

beating a dead horse

The Whorl list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 09 May 1997

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/276>

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.

Joel Priddy — 09 May 1997, 14:08

Thanks for the great and thorough answers in response to my Pas/Typhon questions. Now that the connection between the two series has been nailed down, I have a slightly stickier question: why? What is served by the two series being connected?

Thematically: There are some similar themes of course, but does one flesh out or serve the other in any way that requires them to be connected? New Sun and Long Sun do may be variations on a theme, but so is a lot of Wolfe's work. Is there any narrative advantage to the connection? Developed histories/universes are one of the fun toys of science fiction (I still recall reading *_I, Robot_* as a kid and being wowed at following a fictional history over a span of centuries), but New Sun and Long Sun are so removed from each other in so many details of history, tech, culture, and scope that I'm not sure the connection satisfies any shared-history sweet-tooth. Following with a series taking place on Blue and Green would be a satisfying connection to Long Sun, but New Sun/ Long Sun strikes me as saying *_The Last Temptation Of Christ_* takes place in the same "universe" as *_The Catcher In The Rye_*. Sure, that could be the case, but it doesn't add anything to either story to be presented with that of information. I don't see any reason that requires a New Sun/ Long Sun connection except as a promotional thing, letting Long Sun ride on New Sun's coattails for a while, but I assume that if Wolfe bothered to make a connection, there must be a more relevant purpose behind it... Of course, I'm making the error of second guessing Wolfe. Who knows how many books he has planned in the same universe, or how much both Long Sun and New Sun will inform them. I think I'm probably just still mad at the publisher for putting that blurb on the cover of *Nightside*. It set me up to expect something different that what I got, and as several other people have expressed here, it took me awhile to switch gears so that I could enjoy Long Sun in and of itself. Had I just been reading happily along what I thought was an unrelated Wolfe book and stumbled across a reference to Bria, it would have been an exciting revelation. It all comes down to expectation, I guess.

JOEL

Scott Dalrymple — 09 May 1997, 14:13 · follows Joel Priddy

At 10:08 AM 5/9/97 EDT, you wrote:

Thanks for the great and thorough answers in response to my Pas/Typhon questions. Now that the connection between the two series has been nailed down, I have a slightly stickier question: why? What is served by the two series being connected?

For me, the fact that Typhon launched the Whorl gave me a greater appreciation of the immensity of both his vision and his supreme arrogance (especially given the fact that he fashions Pas after himself). The image of the Whorl seems to me an extension of the huge statue of Typhon: a testament to his awesomely-scaled monomaniacal streak. Is this link between the series necessary? Does it offer any particularly important insights into the *_Long Sun_* series? Probably not. But it cost Wolfe nothing to link the two, and it does make me read the Typhon section of the

Urth series differently now. I think it's a delicious bonus to have the two linked.

On a somewhat practical level, one might contend that the very strong similarities between the religion in _Long Sun_ and Catholicism argues for a somewhat shorter time span than we generally imagine between today's time and Typhon's; remnants of Catholicism certainly still exist even in Severian's present, but seem more removed than what Silk practices.

m.driussi — 09 May 1997, 17:58 · follows Scott Dalrymple

Reply: Item #7420072 from WHORL at LISTS.BEST.COM@INET00#

Joel,

Re: your notes on the mechanics of augury ("ars augurium"?), you've opened a can of worms--good stuff. That is, I agree with your points. The conclusion would seem to be that prepping an animal (and getting it to the right? augur?) takes too long; that the point of information transfer is actually in the interpretation of the animal guts--just the right moment for a mind-control pink-light laser-beam to the brain, if such heavy handed manipulation is required.

"The glass is half-em--" <brzzzzt!> "--full; this means that rain will fall only in the north . . . "

But yeah, the Nine are probably really gods in the Greco-Roman sense of it. And that's one of the main points, right? Putting Father Brown and the 19th century into a Greco-Roman polytheistic mode.

Re: why a new Briatic series? Now this is just my opinion and you don't have to agree with it, but I think it is pretty interesting to take one of the irredeemable devils of New Sun and at least partially redeem him in Long Sun. As if Tolkien wrote a sequel to THE LORD OF THE RINGS where Sauron the Great took a turn playing do-gooder "Sauron the Long Suffering"; then through elvish time warping had the sequel play along simultaneous to the first work.

That is to say: it is clear that being literally dead and then literally resurrected did nothing to cure Monarch Typhon of his evil dreams; it is as if he had only gone to sleep then woken up. But the process of a waking dream (virtual reality/artificial intelligence) of being a good god seems to have had some effect. In the end, Pas seems to be at peace.

(Of course, in a different light this redemption might just be the same as the convoluted torture of a Titan in the netherworld; i.e., the "gooder" he tries the more he suffers because his "true" nature is Evil.)

We might just as well ask, "Why all the sequels to `The Island of Doctor Death and Other Stories'?" But the answer to that is more clear-cut: each story looks at a different angle of the same sort of puzzle. For one example, in Long Sun Love looms large; reminding us how utterly absent Love is (or seems to be) from New Sun.

vizcacha,

Great summation on Mint! Have a cup of coffee (or two) and keep going!

=mantis=