

# Severian I, Severian II, Severian III, Severian Ad Nauseum

The Urth list — 11 messages, 4 voices, 03 Dec 2008

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5261>

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Son of Witz — 03 Dec 2008, 17:54

Is Severian's speculation at the end of Citadel to be taken at face value?

Citadel 38:

"Two things are clear to me. The first is that I am not the first Severian..."

Reading these, I've felt that Severian's speculation is often wrong, where as his more nebulous philosophical musings are usually right. So it wasn't until this discussion about the various Severians that I really even chewed on it.

It doesn't seem that he's right.

The narrator is the same as the First Severian, just reshaped by time travelers.

Marty Mcfly and John Conner are not new Instances of themselves, they've just had their lives reshaped.

So what he means is that he must have had a timeline without the manipulations FIRST, then when he was noticed by the Heiros, they went back and altered his timeline to produce a character with more potential to become the New Sun than his first timeline did. The text does not say if this 'first' Severian passed the test, just that he sailed beyond Briah.

same quote section:

"he (who in the final sense was and is myself) became Autarch in turn and sailed beyond the candles of night. Then those who walk the corridors walked back to the time when he was young, and my own story as I have given it here in so many pages began."  
"

from the perspective of the 4 books proper, there is only really one Severian body, though that is confused by the tomb. This is why there is the explosion when he meets Apu Punchau. The Two bodies can't be in the same time because they are one, ala Inire's law of mirrors (so to speak).

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I guess I'm bringing this up because this passage has led to some theories that seem pretty wonky to me. I take issue with the count of Severians in the Lexicon Urthus. I don't think he's mapped it out right because of a few reasons:

Severian I is Severian II, as I've argued above. What justification is there for calling the Claw Severian III? And if the New Sun body is fixed rather than remade, Severian III, narrator of Urth, is still the same Severian as I & II. Lacking the lexicon here, I can't go into the rest, but calling the White Fountain one of the sequenced Severian's seems dodgy at best because it's not really a sequential body.

I've yet to reread the flood, so I'll have to account for his drowning there, but I think he's been resurrected (by self or by Heiros) at a few points within BoTNS proper, so if we're going to count every death/resurrection as a Sequential Severian, our count would be much higher and even more debateable. ("Is He Dead?") If we're going to only count dead bodies, then we shouldn't count Claw or Fountain.

Philosophically, I believe Consciousness is primary, and our bodies are not our true selves. for Severian this goes further than it does for us. He keeps living, whether he's poisoned by Avern, drowned in a river, broken from a fall, strangled, etc.)

I think the point of this death is to show us this. Read the scene with an eye towards the death/resurrection theme. He's running from murderers. He meets up with a Suit of Armor (Sidero - Iron Man) and when he's fixing him and understanding Sidero's armor nature, he hears Great Wings and jumps in the Iron suit to protect his body. Then, the winged creature, the Butterfly Angel of the Book, Tzadkiel, unless I'm reading it wrong, picks him up and tosses him down the shaft. Why does Tzadkiel break his body?

I think it's to show him that his body doesn't really matter, that he is constant. He doesn't NEED to get in that suit of armor, He doesn't, on the cusp of becoming the GOLD of the New Sun need to hide himself in a BASE METAL, like Iron, especially at this point, when he's more or less purified the LEAD of his mundane existence.

Urth IX, the airshaft scene, when he's having his OBE.

"Had I delivered my final lines? "In future times, so it has long been said, the death of the old sun will destroy Urth. But from its grave will rise monsters, a new people, and the New Sun. Old Urth will flower as a butterfly from its dry husk, and the New Urth shall be called Ushas." What fanfaron! Exit Prophet.

"

I believe Tzadkiel is giving him a direct example of this notion of Resurrection from Death. It's especially relevant that Tzadkiel has butterfly wings. " It was neither a woman nor a butterfly, but it partook of both,"

If I'm wrong, and he is an Aquastor at this point, perhaps the idea is to remove the final LEAD from him before he becomes the New Sun.

But if he IS an Aquastor, why does he leave a Corpse or few later on Ushas?

When Malrubius and Triskele were no longer sustained, they became dust. Why not corpses?

tricky business parsing this out.

~Witz

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John Watkins — 03 Dec 2008, 18:42 · in reply to Son of Witz

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Son of Witz — 03 Dec 2008, 19:04 · follows John Watkins

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From: John Watkins [mailto:john.watkins04 at gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, December 3, 2008 10:42 AM

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"What do you know of the anima?"

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While I stared in disbelief, Famulimus sang, "You came too near your double once, you know; that was here, in this poor town of stones. Then he was gone, and only you remained. Our eidolons are always of the dead. Have you not wondered why? Be warned!"

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John Watkins — 03 Dec 2008, 19:12 · in reply to Son of Witz

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For a living thing, the form is the anima, the life-principle--for humans, you might call it the mind or the soul. The matter is the body. Severian and Apu-Punchau are the same "form" instantiated, or "written," in different matters. Nevertheless they are distinct entities.

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Lane Haygood — 03 Dec 2008, 19:49 · in reply to John Watkins

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Lane Haygood — 03 Dec 2008, 22:29 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

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John Watkins — 03 Dec 2008, 22:34 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

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Lane Haygood — 04 Dec 2008, 04:37 · in reply to John Watkins

OK, so matter, form and anima.

