

David Stockhoff — 08 Oct 2011, 21:54 · in reply to David Stockhoff

Apologies for all the links the Wiki paste put in there. Here is a cleaner version.

On 10/7/2011 5:33 PM, David Stockhoff wrote:

(1) What the hell was that about Ellen Woodward, Connell, and Auciello? The leader she shoots is not the hijacker's, because he (I can't find his name) is subdued by Soriano. Was Skip once someone else? (Why did Chelle think he had a cane at one point?)

(2) Charles is emphatically Chelle's father (unless he is not). At the formal dinner, his family reunites. All three have trouble recognizing one another (except when they don't). Two are known to be not entirely who they think they are. Surely the third is also not entirely who he is. It has been suggested Blue is an Os, but surely the Os are not sexually/genetically compatible with humans. Was Charles abnormally tall previously? Chelle says he would do anything to get ahead; he was quite old. To complete the trio of "spirit mounts," is Mr White Charles in an Os body (or some Os-tech amalgam that lets him keep his blue eyes)?

(3) Someone mentioned the loa; someone else also wondered about a mythic family containing a resurrected mother and a tricky father. I

don't know about that but has anyone checked out the Ogun angle? From the Wiki:

(a) In a ritual the Loa are summoned by the Houngan (Priest), Mambo (Priestess) or Bokor (Sorcerers) to take part in the service, receive offerings, and grant requests. The Loa arrive in the peristyle (ritual space) by mounting (possessing) a horse (ritualist) - who is said to be "ridden."

Certain Loa display very distinctive behaviour by which they can be recognized, specific phrases, and specific actions. As soon as a Loa is recognized, the symbols appropriate to them will be given to them. For example Erzulie Freda will be given a mirror and a comb, fine cloth or jewelry (Vanessa?!); Legba will be given his cane, straw hat and pipe (Charles?); Baron Samedi will be given his top hat, sunglasses (Charles again?) and a cigar.

Further, as to why Wolfe would suddenly write a voodoo novel:

(b) As a way to keep their European masters from interfering, and to appease the authorities who prevented them from practising their own religions, the African slaves in Haiti syncretised the Loa with the Roman Catholic saints - so Vodoun altars will frequently have images of Catholic figures displayed. For example, Papa Legba is alternately St. Peter or St. Lazarus, Ayizan is Saint Clare, and so on. Syncretism also works the other way in Haitian Vodou and many Catholic saints have become Loa in their own right, most notably St. Philomena, St. Michael the Archangel, St. Jude, and St. John the Baptist.

And finally:

(c) The Rada Loa are generally the older, more beneficent spirits, and are associated with the gods of Africa. They include Legba, Loko, Ayizan, Anaisa Pye, Dhamballah Wedo, and Ayida-Weddo, Erzulie Freda, La Sir ne, and Agwe. Their traditional colour is white (as opposed to the specific colours of individual Loa).

David Stockhoff — 12 Oct 2011, 00:41 · in reply to David Stockhoff

Seriously. Has no one read Home Fires?

On 10/8/2011 5:54 PM, David Stockhoff wrote:
Apologies for all the links the Wiki paste put in there. Here is a cleaner version.

On 10/7/2011 5:33 PM, David Stockhoff wrote:

(1) What the hell was that about Ellen Woodward, Connell, and Auciello? The leader she shoots is not the hijacker's, because he (I can't find his name) is subdued by Soriano. Was Skip once someone else? (Why did Chelle think he had a cane at one point?)

(2) Charles is emphatically Chelle's father (unless he is not). At the formal dinner, his family reunites. All three have trouble recognizing one another (except when they don't). Two are known to be not entirely who they think they are. Surely the third is also not entirely who he is. It has been suggested Blue is an Os, but surely the Os are not sexually/genetically compatible with humans. Was

Charles abnormally tall previously? Chelle says he would do anything to get ahead; he was quite old. To complete the trio of "spirit mounts," is Mr White Charles in an Os body (or some Os-tech amalgam that lets him keep his blue eyes)?

(3) Someone mentioned the loa; someone else also wondered about a mythic family containing a resurrected mother and a tricky father. I don't know about that but has anyone checked out the Ogun angle? From the Wiki:

(a) In a ritual the Loa are summoned by the Houngan (Priest), Mambo (Priestess) or Bokor (Sorcerers) to take part in the service, receive offerings, and grant requests. The Loa arrive in the peristyle (ritual space) by mounting (possessing) a horse (ritualist) - who is said to be "ridden."

Certain Loa display very distinctive behaviour by which they can be recognized, specific phrases, and specific actions. As soon as a Loa is recognized, the symbols appropriate to them will be given to them. For example Erzulie Freda will be given a mirror and a comb, fine cloth or jewelry (Vanessa?!); Legba will be given his cane, straw hat and pipe (Charles?); Baron Samedi will be given his top hat, sunglasses (Charles again?) and a cigar.

Further, as to why Wolfe would suddenly write a voodoo novel:

(b) As a way to keep their European masters from interfering, and to appease the authorities who prevented them from practising their own religions, the African slaves in Haiti syncretised the Loa with the Roman Catholic saints - so Vodoun altars will frequently have images of Catholic figures displayed. For example, Papa Legba is alternately St. Peter or St. Lazarus, Ayizan is Saint Clare, and so on. Syncretism also works the other way in Haitian Vodou and many Catholic saints have become Loa in their own right, most notably St. Philomena, St. Michael the Archangel, St. Jude, and St. John the Baptist.

And finally:

(c) The Rada Loa are generally the older, more beneficent spirits, and are associated with the gods of Africa. They include Legba, Loko, Ayizan, Anaisa Pye, Dhamballah Wedo, and Ayida-Weddo, Erzulie Freda, La Sir ne, and Agwe. Their traditional colour is white (as opposed to the specific colours of individual Loa).

Daniel Petersen — 12 Oct 2011, 09:01 · in reply to David Stockhoff

Ha, ha, not yet, David! Wish I could help!

