

Wolfe as Heretic

The Urth list — 76 messages, 18 voices, 19 May 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5611>

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Lee Berman — 19 May 2010, 14:00

In my fairly extensive review of Gene Wolfe interviews I've found him to be generally cautious and circumspect with regard to revealing the mysteries behind his literary work. But occasionally a certain interviewer will inspire him to let something important slip. For example, in the Larry McCaffery interview I mentioned in another post he is willing to resolve the central mystery of Fifth Head of Cerberus.

In the '96 interview with James Jordan I find one of the most telling revelations which has helped my personal understanding of the thematic underpinnings of the Sun series. Ironically the answer is in response to a question about the Soldier series. But it displays a part of the stated personal belief system of Gene Wolfe which seems to have inspired much of his work. I think it is a belief which is not reconcilable with orthodox Catholicism, though I can't be sure.

JJ: Which is another way of saying, do we have fallen angels here or some type of power that really was operative in the world before the kingdom of God?

GW: That is my personal belief. I think that the gods of paganism were real. But what I tried to do was to write about that pagan world as the pagans themselves wrote about it. If we read modern historians we are reading a very rationalistic viewpoint of this which says that all of these people were absolutely wasting their time by building temples to Ares or Apollo or you name it. And by offering sacrifices in worship and all that it was nothing there. Nothing at all there and that whether it is true or not that certainly is not the way the people who were doing it felt. They were convinced that there was something there and they had all sorts of legends and so forth about the appearances of the god and in fact there is one place in the Acts where Paul and another one of the apostles are mistaken for Zeus and Mercury. Zeus and Hermes, we are mixing the Latin and the Greek which is what I was trying to get away from. They are mistaken for Zeus and Hermes in human form because people in those days expected that you could see Zeus and Hermes in human form. I am not so sure they were wrong. I am not convinced that they were wrong. We love to think how much smarter we are than people of ancient times or biblical times or so forth but I am very dubious about that.

John Watkins — 19 May 2010, 14:10 · in reply to Lee Berman

I am not certain that monolatry is heretical.

On Wed, May 19, 2010 at 10:00 AM, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:

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António Pedro Marques — 19 May 2010, 14:33 · in reply to Lee Berman

Church Fathers did not in general make a point of saying pagan gods didn't exist. I don't think any considered them divine, but instead of angelic nature, though either fallen or misconstrued by their worshippers.

Hi, people.

Lee Berman wrote (19-05-2010 15:00):

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Lane Haygood — 19 May 2010, 14:47 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

2010/5/19 Ant?nio Pedro Marques <antonio at gmail.com>:

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That's what I read Wolfe as saying: the being worshipped is real even if humans misconstrue their nature. Let's say that an ancient Greek worshipping Apollo was really worshipping one of the angels to whom was given custody of poetry, the sun, music, etc. The imperfect nature of the worshipper is such that all he knows how to call what he sees is "divine," even if that appellation might more properly refer to Apollo's boss, and not to Apollo himself. Certainly the same sort of modernistic arguments against the existence of divinity apply with equanimity to

the existence of Apollo or the god of monotheists. Wolfe is right that there is no reason for people that acknowledge the existence of that monotheistic god to assume that heathens were silly for believing in their many gods. In fact, it is contrary to their own faith that they would be dismissive of the faith of others.

Also, Wolfe is a learned man, and well aware of Christianity's roots being not too far removed from henotheistic Judaism. I think our modern theological discussions are stripped very bare of the supernatural (except for, of course, those beings for which theodicies are traditionally maintained), and we tend to impart our rather cynical view to ancients, or view them as deficient in some regard because they believed in things we now consider seriously. Every time I indulge myself in this prejudice, I recall all of the wonders the people of the ancient world produced, and am humbled a bit.

David Stockhoff — 19 May 2010, 15:26 · follows Lane Haygood

Exactly. This is how Tolkien handled it too; his elemental gods were clearly angelic, and Elves remembered this if Men didn't. Just acknowledging the gods as real doesn't mean they must be gods.

I don't think Wolfe would agree that only the Jews knew God before the Christians; the Greeks must have glimpsed divinity, whether in angelic form or as fragments of true divinity. They were well acquainted with it.

