

Plant/Animal

The Urth list — 16 messages, 4 voices, 15 Sep 2014

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6670>

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Lee — 15 Sep 2014, 18:46

Marc Aramini: Spring Wind being half plant caught me a bit off guard -

I obviously hadn't read that since I devised the man-tree hybrid scheme of Short Sun. Definitely those embedded stories would have told us the real plot and its denouement in a world in which Urth of the New Sun was never written, but they are still somewhat opaque in their syncretic blending of stories of Mowgli, Moses, myth, and more. What is the Red Flower, the rose without thorns, which gives birth to Spring Wind? Severian's Claw of the Conciliator probably winds up being the thorn of a flower dipped in his blood.

IIRC you connect this theme to the Vironese custom of plant naming of women and animal naming of men. Also to the connection between botanic parasitic vine/multi-limbed trees and the zoological parasitic inhum/multi-limbed Neighbors.

I'm pretty sure you've mentioned noticing that early in Shadow of the Torturer, Severian describes anticipating a certain light (New Sun) which "engendered life in whatever objects it fell upon, so that a leaf plucked from a bush grew slender legs and waving feelers..."

I think you've connected all this to the original Transfiguration which involved Jesus emitting mystic beams of light signifying his (Conciliatory) status as bridge between heaven and earth. The Transfiguration continuing to be symbolized by a conversion of the grape and grain plant products to the animal products of blood and flesh.

But I am hoping you include also the Green Man in the constellation of elements to this theme. Not only because of his combined nature of plant and animal essence, and his ostensible origin from the New Sun light.

But also because of The Green Man as a pagan deity connected to Great God Pan and Dionysus worship for which there are undertones and hints throughout the entire Sun Series and which probably represents the connection between Judeo-pagan wine reverence and its importance to Christianity.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_Man

Marc Aramini — 15 Sep 2014, 19:26 · in reply to Lee

Yes ... it seems that Spring Wind is much more Green Man than Typhon ... and I have noted the Green Man feeds off the light of the New Sun in something I am writing up now.

The story of Hyacinthus, where flowers spring up from blood, is vital to the Short Sun universe ... somehow this Spring Wind story is its opposite, I think. A cyclic kind of communion is implied. fruit to wine to blood, returning to flowers. Severian's blood on that thorn also somehow

completes the Eucharistic cycle.

On Mon, Sep 15, 2014 at 11:46 AM, Lee <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:
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Marc Aramini — 16 Sep 2014, 15:02 · in reply to Marc Aramini

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Marc Aramini — 16 Sep 2014, 15:24 · in reply to Marc Aramini

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Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 16 Sep 2014, 15:38 · in reply to Marc Aramini

On Tue, Sep 16, 2014 at 8:33 AM, Marc Aramini <marcaramini at gmail.com> wrote:
That Green Man might be a damn Martian ...

Thank you very much. Now I will never be able to reread tBotNS without envisioning Marvin.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Jeffery Wilson clueland.com — 16 Sep 2014, 17:03 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

On 9/16/2014 10:38 AM, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:
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Uncle Martin did have time travel....

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Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 16 Sep 2014, 17:19 · in reply to Jeffery Wilson clueland.com

But Uncle Martin wasn't green!

On Tue, Sep 16, 2014 at 10:03 AM, Jeffery Wilson clueland.com <jwilson at clueland.com> wrote:

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Lee — 17 Sep 2014, 13:48 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

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Yep, good detective work all around!

The story of Hyacinthus, where flowers spring up from blood, is vital to the Short Sun universe.

Given the character "Hyacinth" in Long Sun, I think the theme deserves all the attention

is has gotten on this board and more.

Perhaps the Green Man is partially alien too, and only believes himself a true descendent of man.

The tale of the origin of Hieros is twisted and confused. But I think there is an implication that they are ultimately derived from human stock. There is a term I now forget, in animal husbandry which describes taking extreme variants and rebreeding them with the original stock for genetic robusticity. I kinda think that may be what Wolfe is getting at here.

The Green Man warns Severian that if he begets a son, it will be his enemy. Sev takes this as a generic prophecy.

Interesting observation. Might this relate to the relationship of Zeus and Dionysus? In ancient Greece, rustic vine god worship was replaced by worship of the Olympic pantheon, but the worship of Zeus and his ilk was eventually replaced by Dionysian worship.

Severian does not have a son. But on the Whorl it seems like the relationship between Pas and Silk is somewhat Zeus-Dionysian.