Anybody heard whether Gene's gonna be able to complete The Land Across or follow up An Evil Guest with a novel set at least partly on Woldercan?

-DOJP

On Wed, Oct 12, 2011 at 1:41 AM, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:
Seriously. Has no one read Home Fires?

On 10/8/2011 5:54 PM, David Stockhoff wrote:

Apologies for all the links the Wiki paste put in there. Here is a cleaner version.

On 10/7/2011 5:33 PM, David Stockhoff wrote:

(1) What the hell was that about Ellen Woodward, Connell, and Auciello? The leader she shoots is not the hijacker's, because he (I can't find his name) is subdued by Soriano. Was Skip once someone else? (Why did Chelle think he had a cane at one point?)

(2) Charles is emphatically Chelle's father (unless he is not). At the formal dinner, his family reunites. All three have trouble recognizing one another (except when they don't). Two are known to be not entirely who they think they are. Surely the third is also not entirely who he is. It has been suggested Blue is an Os, but surely the Os are not sexually/genetically compatible with humans. Was Charles abnormally tall previously? Chelle says he would do anything to get ahead; he was quite old. To complete the trio of "spirit mounts," is Mr White Charles in an Os body (or some Os-tech amalgam that lets him keep his blue eyes)?

(3) Someone mentioned the loa; someone else also wondered about a mythic family containing a resurrected mother and a tricky father. I don't know about that but has anyone checked out the Ogun angle? From the Wiki:

(a) In a ritual the Loa are summoned by the Houngan (Priest), Mambo (Priestess) or Bokor (Sorcerers) to take part in the service, receive offerings, and grant requests. The Loa arrive in the peristyle (ritual space) by mounting (possessing) a horse (ritualist) - who is said to be "ridden."

Certain Loa display very distinctive behaviour by which they can be recognized, specific phrases, and specific actions. As soon as a Loa is recognized, the symbols appropriate to them will be given to them. For example Erzulie Freda will be given a mirror and a comb, fine cloth or jewelry (Vanessa?!); Legba will be given his cane, straw hat and pipe (Charles?); Baron Samedi will be given his top hat, sunglasses (Charles again?) and a cigar.

Further, as to why Wolfe would suddenly write a voodoo novel:

(b) As a way to keep their European masters from interfering, and to appease the authorities who prevented them from practising their own religions, the African slaves in Haiti syncretised the Loa with the Roman Catholic saints - so Vodoun altars will frequently have images of Catholic figures displayed. For example, Papa Legba is alternately St. Peter or St. Lazarus, Ayizan is Saint Clare, and so on. Syncretism also works the other way in Haitian Vodou and many Catholic saints have become Loa in their own right, most notably St. Philomena, St. Michael the Archangel, St. Jude, and St. John the Baptist.

And finally:

(c) The Rada Loa are generally the older, more beneficent spirits, and are associated with the gods of Africa. They include Legba, Loko, Ayizan, Anaisa Pye, Dhamballah Wedo, and Ayida-Weddo, Erzulie Freda, La Sir ne, and Agwe. Their traditional colour is white (as opposed to the specific colours

of individual Loa).

avast! Antivirus: Outbound message clean.
Virus Database (VPS): 111011-2, 10/11/2011
Tested on: 10/11/2011 8:41:23 PM
avast! - copyright (c) 1988-2011 AVAST Software.
<http://www.avast.com>

António Pedro Marques — 12 Oct 2011, 11:41 · in reply to David Stockhoff

No dia 12/10/2011, ?s 01:41, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> escreveu:

Seriously. Has no one read Home Fires?

Errr...

You've caught us.

David Stockhoff — 12 Oct 2011, 13:45 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

Shame!

On 10/12/2011 7:41 AM, Ant?nio Pedro Marques wrote:

No dia 12/10/2011, ?s 01:41, David Stockhoff<dstockhoff at verizon.net> escreveu:

Seriously. Has no one read Home Fires?

Errr...

You've caught us.

Marc Aramini — 12 Oct 2011, 14:58 · in reply to Daniel Petersen

--- On Wed, 10/12/11, Daniel Petersen <danielottojackpetersen at gmail.com> wrote:

Ha, ha, not yet, David! ?Wish I could help!

Anybody heard whether Gene's gonna be able to complete The Land Across or follow up An Evil Guest with a novel set at least partly on Woldercan?

He finished the first draft of The Land Across recently, but he likes to rewrite. Don't know about any future plans after that, but he still writes regularly.

I read all but the very end of Home Fires, because I like to save something new from Wolfe for a rainy or depressing day. When a publication day is set for The Land Across I will finish Home Fires and contribute more to the discussion.

Lots of distractions recently health wise, both Rosemary's and possibly his own, though he doesn't say more than stuff like, "been ill this week". If I could steal a thousand years from future generations I would certainly transfer them vampirically to Wolfe.

Stephen Hoy — 18 Oct 2011, 02:02 · in reply to David Stockhoff

David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> asked:

Seriously. Has no one read Home Fires?

My thirst for?Home Fires got quenched in the first chapter while trying to figure out why yellow FAX paper would be so comforting--apparently this is a 'finding' in color psychology, which presumably foreshadows the overlays of color-named characters.

Was Skip once someone else?

Seems like everyone in Home Fires is/was someone else so why not Skip? Question is, who? His initials--S.W.G.--don't help me generate many alternatives, although some sort of "Greene" seems likely. But Skip/overlay might explain why Skip wonders if Chelle will recognize him on her return--despite the Obvious Explanation that Skip will appear different in Chelle's eyes because he has aged. Skip/overlay also fits with Skip's too-easy transformation into agile hero aboard the cruise ship.

?At the formal dinner, his family reunites. All three have trouble recognizing one another (except when they don't). Two are known to be not entirely who they think they are. Surely the third is also not entirely who he is.