To me, all his novels read like the Soldier novels to me---his characters are like the blind men encountering the elephant, but they don't think they know everything like 21st century people do, nor do they think God is a big warm hug. They acknowledge the persistence of mystery/ies. Encountering their gods could be a fatal experience.

I don't think there are angels in FHC.

BTW, I'd bet that Wolfe might have fun with heretical status in the sense of being a "bad boy," but no more than that. He's too smart to have converted with the purpose of either deconstructing and demolishing his new religion or oversimplifying/rigidifying it.

Message: 7

Date: Wed, 19 May 2010 15:33:01 +0100

From: Ant?nio Pedro Marques <antonio at gmail.com>

David Stockhoff — 19 May 2010, 15:32 · follows David Stockhoff

And now I grasp another layer of meaning in Latro's name.

Am I always the last to know? ;)

Message: 6

Date: Wed, 19 May 2010 10:10:12 -0400

From: John Watkins <john.watkins04 at gmail.com>

John Watkins — 19 May 2010, 15:37 · in reply to David Stockhoff

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To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>

Subject: Re: (urth) Wolfe as Heretic

Message-ID:

<AANLkTimBy7TYu9Spxvov6WNsDP2wN_PEhekSwSY8w98N at mail.gmail.com>

Content-Type: text/plain; charset="iso-8859-1"

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brunians at brunians.org — 19 May 2010, 15:39 · in reply to Lee Berman

In what way is this not compatible with Catholicism?

What is Catholic doctrine on this matter?

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brunians at brunians.org — 19 May 2010, 15:41 · in reply to Lane Haygood

Y'all ought to speak for yourselves when talking about what the ancients believed as opposed to what we believe.

There's plenty of people out there with other pictures of the World than the Moderrun one that suit them very well.

2010/5/19 Ant?nio Pedro Marques <antonio at gmail.com>:

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I indulge myself in this prejudice, I recall all of the wonders the people of the ancient world produced, and am humbled a bit.

Jerry Friedman — 19 May 2010, 17:50 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Wolfe said in that same interview, "Laura is my idea of what a pagan goddess might be who survived into the Christian world. One of the places where I probably split off from conventional Catholic thinking is that I believe that the gods of paganism were real. I don't think that they are entitled to the worship that they received from the pagans. I think what many of the biblical writers are saying is, 'Yes, these are real powers, but it is wrong for you to give to them the honors that are due to God alone.' And I think that that is exactly correct."

So he thinks (or thought) his view of the pagan gods was "probably" not "conventional Catholic thinking", but that's different from "heretical".

I can't answer your questions about Catholic doctrine, Josh.

Jerry

----- Original Message -----

From: "brunians at brunians.org" <brunians at brunians.org> To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net> Sent: Wed, May 19, 2010 9:39:00 AM Subject: Re: (urth) Wolfe as Heretic

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Urth Mailing List

To post, write urth at urth.net

Subscription/information: <http://www.urth.net>

David Stockhoff — 19 May 2010, 18:04 · follows Jerry Friedman

And it's a great pun.

Wouldn't want to overinterpret, but if Latro is hunting (seeking) something in a world where gods present themselves to him daily, what is he seeking except which god to worship? Indeed, which god would a Christian worship if he lived before Christ?

Message: 4

Date: Wed, 19 May 2010 11:37:56 -0400

From: John Watkins <john.watkins04@gmail.com>

To: The Urth Mailing List <urth@lists.urth.net>

Subject: Re: (urth) Wolfe as Heretic

Message-ID:

<AANLkTinvp1t8dXQpKZTta6i-TAScytV8fUUqk-qRi5DS@mail.gmail.com>

Content-Type: text/plain; charset="iso-8859-1"

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On Wed, May 19, 2010 at 11:32 AM, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff@verizon.net> wrote:

And now I grasp another layer of meaning in Latro's name.

Am I always the last to know? ;)

Lee Berman — 19 May 2010, 18:28 · follows David Stockhoff

Well, I did a quick search and didn't find mention of "monolatry" elsewhere on this list. Can't remember it in any other analysis so it looks like David Stockhoff might be elevated from last to first in the Lupine universe to catch the likely intended connection between that term and the Soldier. Much credit to John Watkins for dredging up the term.