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes: Thank you very much. Now I will never be able to reread tBotNS without envisioning Marvin.

Heh. Though if any Martian connection was intended, perhaps Edgar Rice Burroughs and/or Ray Bradbury were the main reference? On the other hand, must we be snobby and assume that Wolfe

valued these SF giants higher than Looney Toons?

Marc Aramini — 17 Sep 2014, 13:57 · in reply to Lee

I think sometimes Wolfe likes making clichés come to life in not so obvious ways. (green men, silk purse of a pig's ear for Silk in Pig, etc.)

On Wed, Sep 17, 2014 at 6:48 AM, Lee <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:
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Jeffery Wilson clueland.com — 17 Sep 2014, 16:00 · in reply to Marc Aramini

On 9/17/2014 8:57 AM, Marc Aramini wrote:

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Do you mean literally the vanished Hieros, whom are only referred to but are said to be the original human race ascended beyond the cycle of bang-gnabs, or the Hierogramates, who were uplifted from the unintelligent life outside the earth by the vanished Hieros and in turn made the other Yesodis? Almost certainly some of the Hieros are in the 'gramates woodpile, IMO.

There is a term I now forget, in animal husbandry

which describes taking extreme variants and rebreeding them with the original stock for genetic

robusticity. I kinda think that may be what Wolfe is getting at here.

"Hybrid vigour" works with any diverse genepool to produce breeds with the best qualities of previous lines while hopefully lacking their weaknesses.

Jeff Wilson - < jwilson at clueland.com >
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Lee — 17 Sep 2014, 18:36 · follows Jeffery Wilson clueland.com

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Jeffrey Wilson:

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Well there are also the "Hierarchs", the apparent designation for Apheta and her ilk. These serve as the "larvae" for Hierogrammates. So are these humaniform Hierarchs the lost "Hiero"

race residing in a place beyond the universe (Yesod)?

I don't know and I suspect we, the human audience, are not really supposed to know nor fully understand the working of such superior beings. A dog may have a general sense of "family" but the concept of "great aunt" or "second cousin-twice removed" is probably beyond its comprehension. So also, the interrelationships of the Hiero groups may be incomprehensible for humans.

But given that Tzadkiel and B, F and O and Apheta and the other Yesodis all take a human-like form (at least while we observe them), I think some sort of ultimately human origin for them is implied. If God made humanity (and angels) in His own image, might not the reverse also be true?

Jeffery Wilson clueland.com — 20 Sep 2014, 01:34 · in reply to Lee

On 9/17/2014 1:36 PM, Lee wrote:

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The Hierarchs are said to be the creatures of the Hierogrammates, so they are among "the other Yesodis" I mentioned. FB&O are not among the tongueless Hierarchs, as they are able to speak in places as literally silent as a tomb. IIRC, F and B are of the short-lived purpose-made Hierodules, with robot O along for muscle.

Jeff Wilson - < jwilson at clueland.com >

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Jeffery Wilson clueland.com — 21 Sep 2014, 14:06 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

On 9/16/2014 12:19 PM, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:

But Uncle Martin wasn't green!

It wasn't obvious on the original black and white seasons of the show, but he could change to match Tim.

<http://www.sitcomsonline.com/myfavoritemartiantvguide.jpg>

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Lee — 22 Sep 2014, 13:21 · follows Jeffery Wilson clueland.com

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I would agree.

Still I think what I said previously holds: Wolfe does not want these "angels" and their form and organization to have a clear, explicit description in our minds, and he is deliberately being ambiguous in describing them.

Biblical seraphim are described as:

Literally "burning ones", the word seraph is normally a synonym for serpents when used in the Hebrew Bible...Fiery six-winged beings that fly around the Throne of God crying "holy, holy, holy". . "Each had six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew"..They appear also in the Christian Gnostic text On the Origin of the World, described as "dragon-shaped angels".[6]

This is pretty strange stuff, especially for ancient people who could only communicate such supernatural constructions with words and 2-D hand drawings. I get the sense that even the people creating such depictions were aware that they were not doing their referents real justice with these odd descriptions.

So my guess is that Wolfe is going for something similar in describing Hiero-types.. A description which gives us an idea; something for our imaginations to work with but which doesn't really do it justice, given our human limitations.

(The idea of angels taking the form of fiery reptiles/dragons might have more than one echo in BotNS; the Salamander and Typhon/Mandragora to name a couple.)