I do wonder how any of the Blue family can recognize each other to any degree because they're all replacements/overlays. Still, somehow Chelle recognized her replacement mother at the airport while failing to recognize Skip. Clearly an important clue.

David Stockhoff — 18 Oct 2011, 02:29 · in reply to Stephen Hoy

Finally!

On 10/17/2011 10:02 PM, Stephen Hoy wrote:
David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> asked:

Seriously. Has no one read Home Fires?

My thirst for /Home Fires/ got quenched in the first chapter while trying to figure out why yellow FAX paper would be so comforting--apparently this is a 'finding' in color psychology, which presumably foreshadows the overlays of color-named characters.

I forget who was supposed to find it comforting....need to check. Yes, there must be other colors than Blue and White; there must be a Yellow at least.

Was Skip once someone else?

Seems like everyone in Home Fires is/was someone else so why not Skip? Question is, who? His initials--S.W.G.--don't help me generate many alternatives, although some sort of "Greene" seems likely. But Skip/overlay might explain why Skip wonders if Chelle will recognize him on her return--despite the Obvious Explanation that Skip will appear different in Chelle's eyes because he has aged. Skip/overlay also fits with Skip's too-easy transformation into agile hero aboard the cruise ship.

Exactly. He doubts it himself. And it's almost as though he is truly a wuss who has no idea he was ridden and did not perform those deeds, but since he thinks he did, he becomes brave. Wouldn't be the first time.

At the formal dinner, his family reunites. All three have trouble recognizing one another (except when they don't). Two are known to be not entirely who they think they are. Surely the third is also not entirely who he is.

I do wonder how any of the Blue family can recognize each other to any degree because they're all replacements/overlays. Still, somehow Chelle recognized her replacement mother at the airport while failing to recognize Skip. Clearly an important clue.

Yes. As a person apparently in her own body, she ignored her mom's mount's body and saw only her rider, but she didn't see Skip. I don't know whether to take that as a sign of how well the technology works or something else. Skip was not simply riding a new body, or else there is no reason for Chelle to miss (skip?) him. The other alternative is that someone was riding him. But he's a lawyer, not a suicide---he wasn't wiped, he's ridden by a god if anything.

Does "skip" refer to the practice of effectively time traveling by shipping outsystem? Is Skip's cover story for Chelle's mom of doing "secret work for the government" (presumably complete with ninja moves) derived from his own immediate past?

The voodoo angle doesn't help much---all the big shots are white. But there are other color associations that may help. hmm....

David Stockhoff — 18 Oct 2011, 14:33 · in reply to Stephen Hoy

more...

On 10/17/2011 10:02 PM, Stephen Hoy wrote:

David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> asked:

Seriously. Has no one read Home Fires?

My thirst for /Home Fires/ got quenched in the first chapter while trying to figure out why yellow FAX paper would be so comforting--apparently this is a 'finding' in color psychology, which presumably foreshadows the overlays of color-named characters.

Was Skip once someone else?

Seems like everyone in Home Fires is/was someone else so why not Skip? Question is, who? His initials--S.W.G.--don't help me generate many alternatives, although some sort of "Greene" seems likely. But Skip/overlay might explain why Skip wonders if Chelle will recognize him on her return--despite the Obvious Explanation that Skip will appear different in Chelle's eyes because he has aged. Skip/overlay also fits with Skip's too-easy transformation into agile hero aboard the cruise ship.

At the formal dinner, his family reunites. All three have trouble recognizing one another (except when they don't). Two are known to be not entirely who they think they are. Surely the third is also not entirely who he is.

I do wonder how any of the Blue family can recognize each other to any degree because they're all replacements/overlays. Still, somehow Chelle recognized her replacement mother at the airport while failing to recognize Skip. Clearly an important clue.

Some notes about the beginning. First, it seems to begin with a dream, but the dream (Skip's memory of contracting with Chelle, looking in a mirror, recoiling) is followed by a reality that appears to be identical (he worries about Chelle, he looks in the mirror, recoils).

Second, Skip gets his own "yellow copy." He wonders if it's work-related, then tells himself he knows what it is, then tells himself it's something else. It turns out to be a message concerning Chelle. Pretty much all the narration here is immediately negated or contradicted. What was the other thing it could have been?

Odds/ends:

(1) Skip's hands are described as "wrinkled and old" in his dream. Is this merely his

exaggerated worry that Chelle will find him too old? He's only in his late forties.

(2) the sentence "Five hundred." (This after something "seizes" Skip at the mirror and before he "shudders.") Years? Hours? Surely not noras.

Stephen Hoy — 19 Oct 2011, 19:59 · in reply to David Stockhoff

David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:

At the formal dinner, his family reunites. All three have trouble recognizing one another (except when they don't). Two are known to be not entirely who they think they are. Surely the third is also not entirely who he is.

?> I do wonder how

any of the Blue family can recognize each other to any degree because they're all replacements/overlays. Still, somehow Chelle recognized her replacement mother at the airport while failing to recognize Skip. Clearly an important clue.

?Some notes about the beginning. First, it seems to begin with a dream, but the dream (Skip's memory of contracting with Chelle, looking in a mirror, recoiling) is followed by a reality that appears to be identical (he worries about Chelle, he looks in the mirror, recoils).

?Second, Skip gets his own "yellow copy." He wonders if it's work-related, then tells himself he knows what it is, then tells himself it's something else. It turns out to be a message concerning Chelle.

Pretty

much all the narration here is immediately negated or contradicted. What was the other thing it could have been?

I agree about the dream-like start--a re-read of Chapter One feels like Skip is recovering from a recent mind-plant. Note also the details toward chapter's end, from the window conversion paragraph thru the tea garden paragraph--the open window and budding roses suggest an expansion of consciousness.

Wolfe doesn't openly discuss the effects of superposing one mind onto another without first performing a wipe, but that seems to be what we're both considering. I think Skip has an overlay of some sort, possibly an agent's persona designated to watch over Chelle.