I wasn't seriously arguing that Wolfe should be branded a heretic. It was mostly a jest aimed at Dan's worry above about "Very deep heresy". Plus a bit of poetic license. "Wolfe as non-conventional Catholic thinker" just didn't have the same ring for a subject title.

So monolatry allows for Apollo and Hermes to be the Greeks' misinterpretation of angels while Typhon and Medusa or Lamia were the misinterpretation of fallen angel demons, etc. But I still get the impression Gene Wolfe had more on his mind than the straight religious interpretation, especially with the Sun series.

Wolfe is Catholic but he is more than just Catholic. Science and SF are also obviously very important to him. The decade during which *Shadow of the Torturer* was written featured a great popularity of the notion that alien travellers had visited Earth and strongly impacted the ancient peoples and civilizations. Not to suggest Wolfe is a "trendy" thinker but neither did he live in a cave. These ideas combined with monolatry may have been part of the impetus for that theme in the series, allowing for Abaia and Hierodules and The Cumaean etc. to have their impact on Urth.

brunians at brunians.org — 19 May 2010, 18:30 · in reply to David Stockhoff

God's got our best interests in mind, and all, but that's from His point of view.

God is the Person who kills every one of us.

God is the Enemy on the Left.

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And it's a great pun.

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Rob Thornton — 19 May 2010, 18:39 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Who is the Enemy on the Right?

On Wed, May 19, 2010 at 2:30 PM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:
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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 19 May 2010, 18:42 · in reply to Rob Thornton

...Richard Nixon?

On Wed, May 19, 2010 at 11:39 AM, Rob Thornton <oblate777 at gmail.com> wrote:
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Another of His titles is the Smoking Mirror.

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 19 May 2010, 19:24 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

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On Wed, May 19, 2010 at 12:03 PM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

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brunians at brunians.org — 19 May 2010, 19:49 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

That's also right.

It's interesting to reflect that Arjuna is the Left Handed Archer.

Arjuna uses his bow from both sides.

When we die, it is God that kills us.

He is closer to you than your jugular vein.

Are you familiar with the observance of Toxcatl, Dan'I?

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The Enemy on the Left is a title of Tezcatlipoca.

Another of His titles is the Smoking Mirror.

Who is the Enemy on the Right?

On Wed, May 19, 2010 at 2:30 PM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

God's got our best interests in mind, and all, but that's from His point of view.

God is the Person who kills every one of us.

God is the Enemy on the Left.

And it's a great pun.

Wouldn't want to overinterpret, but if Latro is hunting (seeking) something in a world where gods present themselves to him daily, what is he seeking except which god to worship? Indeed, which god would a Christian worship if he lived before Christ?

Message: 4
Date: Wed, 19 May 2010 11:37:56 -0400
From: John Watkins <john.watkins04 at gmail.com>

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 19 May 2010, 19:51 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Only in broad terms. And we're wandering pretty far from the topic of the list.

On Wed, May 19, 2010 at 12:49 PM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:
That's also right.

It's interesting to reflect that Arjuna is the Left Handed Archer.

Arjuna uses his bow from both sides.

When we die, it is God that kills us.

He is closer to you than your jugular vein.

Are you familiar with the observance of Toxcatl, Dan'I?

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Date: Wed, 19 May 2010 11:37:56 -0400

From: John Watkins <john.watkins04 at gmail.com>

To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>

Subject: Re: (urth) Wolfe as Heretic

Message-ID:

? ? ? <AANLkTinvp1t8dXQpKZTta6i-TAScytV8fUUqk-qRi5DS at mail.gmail.com>

Content-Type: text/plain; charset="iso-8859-1"

The last to know was me, reading this just now! "I thought it meant "hunter"

and was a reference to his desire to regain his memories. ?I missed the pun.

