

"The First Severian"

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Dan'l Danehy Oakes — 04 May 1998, 07:01

I was at first surprised at all the stuff about who "the first Severian" was. The Severian who writes tBotNS -- the one who tells us "I know that I am not the first Severian" -- has been killed and resurrected/reconstructed from a "ghost" (aqastor, whatchmajiggy) more than once, after all.

But that doesn't cover what he means; he talks about a Severian who has a parallel career but does not bring the New Sun.

So -- consider another possibility. Wolfe, as an intellectual Roman Catholic, is very aware of the distinction between the view of Eternity and that of Space/Time.

So consider (if you will) the world as the artwork of a Creator. He (and, from the RC PoV, there is really very little alternative to using the masculine singular pronoun) creates a world as a "first draft." It goes along according to its natural laws -- and the Creator is not pleased with the way it comes out.

So He intervenes. From in spacetime, these look like suspensions of natural law -- we call them "miracles." (From outside spacetime, from the Eternal point of view, of course, they're perfectly natural.) But they change the flow of history. Before the Creator intervenes, for example, Joshua and his army get wiped out at Jericho; then the Creator intervenes and the walls fall.

And, from the spacetime point of view it has always happened that way.

Severian-1 is the Severian of the "first draft." (Actually, the nth draft, since until certain events in dimmer history -- like Jericho -- have taken place, events will produce no Severian at all: but he is the first draft of Severian.) He does the things Severian-2 describes. Then the Creator -- or, perhaps, His servants like Tzadkiel -- intervene, probably from the moment of his conception (not immaculate, but special), linking his being with that of the White Fountain. That is the Severian-2 we know and, well, whatever. (He's not terribly lovable, is he...?)

--Dan'l Danehy-Oakes	Can you believe that the eagle
Staff Curriculum Developer	will fly with the dove?
Oracle World-Wide Education	Can you believe in the rose
email: ddanehyo at us.oracle.com	in the raised fist glove?
phone: 650-506-0793	-- John Michael Talbot