?Odds/ends:

?(1) Skip's hands are described as "wrinkled and old" in his dream. Is this merely his exaggerated worry that Chelle will find him too old? He's only in his late forties.

?(2) the sentence "Five hundred." (This after something "seizes" Skip at the mirror and before he "shudders.") Years? Hours? Surely not noras.

Here's a thought...a year may not be a solar year.

What if a year is actually ten hundred-days? Is there anything in Home Fires that might contradict this metrification? ?Twenty-two years of hundred-time equals about sixty of ours, which would help explain Chelle's failure to id Skip right off the ship, as well as Skip's early self-perception as "wrinkled and old." Also, it helps explain the confusion of Martha Ott, the disoriented elderly woman at the end of the book who sips tea with Chelle at Carrera's Cafe. On the down side, it's not a world-building premise I'd expect an author to obscure.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 19 Oct 2011, 20:11 · in reply to Stephen Hoy

On Wed, Oct 19, 2011 at 12:59 PM, Stephen Hoy <stephenhoy at yahoo.com> wrote:

What if a year is actually ten hundred-days? Is there anything in Home Fires that might contradict this metrification?

No, but I believe that if they were going to call a thousand days a "year," they would've called a hundred days a "month;" contrariwise, if they were going to call a hundred days a "hundred-day," they would have come up with an appropriate name for a thousand-day. I could, of course, be wrong, but I don't think Wolfe would throw in such an inconsistency without at least a hint.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

David Stockhoff — 19 Oct 2011, 21:16 · in reply to Stephen Hoy

On 10/19/2011 3:59 PM, Stephen Hoy wrote:

David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:

At the formal dinner, his family reunites. All three have trouble recognizing one another (except when they don't). Two are known to be not entirely who they think they are. Surely the third is also not entirely who he is.

I do wonder how any of the Blue family can recognize each other to any degree because they're all replacements/overlays. Still, somehow Chelle recognized her replacement mother at the airport while failing to recognize Skip. Clearly an important clue.

Some notes about the beginning. First, it seems to begin with a dream, but the dream (Skip's memory of contracting with Chelle, looking in a mirror, recoiling) is followed by a reality that appears to be identical (he worries about Chelle, he looks in the mirror, recoils).

Second, Skip gets his own "yellow copy." He wonders if it's work-related, then tells himself he knows what it is, then tells himself it's something else. It turns out to be a message concerning Chelle. Pretty much all the narration here is immediately negated or contradicted. What was the other thing it could have been?

I agree about the dream-like start--a re-read of Chapter One feels like Skip is recovering from a recent mind-plant. Note also the details toward chapter's end, from the window conversion paragraph thru the tea garden paragraph--the open window and budding roses suggest an expansion of consciousness.

Wolfe doesn't openly discuss the effects of superposing one mind onto another without first performing a wipe, but that seems to be what we're both considering. I think Skip has an overlay of some sort, possibly an agent's persona designated to watch over Chelle.

Yes. And that would explain a few things: (1) if the agent rider (or observer?) is very young, that would explain both Skip's quick reactions and his horror at Skip's age. Mist may be a clue. (2) That lets Mr White be the same kind of composite persona. Hard to say who is riding whom. (3) Skip's ready production of an alibi for Chelle's mom (I still find it suspicious). (4) Possibly, just possibly, the memory of rallying the nearly-unarmed Ellen Woodward and others when the agent rode someone else. Is the agent a kind of mental Sky Marshal? Odd that this "agent" seems experienced at hijacking-type situations; when Skip emerges from the mists, he hasn't even thought of his cruise idea yet. Maybe hijackings have become common, but then why no Marines on the ship?

And Chelle appears not to be valuable anyway, at least not in the way some characters seem to think.

Odds/ends:

(1) Skip's hands are described as "wrinkled and old" in his dream.

Is this merely his exaggerated worry that Chelle will find him too old? He's only in his late forties.

(2) the sentence "Five hundred." (This after something "seizes" Skip at the mirror and before he "shudders.") Years? Hours? Surely not noras.

Here's a thought...a year may not be a solar year.

What if a year is actually ten hundred-days? Is there anything in Home Fires that might contradict this metrification? Twenty-two years of hundred-time equals about sixty of ours, which would help explain Chelle's failure to id Skip right off the ship, as well as Skip's early self-perception as "wrinkled and old." Also, it helps explain the confusion of Martha Ott, the disoriented elderly woman at the end of the book who sips tea with Chelle at Carrera's Cafe. On the down side, it's not a world-building premise I'd expect an author to obscure.

There was some discussion of time a few months ago (see "Home Fires and calendar reform"). The year seems to be 400 days, with 100-day quarters and (I guess) 33-day months. So 500 days would be more than a year. I just returned the book to the library---how long is Chelle supposed to be on leave? Anyway, the agent's assignment to Skip could be that long.

Now, if you allow massive rounding (odd in a metric time system, but maybe common among people who haven't adapted to it yet), "200 days, about half a year" could mean almost 250 days, so a year might be 500 days. BTW, I think you're off by a decimal: $22 \times 100 = 2200$; $2200/365 = 6$ of our years or 5.5 400-day years. Or did I misunderstand you?

Another approach: if tours of duty are similar to our own, i.e., 6 months to 2 to 4 years, maybe that's a place to start. Given interstellar distances, 2 years may be the minimum time Chelle was away. Would 1000 days be a typical tour, or 500 + star travel? How many years would pass on Earth?

Stephen Hoy — 23 Oct 2011, 15:25 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

On Wednesday, October 19, 2011 3:11 PM, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:
On Wed, Oct 19, 2011 at 12:59 PM, Stephen Hoy <stephenhoy at yahoo.com> wrote:

What if a year is actually ten hundred-days? Is there anything in Home Fires that might contradict this metrification?