On Wed, May 19, 2010 at 11:32 AM, David Stockhoff
<dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:

And now I grasp another layer of meaning in Latro's name.
Am I always the last to know" ;)

brunians at brunians.org — 19 May 2010, 19:55 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

The most important part of the Toxcatl ritual was the sacrifice of a young man who had been impersonating Tezcatlipoca since the last Toxcatl festival, and the selection of a new man to take that role in the year to come.

The youth chosen to be the ixiptlatli (impersonator) of Tezcatlipoca was normally a war captive. He was taught courtly speech, singing and to play the flute. Throughout the year he would parade in the streets of Tenochtitlan and be treated with great reverence.

His skin was painted black except for a ribbon across his eyes, he was dressed in precious jewellery and cotton embroidered clothes. He wore a snail-shell lip pendant, eagle down headdress, turquoise bracelets and golden bells on his ankles.

He walked about the city playing the flute, smoking tobacco and smelling flowers, and people would salute him as the living image of the god. At the building called Quauhxicalco he would sometimes burn copal incense and play his flute.

Several times during the year he would meet with the Aztec ruler, the tlatoani, who would ritually adorn him. In the month of Huey Tozoztli which preceded Toxcatl, he would be ritually wed to four maidens who impersonated the goddesses Xochiquetzal, Xilonen, Atlatonan and Huixtocihuatl, and he lived with them for twenty days.

Four days before the main ceremony the tlatoani secluded himself in his palace and the Tezcatlipoca impersonator and his four wives paraded through the city. On the fifth day they travelled by canoe to a place called Acaquilpan, here he was left to himself by his wives near the temple Tlacoachcalco ("In the House of Darts"). He then freely walked up the stairs of the pyramid, breaking a flute on each step. At the summit the priests would lay him on a sacrificial stone, open his chest with an obsidian dagger, and remove his heart.

He was beheaded and his skull was placed on the tzompantli (skull rack), his body was flayed and his flesh was distributed among the nobles of the city and eaten. The warcaptive who was to be the next impersonator of Tezcatlipoca also took part in the flesh and probably also wore the skin of his predecessor.

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Date: Wed, 19 May 2010 11:37:56 -0400

From: John Watkins <john.watkins04 at gmail.com>

brunians at brunians.org — 19 May 2010, 19:56 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

I don't actually think we are.

See my previous post.

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Garry Geer — 19 May 2010, 20:11 · follows brunians at brunians.org

There are elements of early gnosticism in the BOTNS, where one can never truly reach the level of the Increate, but one can move upward through the various levels (i.e. spiritual beings) to better understand the Increate but never quite reaching Him. Think of it as a spiritual version of Zeno's paradox as personified through pseudo-deities.

As a pastor I find Wolfe's work fascinating as it always operates in a moral universe, but there never seems to be a clearly communicated ethic from the Increate.

Garry

Lane Haygood — 19 May 2010, 20:17 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Aztecs, you don't say? Remind me to sleep lightly the next time I stay over at my in-laws' place.

Lane

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 19 May 2010, 20:23 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

While I admit that I don't see the immediate relevance of this to Wolfe, it is interesting (and much more than I knew, or at least remembered). I'll leave it to others to find the relevance.

I suspect, however, that this is a case of "anything is relevant to Wolfe if looked at from the right angle: extreme freedom of interpretation is fun and interesting but not always productive.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

James Wynn — 19 May 2010, 20:43 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

Church Fathers did not in general make a point of saying pagan gods didn't exist. I don't think any considered them divine, but instead of angelic nature, though either fallen or misconstrued by their worshippers.

For pagans, the difference between divine and merely "higher" is probably splitting hairs. It is only an important difference for monotheists.

Paul's opinion was that: "Idols are truly divine and what is offered to them does not do any good.. But the gentiles sacrifice to demons, not to God." (1 Cor 10:20)

He was glossing from Deuteronomy: "They sacrificed to demons, which are not God. Gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your fathers did not fear."

Wolfe differs in accepting that the ancient gods might not always be malevolent, but potentially even good. He might have received this from (or had it confirmed by) the Anglican C.S. Lewis who said almost the same thing. (And in "That Hideous Strength" he portrayed the gods Venus and Mercury as powers not positively aligned to the rebellious Lord of Earth,) This all sounds like something Chesterton might have opined, but I can't find anywhere he did.

