

New/Long Sun; Derivation of "talus"

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 15 Feb 1999

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Robert Patterson — 15 Feb 1999, 23:19

I searched the archives and also for a FAQ, but I cannot find any discussion of direct links between New Sun & Long Sun. Has anyone proved that they are from the same universe? Or do we simply take it on faith because Amazon says so? (I worry that this is a bone-crushingly stupid question, but I can't remember any obvious connections.)

I noticed in the archives a discussion of the derivation of some of the Long Sun words. The one I saw for "talus" failed to give the most important reference. Talus was a demigod character in Spencer's "The Fairie Queen" who accompanied one of the knights on many of his adventures. He was invincibly strong, fairly stupid, and rather unpleasant for a "good" guy. His whole purpose was to implement justice untempered by mercy or extenuating circumstances. In one scene he slaughtered an entire town for a minor infraction. He was similar to Long Sun taluses in many important ways, and I am certain that is where Wolfe got the name.

I would quote chapter and verse, but the copy of Spencer that I read is at my local library. I heartily recommend Spencer. You can get the hang of the verse and the Elizabethan English within a few pages. Spencer's account of St. George's battle with the dragon is as vivid a dragon slaying as I've ever read. (Another great dragon slaying is of course the one in Tolkien's "The Unfinished Tales." However, Turin killed Glaurung in an afternoon. St. George required several days of continuous fighting.) Anyway, I would not be surprised if Spencer is the source of other Wolfe references that I missed.

BTW, as I recall, the Talus character doesn't show up until about halfway through "The Fairie Queen." I remember what an epiphany it was for me. At the time I had already read Nightside. I had (as we all probably have) looked up that "talus" word in my dictionary and been very puzzled and frustrated by the definition therein. When I encountered Talus in FQ, it was a wonderful revelation.

Robert

*This is WHORL, for discussion of Gene Wolfe's Book of the Long Sun.