No, but I believe that if they were going to call a thousand days a "year," they would've called a hundred days a "month;" contrariwise, if they were going to call a hundred days a "hundred-day," they would have come up with an appropriate name for a thousand-day. I could, of course, be wrong, but I don't think Wolfe would throw in such an inconsistency without at least a hint.

I agree, an author should give a hint of any change in the definition of a year. The question is whether "hundred-day" is a hint.

As Dan'I points out, we only have a "hundred-day" in Home Fires. Where are "ten-day" and "thousand-day"? There's no mention of month but we do find other non-metric time terms like hour, week, and year. However, trying to stretch a week to ten days won't work because Wolfe eliminates the possibility. In Reflection 17 Looking Over a Rail, Skip calculates the wages of the crew: <<What is it the seamen get? The captain told me. Seventy noras a week, so one thousand per hundred-day.>> ?Ten noras a day, confirming seven days in a week, and an ugly 14.3 weeks per hundred day.

A search for year = thousand-day (or any other value that appeals) also comes up empty. There's no indication that the number of days in a year has changed. Even time-of-day seems unchanged after a careful re-reading. We fail in any search for a philometric calendar with units

of 1, 10, 100, 1000. So why does Wolfe refer so frequently to a "hundred-day"?

Either I'm missing something as a reader, or "hundred-day" is mere window dressing--a sort of fictional condiment like all the food scenes in *An Evil Guest*.

Stephen Hoy — 23 Oct 2011, 16:38 · in reply to David Stockhoff

On Wednesday, October 19, 2011 4:16 PM, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote in reply to me:

Hoy: What if a year is actually ten hundred-days? Is there anything in *Home Fires* that might contradict this metrification? Twenty-two years of hundred-time equals about sixty of ours ...

Stockoff: There was some discussion of time a few months ago (see "*Home Fires* and calendar reform"). The year seems to be 400 days, with 100-day quarters and (I guess) 33-day months. So 500 days would be more than a year. I just returned the book to the library---how long is Chelle supposed to be on leave? Anyway, the agent's assignment to Skip could be that long.

Stockoff: Now, if you allow massive rounding (odd in a metric time system, but maybe common among people who haven't adapted to it yet), "200 days, about half a year" could mean almost 250 days, so a year might be 500 days. BTW, I think you're off by a decimal: $22 \times 100 = 2200$; $2200/365 = 6$ of our years or 5.5 400-day years. Or did I misunderstand you?

I was calculating that 22 "thousand-day years" is about 60 "three-hundred-sixty-five-day years." $22 \times 1000 = 22000$; $60 \times 366.666... = 22000$. But my guess is refuted by a detail I hadn't noticed & to which you refer: Ch 11 Right and Left, Rick Johnson tells Skip about a temporary job he once held for "two hundred days or so, about half a year."

Stockoff: Another approach: if tours of duty are similar to our own, i.e., 6 months to 2 to 4 years, maybe that's a place to start. Given interstellar distances, 2 years may be the minimum time Chelle was away. Would 1000 days be a typical tour, or 500 + star travel? How many years would pass on Earth?

Nailing down the length of a year has significance if you want to know where Chelle fought the Os.

In Ch 2 When Janie Comes Marching Home, Chelle asks, "How long was I gone?" "Twenty-two years, one hundred and six days," Skip replies, "I was..." then trails off into silence. "Speechless, Counselor?" Skip offers up a few words to explain how he felt, including a phrase from Edward Coke, "Veritas nihil veretur nisi abscondi." Truth is only afraid of concealment. — Curiously, we find a similar quote in *An Evil Guest* from Coke's legal rival Francis Bacon, the bit in the first chapter where the President scoffs, "What's truth, 'said jestin' Pilate." This particular legal phrase doesn't really fit Skip's situation. To me, it feels more like "X" marks the spot.

The time passed provides an estimate of the distance traveled. There are only three stars within 11 light years of Earth. Assuming near-perfect lightspeed travel, Chelle possibly traveled to Epsilon Eridani, 10.5 light years distant.

Doesn't leave Chelle much duty time at her destination--about 1 year 106 days--, but this is consistent with the story. She returned early due to injury.

David Stockhoff — 23 Oct 2011, 20:10 · in reply to Stephen Hoy

On 10/23/2011 12:38 PM, Stephen Hoy wrote:

Stockoff: Another approach: if tours of duty are similar to our own, i.e., 6 months to 2 to 4 years, maybe that's a place to start. Given interstellar distances, 2 years may be the minimum time Chelle was away. Would 1000 days be a typical tour, or 500 + star travel? How many years would pass on Earth?

Nailing down the length of a year has significance if you want to know where Chelle fought the Os.

In Ch 2 When Janie Comes Marching Home, Chelle asks, "How long was I gone?" "Twenty-two years, one hundred and six days," Skip replies, "I was..." then trails off into silence. "Speechless, Counselor?" Skip offers up a few words to explain how he felt, including a phrase from Edward Coke, "Veritas nihil veretur nisi abscondi." Truth is only afraid of concealment. Curiously, we find a similar quote in /An Evil Guest/ from Coke's legal rival Francis Bacon, the bit in the first chapter where the President scoffs, "What's truth, said jestin' Pilate." This particular legal phrase doesn't really fit Skip's situation. To me, it feels more like "X" marks the spot.

The time passed provides an estimate of the distance traveled. There are only three stars within 11 light years of Earth. Assuming near-perfect lightspeed travel, Chelle possibly traveled to Epsilon Eridani, 10.5 light years distant.

Doesn't leave Chelle much duty time at her destination--about 1 year 106 days--, but this is consistent with the story. She returned early due to injury.

Well done. Of course "1 year and 106 days" is 471 days, or nearly 500. Consistent with a tour of 1-2 years.

David Stockhoff — 24 Oct 2011, 14:18 · in reply to Stephen Hoy

I note from Lexicon Urthus that "Os" is a town along Gyll. It means mouth, opening, source.

The loa Legbo, who seems to ride Chelle's father as an Os, is a speaker/mouthpiece/gatekeeper.