But then again, CS Lewis's view of pagan gods portrayed in "The Last Battle" is certainly at odds with Paul's. So maybe it is all heretical.

The Fathers and the Biblical Prophets seem to have all agreed that sacrifices to these powers is without practical value. This is different from Latro's world.

Is it heretical to believe that that magic (defined as prayers and sacrifices powers who are not God) *works" even if you believe it is something that is wrong or hurtful to do? .I met a Christian erstwhile fortune-teller who said it definitely did work for him. But he wasn't a theologian and his opinions on the source of its efficacy were more like Paul's than Wolfe's; so, I guess that doesn't really prove anything.

I suppose we'd have to drill down farther into what Wolfe truly believes and how strongly he believes it to know if he's a heretic or not. Put him on the rack.

J.

James Wynn — 19 May 2010, 20:45 · in reply to James Wynn

I made a mess of Paul's quote, let me try again:

"Paul's opinion was that: "Idols are NOT truly divine and what is offered to them does not do any good.. But the gentiles sacrifice to demons, not to God." (1 Cor 10:20)

On Wed, May 19, 2010 at 3:43 PM, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:
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J.

John Watkins — 19 May 2010, 20:52 · in reply to James Wynn

Chesterton in The Everlasting Man took a pretty firm position that the Phoenicians/Carthaginians were devil-worshippers. I can't recall if he took a more charitable position on other pagan deities.

On Wed, May 19, 2010 at 4:45 PM, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:
I made a mess of Paul's quote, let me try again:

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J.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 19 May 2010, 20:54 · in reply to James Wynn

On Wed, May 19, 2010 at 1:43 PM, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:
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Not just Venus and Mercury, but all the "divine spirits" of the traditional Planets.

But then again, CS Lewis's view of pagan gods portrayed in "The Last Battle" is certainly at odds with Paul's. So maybe it is all heretical.

Au contraire: to whatever extent the idea may be at odds with Paul's, the idea that good acts offered to false gods seems to align perfectly with what Jesus had to say on the subject, i.e., the Sheep and the Goats ("When did I ever see you ...")

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True; but then, the Fathers seem to have done away with the idea of sacrifice entirely, other than self-sacrifice (including the sacrifice of the Eucharist, which is the ultimate self-sacrifice).

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Not only is it not-heretical to suppose that magic works: it is quite possible to suppose that working some kinds of magic is not inherently "sinful." The idea that it is is relatively recent, coming in with the late Middle Ages/early Renaissance; before that a clear distinction was made between _magia_ and _goetia_, magic and sorcery. The one had to do with using the inherent laws of created nature (as in alchemy), while the other was dealing with spirits (and was clearly forbidden).

I suppose we'd have to drill down farther into what Wolfe truly believes and how strongly he believes it to know if he's a heretic or not. Put him on the rack.

I'll fetch the comfy chair and the soft cushion.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

James Wynn — 19 May 2010, 21:19 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

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Au contraire: to whatever extent the idea may be at odds with Paul's, the idea that good acts offered to false gods seems to align perfectly with what Jesus had to say on the subject, i.e., the Sheep and the Goats ("When did I ever see you ...")

Well, IIRC correctly, Aslan says to the Calorman "Any good deed done for Tash was actually done for me." I don't think this is far removed from "sacrifices made to Tash were actually made to Aslan", especially if the Calorman performed the sacrifices with an honest and devout heart, that is, with good intentions. But Paul positively repudiated that sacrifices offered to idols were actually offered to God.

I get what you mean by the "Sheep and Goats" example, but *Jesus's* final assessment of our good works is highly debatable. He also said that good works done explicitly *in his Name* might be insufficient -- that some would cite such works and be told by Him "Depart. I never knew you."

True; but then, the Fathers seem to have done away with the idea of sacrifice entirely, other than self-sacrifice (including the sacrifice of the Eucharist, which is the ultimate self-sacrifice).

Granted, but sacrifice is sacrifice.

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to do with using the inherent laws of created nature (as in alchemy), while the other was dealing with spirits (and was clearly forbidden).