Plato and many of the early philosophers wrestled with this idea of universality. For instance, if  
we go and look at a red thing (an apple), we know it's red. We see the color. But what about  
"redness?" What is the "thing-status" (being, reality) of redness?

Plato answers that for every general category there is a perfect, unchanging, eternal Idea  
(eidolon) that is that category. So, in the Platonic Heaven of the Forms, there is the perfect  
Form of Red, and all particular red things "participate in" the form of red. That is, red things are  
imperfect instantiations of redness.

But we never have direct contact with this world, Plato says, so we must know about it in  
another way. Hence, he theorizes that our souls know it, but forget it as we are born into the  
mortal world. When we see particular instantiations, it allows us to grasp the pure concept  
through a process called anamnesis, the remembrance of the Forms in our souls.

Aristotle found this to be problematic, and so argued instead that universality was a feature of  
things themselves. The general idea of redness, he argues, inheres the being of red things. That  
is, there is no "redness" apart from red things. The same "ground for being" is in all particular  
predicates. When I say of an apple, "is red," I am really making the claim that the apple itself is  
a ground, a substance, for predication of a property, redness, but that said property has no  
independent ground for being apart from that substance.

Matter is the stuff that persists through physical changes, or what we commonly think of as  
physical stuff. It's like dirt, or wind, or water. But it can be given form, and certain things arise  
only in concert between matter and form. A house, for instance, isn't the bricks and the  
framework and the plumbing, etc. It is the thing that is made up by their precise configuration.  
To put it more poetically, a cup isn't the clay shell, but the empty space inside of it that is

useful. That's what gives a thing its telos, its purpose.

So what is a substance, as opposed to just matter? A substance is something non-separable from the object. I can separate the color red from the apple. It is possible to think of a non-red apple. But I can't think of an apple that is non-spatial. Extension, mass, etc. are all properties of an apple that are substantial rather than predicable. In other words, substantial features cannot have separate existence. A substance must also be differentiable from other things. Individuality is a rough way of understanding it, but that implies too much uniqueness. We must be able to say that "this, and not that" is a thing. Matter is therefore not a substance, because matter cannot fulfill both these conditions at once.

So the primary substance for Aristotle is *form* or essence (ousia) -- that special unique thing about a given individual that helps us to differentiate it, without which it would not be a thing at all. But nothing exists in this sort of "raw" state. Everything is matter + form, or essences and predicates, or grounds and properties. Apples have "applehood," but they also have mass, extension, a color, a taste, a smell, etc.

Anima refers to the soul (Aristotle's "De Anima" is translated as "on the soul."). It literally means breath, but refers instead to the life- force or essential energy that animates (hey, hey, clue) the body. Living things are matter + form + anima. We might say that anima was a primitive attempt at understanding consciousness, though that'd be specious, because we're no closer to understanding what consciousness is 2,000 years later, and probably won't have any greater clue 2,000 years from today what it is.

This has been your nightly PHIL 101 lesson.

Lane

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Son of Witz — 04 Dec 2008, 07:16 · in reply to Lane Haygood

thanks.

I'm more or less familiar with the concepts.  
I just lose track of the jargon and attributions.  
~witz

On Dec 3, 2008, at 8:37 PM, Lane Haygood wrote:  
OK, so matter, form and anima.

Plato and many of the early philosophers wrestled with this idea of universality. For instance, if we go and look at a red thing (an apple), we know it's red. We see the color. But what about "redness?" What is the "thing-status" (being, reality) of redness?

Plato answers that for every general category there is a perfect, unchanging, eternal Idea (eidolon) that is that category. So, in the Platonic Heaven of the Forms, there is the perfect Form of Red, and all particular red things "participate in" the form of red. That is, red things are imperfect instantiations of redness.

But we never have direct contact with this world, Plato says, so we must know about it in another way. Hence, he theorizes that our souls know it, but forget it as we are born into the mortal world. When we see particular instantiations, it allows us to grasp the pure concept through a process called anamnesis, the remembrance of the Forms in our souls.

Aristotle found this to be problematic, and so argued instead that universality was a feature of things themselves. The general idea of redness, he argues, inheres in the being of red things. That is, there is no "redness" apart from red things. The same "ground for being" is in all particular predicates. When I say of an apple, "is red," I am really making the claim that the apple itself is a ground, a substance, for predication of a property, redness, but that said property has no independent ground for being apart from that substance.

Matter is the stuff that persists through physical changes, or what we commonly think of as physical stuff. It's like dirt, or wind, or water. But it can be given form, and certain things arise only in concert between matter and form. A house, for instance, isn't the bricks and the framework and the plumbing, etc. It is the thing that is made up by their precise configuration. To put it more poetically, a cup isn't the clay shell, but the empty space inside of it that is useful. That's what gives a thing its telos, its purpose.

So what is a substance, as opposed to just matter? A substance is something non-separable from the object. I can separate the color red from the apple. It is possible to think of a non-red apple. But I can't think of an apple that is non-spatial. Extension, mass, etc. are all properties of an apple that are substantial rather than predicable. In other words, substantial features cannot have separate existence. A substance must also be differentiable from other things. Individuality is a rough way of understanding it, but that implies too much uniqueness. We must be able to say that "this, and not that" is a thing. Matter is therefore not a substance, because matter cannot fulfill both these conditions at once.

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