Stephen Hoy — 24 Oct 2011, 22:45 · in reply to David Stockhoff

On Oct 24, 2011, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:

I note from Lexicon Urthus that "Os" is a town along Gyll. It means mouth, opening, source.

The loa Legbo, who seems to ride Chelle's father as an Os, is a speaker/mouthpiece/gatekeeper.

Yes, Os = "mouth" is one of the possible meanings that can make you scratch your head.

?Another possibility is Os = "Yourselves / Each Other." The anthem, "El Continente de los H?roes," was played at the Canam spaceport on Chelle's return, suggesting the possibility of a spanish-language influence when NORA (presumably) chose a name for the Earth's extra-solar adversaries. ?Of course it could have a color basis, too, as Os = "bone-(white)."

None of these possibilities gains much traction because we have almost no information about the nature of the Os. The most revealing info comes from a discussion of spying in Ch 2, "I can't imagine how a human being could spy on the Os." "Electronically."

Matthew Keeley — 24 Oct 2011, 23:22 · in reply to Stephen Hoy

On Mon, Oct 24, 2011 at 6:45 PM, Stephen Hoy <stephenhoy at yahoo.com> wrote:

None of these possibilities gains much traction because we have almost no information about the nature of the Os. The most revealing info comes from a discussion of spying in Ch 2, "I can't imagine how a human being could spy on the Os." "Electronically."

I can see three ways of reading that:

a) Spying has to be electronic because the Os are non-organic or robotic (Os as OS as operating system?) b) The Os don't at all resemble humans and therefore no human spy could infiltrate an Os organization, so electronic reconnaissance is the only option. c) The Os communicate non-verbally; perhaps there are telepathic communications that might be electronically intercepted?

a) would seem to presuppose another race behind the Os. None of these three options rule out the other two from also being true.

-Matt

David Stockhoff — 25 Oct 2011, 00:06 · in reply to Stephen Hoy

On 10/24/2011 6:45 PM, Stephen Hoy wrote:

On Oct 24, 2011, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:

I note from Lexicon Urthus that "Os" is a town along Gyll. It means mouth, opening, source.

The loa Legbo, who seems to ride Chelle's father as an Os, is a speaker/mouthpiece/gatekeeper.

Yes, Os = "mouth" is one of the possible meanings that can make you scratch your head. Another possibility is Os = "Yourselves / Each Other."

Whoa. nice!

The anthem. "El Continente de los H?roes," was played at the Canam spaceport on Chelle's return, suggesting the possibility of a spanish-language influence when NORA (presumably) chose a name for the Earth's extra-solar adversaries. Of course it could have a color basis, too, as Os = "bone-(white)."

Well, since the future world is in part a fulfillment of paranoid fantasies

None of these possibilities gains much traction because we have almost no information about the nature of the Os. The most revealing info comes from a discussion of spying in Ch 2, "I can't imagine how a human being could spy on the Os." "Electronically."

Yeah, there's not much to go on. But I do think the color associations are key. As I noted way back, a certain group of loa, including Legba, are white rather than other colors. Perhaps the Os have an empire of sentient-riders, i.e., they all ride other beings.

David Stockhoff — 25 Oct 2011, 00:30 · in reply to Matthew Keeley

On 10/24/2011 7:22 PM, Matthew Keeley wrote:

On Mon, Oct 24, 2011 at 6:45 PM, Stephen Hoy <stephenhoy at yahoo.com <mailto:stephenhoy at yahoo.com>> wrote:

None of these possibilities gains much traction because we have almost no information about the nature of the Os. The most revealing info comes from a discussion of spying in Ch 2, "I can't imagine how a human being could spy on the Os." "Electronically."

I can see three ways of reading that:

- a) Spying has to be electronic because the Os are non-organic or robotic (Os as OS as operating system?)
- b) The Os don't at all resemble humans and therefore no human spy could infiltrate an Os organization, so electronic reconnaissance is the only option.
- c) The Os communicate non-verbally; perhaps there are telepathic communications that might be electronically intercepted?

a) would seem to presuppose another race behind the Os. None of these three options rule out the other two from also being true.

-Matt

Conversely, the Os spy on humans. Either they are traitors or they simply allow themselves to be ridden, or both. I'm guessing they can't just take over.

Thanks to the pun you point out in in "a" and Wolfe's history of imagining telepathic robot civilizations, I'd go for all three. Presumably telepathy and wireless communications are not far apart.

Andreas Muegge — 02 Dec 2011, 13:50 · in reply to David Stockhoff

Almost missed this discussion...

2011/10/18 David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net>

Was Skip once someone else?

Seems like everyone in Home Fires is/was someone else so why not Skip? Question is, who? His initials--S.W.G.--don't help me generate many alternatives, although some sort of "Greene" seems likely. But Skip/overlay might explain why Skip wonders if Chelle will recognize him on her return--despite the Obvious Explanation that Skip will appear different in Chelle's eyes because he has aged. Skip/overlay also fits with Skip's too-easy transformation into agile hero aboard the cruise ship.

At the formal dinner, his family reunites. All three have trouble recognizing one another (except when they don't). Two are known to be not entirely who they think they are. Surely the third is also not entirely who he is.

I do wonder how any of the Blue family can recognize each other to any degree because they're all replacements/overlays. Still, somehow Chelle recognized her replacement mother at the airport while failing to recognize Skip. Clearly an important clue.

This puts the whole book into a new light. Does anyone have an idea how it's possible that the "overlays" recognize each other in the new bodies?

Ciao,
Andreas

David Stockhoff — 02 Dec 2011, 14:08 · in reply to Andreas Muegge

On 12/2/2011 8:50 AM, Andreas Muegge wrote:
Almost missed this discussion...

2011/10/18 David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net>
<mailto:dstockhoff at verizon.net>>

> Was Skip once someone else?

Seems like everyone in Home Fires is/was someone else so why not Skip? Question is, who? His initials--S.W.G.--don't help me generate many alternatives, although some sort of "Greene" seems likely. But Skip/overlay might explain why Skip wonders if Chelle will recognize him on her return--despite the Obvious Explanation that Skip will appear different in Chelle's eyes because he has aged. Skip/overlay also fits with Skip's too-easy transformation into agile hero aboard the cruise ship.

> At the formal dinner, his family reunites. All three have trouble recognizing one another (except when they don't). Two are known to be not entirely who they think they are. Surely the third is also not entirely who he is.

I do wonder how any of the Blue family can recognize each other to any degree because they're all replacements/overlays. Still, somehow Chelle recognized her replacement mother at the airport while failing to recognize Skip. Clearly an important clue.

This puts the whole book into a new light. Does anyone have an idea how it's possible that the "overlays" recognize each other in the new bodies?

Ciao,
Andreas

I have a few thoughts on that but no answers:

(1) All three are different types of overlays or riders: an alien, a human-tech scanned download, and whatever kind of mysterious accident Chelle is. Because of the interest the factions seem to have in her, she feels like some kind of sport, maybe a combination of human reconstructive tech and something alien. Dunno.

(2) But all are riders on human mounts, and to the extent that they know what they are, may be able to spot doubled personality in others. Fuzzy, I know.

(3) Skip, also a suspected rider, does not **appear** to pick up on this stuff quickly or at least overtly, but it's hard to tell what he sees, isn't it? If there's a rule based on common mechanisms, he should follow it too.

Stephen Hoy — 02 Dec 2011, 17:54 · in reply to David Stockhoff

Glad to see this topic arise from the dead. I finished a third re-read of HF and want to share an idea.

Throughout Home Fires, we find out very little about the Os. What we know for certain is that a multinational alliance engaged the Os on the planet Johanna (Gehenna). The most recent information available--10 or so years ago when Chelle departed Johanna--indicates the Os are losing on the ground. Skip entertains a few thoughts about whether the Os would destroy a habitable planet rather than lose it to us, but dismisses this idea. He believes the Os would prefer to negotiate.

Who on earth is better suited to negotiate on behalf of the Os than Skip Webster Grison, lifelong defender of celebrities, cyborgs, and the unjustly accused, leading partner of the celebrated defense firm of Burton, Grison, and Ibarra. How convenient for the Os that, as Home Fires ends, Skip heads to Johanna as a military lawyer, in perfect position to represent the Os if negotiations begin. "Even a murderer deserves to have someone to speak for him, someone who will explain to the jury why he did what he did and show him where his best interests lie." The overt story of Home Fires is the classic tale of what a man will do for the love of a woman. But what if the covert story began with a missing fact: Skip was never contracted with Chelle? What if... his memories of Chelle have been implanted just before he awakes on Yellow Paper Day?

Everyone who speaks directly of Skip's relationship with Chelle & family has (arguable) ties to the Os: double agent Charles Blue/White, Vanessa Henessey/Virginia Healey, Susan Clerkin/(whose real last name is unknown), and possibly Chelle herself. If we believe Charles White, Susan's rebound lover Rick Johnson isn't a suicide cultist, but a cyborg agent for the Os, suggesting Vanessa's body-donor Edith Eckhart may have been an Os agent as well. I suspect the not-quite-cyborg pickpocket Achilles may have a little Os to his backstory, too. Nefarious backstory: Skip is being manipulated to go to Johanna to represent the Os.

David Stockhoff — 02 Dec 2011, 19:21 · in reply to Stephen Hoy

Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. That's why Blue is on Earth riding White.

This explains the weird "no this, no that" going on in Skip's thoughts in the opening scene; the thoughts he insists on are the fake ones. Would this imply Skip is not actually being ridden? More subtracted from than added on to? or both? More like an injected "agent" package than a complete overlay, but enough to make him unrecognizable, i.e., look like someone else, to Chelle?

Might Chelle have returned bearing some kind of white flag from the Os? The guy she shot was spying for them, which must mean he let them ride him voluntarily. Did some parallel, involuntary mechanism operate when she had her accident and was reconstructed?

Does the ship hijacking have meaning beyond its plot function?

On 12/2/2011 12:54 PM, Stephen Hoy wrote:

Glad to see this topic arise from the dead. I finished a third re-read of HF and want to share an idea.

Throughout Home Fires, we find out very little about the Os. What we know for certain is that a multinational alliance engaged the Os on the planet Johanna (Gehenna). The most recent information available--10 or so years ago when Chelle departed Johanna--indicates the Os are losing on the ground. Skip entertains a few thoughts about whether the Os would destroy a habitable planet rather than lose it to us, but dismisses this idea. He believes the Os would prefer to negotiate.

Who on earth is better suited to negotiate on behalf of the Os than Skip Webster Grison, lifelong defender of celebrities, cyborgs, and the unjustly accused, leading partner of the celebrated defense firm of Burton, Grison, and Ibarra. How convenient for the Os that, as Home Fires ends, Skip heads to Johanna as a military lawyer, in perfect position to represent the Os if negotiations begin. "Even a murderer deserves to have someone to speak for him, someone who will explain to the jury why he did what he did and show him where his best interests lie."

The overt story of Home Fires is the classic tale of what a man will do for the love of a woman. But what if the covert story began with a missing fact: Skip was never contracted with Chelle? What if... his memories of Chelle have been implanted just before he awakes on Yellow Paper Day?

Everyone who speaks directly of Skip's relationship with Chelle & family has (arguable) ties to the Os: double agent Charles Blue/White, Vanessa Hennessey/Virginia Healey, Susan Clerkin/(whose real last name is unknown), and possibly Chelle herself. If we believe Charles White, Susan's rebound lover Rick Johnson isn't a suicide cultist, but a cyborg agent for the Os, suggesting Vanessa's body-donor Edith Eckhart may have been an Os agent as well. I suspect the not-quite-cyborg pickpocket Achilles may have a little Os to his backstory, too.

Nefarious backstory: Skip is being manipulated to go to Johanna to represent the Os.

From: David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net>
To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
Sent: Friday, December 2, 2011 8:08 AM
Subject: Re: (urth) Home Fires questions

On 12/2/2011 8:50 AM, Andreas Muegge wrote:

Almost missed this discussion...

2011/10/18 David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net
<mailto:dstockhoff at verizon.net> <mailto:dstockhoff at verizon.net
<mailto:dstockhoff at verizon.net>>>

Was Skip once someone else?

Seems like everyone in Home Fires is/was someone else so why not Skip? Question is, who? His initials--S.W.G.--don't help me generate many alternatives, although some sort of "Greene" seems likely. But Skip/overlay might explain why Skip wonders if Chelle will recognize him on her return--despite the Obvious Explanation that Skip will appear different in Chelle's eyes because he has aged. Skip/overlay also fits with Skip's too-easy transformation into agile hero aboard the cruise ship.

At the formal dinner, his family reunites. All three have trouble recognizing one another (except when they don't). Two are known to be not entirely who they think they are. Surely the third is also not entirely who he is.

I do wonder how any of the Blue family can recognize each other to any degree because they're all replacements/overlays. Still, somehow Chelle recognized her replacement mother at the airport while failing to recognize Skip. Clearly an important clue.

This puts the whole book into a new light. Does anyone have an idea how it's possible that the "overlays" recognize each other in the new bodies?

Ciao,
Andreas

I have a few thoughts on that but no answers:

(1) All three are different types of overlays or riders: an alien, a human-tech scanned download, and whatever kind of mysterious accident Chelle is. Because of the interest the factions seem to have in her, she feels like some kind of sport, maybe a combination of human reconstructive tech and something alien. Dunno.

(2) But all are riders on human mounts, and to the extent that they know what they are, may be able to spot doubled personality in others. Fuzzy, I know.

(3) Skip, also a suspected rider, does not **appear** to pick up on this stuff quickly or at least overtly, but it's hard to tell what he sees, isn't it? If there's a rule based on common mechanisms, he should follow it too.

Stephen Hoy — 16 Jan 2012, 19:02 · in reply to Stephen Hoy

David Stockhoff added a few comments recently about the use of "hundred day" in Home Fires, exploring the possibility that the calendar is altered in some way that may illuminate the background of the story. Like the dialects of certain characters, the colloquial use of "hundred day" adds a distinct flavor to the story, but I haven't found any indication the calendar has been changed. Home Fires seems to have a 24 hr clock, a 7 day week, and 365+ day year. Still, I keep wondering whether we can eke out another layer of meaning.

I've been searching for some secondary association of "hundred day" that connects to mind-control or memory enhancement or some well-worn epigram of Simonides (as in the dedication to AEG) or some mnemonic device. This line of attack seemed reasonable because the first "Reflection" chapter opens with a discussion of memories, where Skip offers the idea that each morning we rebuild our identity with scraps of memories pieced together from "somewhere" upon waking. Unfortunately, the memory approach leads nowhere.

Just to see what would happen, I tried translating "hundred day" into standard metric form = "hectoDies." Maybe this refers to a person named Hector who dies or someone whose alias is Hector Diaz. If there is such a person, Hector and Achille would have it in for each other. ?

Possibly interesting, but pretty flimsy unless there are other traces of the Iliad hidden away somewhere.

Jeff Wilson — 16 Jan 2012, 22:22 · in reply to Stephen Hoy

On 1/16/2012 1:02 PM, Stephen Hoy wrote:

David Stockhoff added a few comments recently about the use of "hundred day" in Home Fires, exploring the possibility that the calendar is altered in some way that may illuminate the background of the story. Like the dialects of certain characters, the colloquial use of "hundred day" adds a distinct flavor to the story, but I haven't found any indication the calendar has been changed. Home Fires seems to have a 24

hr clock, a 7 day week, and 365+ day year. Still, I keep wondering whether we can eke out another layer of meaning.

The US media often makes a special issue of covering a new president's first 100 days in office. Maybe there's a media convergence on this period that catches on, the way the arbitrary red state / blue state designation did. This could suggest that the media-driven political fixation of US society is much, much stronger, or at least much more advanced.

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

David Stockhoff — 17 Jan 2012, 01:57 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On 1/16/2012 5:22 PM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

On 1/16/2012 1:02 PM, Stephen Hoy wrote:

David Stockhoff added a few comments recently about the use of "hundred day" in Home Fires, exploring the possibility that the calendar is altered in some way that may illuminate the background of the story. Like the dialects of certain characters, the colloquial use of "hundred day" adds a distinct flavor to the story, but I haven't found any indication the calendar has been changed. Home Fires seems to have a 24 hr clock, a 7 day week, and 365+ day year. Still, I keep wondering whether we can eke out another layer of meaning.

The US media often makes a special issue of covering a new president's first 100 days in office. Maybe there's a media convergence on this period that catches on, the way the arbitrary red state / blue state designation did. This could suggest that the media-driven political fixation of US society is much, much stronger, or at least much more advanced.

I didn't catch any sense of that; rather, if anything, that politics as we know it had entirely died. The "system" seems to rule in Home Fires, whatever system that might be. Of course, in such a world, media idiocies like that 100-day period (arising from FDR's busy presidency) might well supplant rational discourse. But it's hard to imagine that habit coming to order people's lives, unless dictators routinely ruled for 100 days before they were shot by their guards and replaced. It would fit in some ways, but seems a stretch in others.

Rereading that post about the "rational" calendar, I think I didn't make a couple of things clear enough: (1) that the calendar we use today is almost identical to it (2) that the 91-day block of days in a quarter is virtually impossible to internalize the way humans normally process things. It would demand---no, scream for---a rounding out to any round number the human brain can latch on to. "100" is the only such number in sight in that scenario.