Well, many Christians have believed (and continue to believe) that magic works. I doubt those who participated in the Salem witch trials thought the practitioners were harmless. But taking the Prophets and the New Testament alone, the consensus seems to be that prayers to false gods are of no practical value. There was that witch who successfully summoned the Prophet Samuel however. I suppose you're right, though. Enough Christians seem to have believed in the efficacy of magic that I doubt the belief could have been labeled heretical.

J.

JBarach at aol.com — 19 May 2010, 22:29 · follows James Wynn

In a discussion of Wolfe's views of other gods, it might be helpful to factor in "When I Was Ming the Merciless." All my books are in boxes right now, alas, so I can't look up the passage, but maybe someone could find it and quote it to push this discussion along.

The passage I'm thinking of is the one where "Ming" talks about the Spirit of Yellow. The Yellows all bring trophies of war and present them to the Spirit of Yellow at the shrine they've built. Now of course there is no such thing as "the Spirit of Yellow." It's something that they've just made up. It's a nothing in itself (just as much as "team spirit," I suppose).

But, Ming says, when you start to do that -- when you start to pay homage to something like that -- ... and here's where my memory breaks down. He says something like: When you start to do that, the thing you're worshipping and paying homage to takes on a new quality and becomes real.

Please, please: Someone find the passage and quote it.

But here's how that relates to the Bible. In some passages, the Bible indicates that there are no other gods. There is only Yahweh. All the other idols are nothings. But at the same time, the Bible indicates that those who worship these idols are worshipping demons and those who eat at the table of the false gods is communing with demons, as really as those who eat at the Lord's Table are communing with the Lord and with His people, becoming one bread, one body, with Him.

A man cuts down a tree and fashions it into an idol and bows down to it and worships it. What is it? Well, one answer is: It's a hunk of wood, carved a certain way, and nothing else. And that's a true answer, which leads the prophets to mockery: You cut down the tree and part of it you burn to cook your food and the other part you worship. How ridiculous! But at the same time, when you do that -- when you bow before the idol -- you are communing with demons. There's something real out there that attaches itself to the idol in terms of your worship of it. And that, it seems to me, is what Ming is talking about.

Add two more things:

(1) The angels are called "gods" in the Bible. While that is disputed when it comes to, e.g., Psalm 97 or Psalm 8, these psalms are quoted in Hebrews 1 and 2 in connection with angels. Some of those angels are rebellious angels, which we now call demons. But some of the angels are faithful angels. So not all of these "gods" are evil by any means. The various nations, the Bible says,

were ruled by various angelic beings, one of whom is Gabriel, who is good. He isn't God, but he is good and he is a ruler and can be called a "god."

(2) Many of the things that people have worshipped are simply creatures or aspects of life, and not necessarily bad. Aphrodite is the goddess of love. Love can become an idol and can be pursued idolatrously. If you worship love, if you make romantic love your highest ideal, etc., you are an idolater, even if you don't bow to the image of Aphrodite. But love is not evil. God is love. So if you put love in its proper place, under God, it ceases to be an idol and becomes something good. (Charles Williams, following Dante, would speak of romantic love, too, as something designed both to be enjoyed and to lead upwards to the love of God.) These created things are great in themselves, but they are not God. If they are treated as God, they are demonic and evil. If they are put in their proper place under God, they are good.

And so, in Long Sun, the goddess of love is redeemed. And in There Are Doors, the paganish pursuit of love is presented as something that might, in the end, lead to something good.

I'm sorry this is so rough. Perhaps someone else (with the texts in front of him/her) can flesh this out a bit more.

John

Adam Thornton IO — 19 May 2010, 22:31 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On Wed, 19 May 2010 12:51:10 -0700, "Dan'l Danehy-Oakes" <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:

Only in broad terms. And we're wandering pretty far from the topic of the list.

On Wed, May 19, 2010 at 12:49 PM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

Are you familiar with the observance of Toxcatl, Dan'l?

Awww, c'mon, Dan'l. Have a heart!

Adam

António Pedro Marques — 19 May 2010, 22:41 · in reply to James Wynn

James Wynn wrote:

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Again generally speaking, most pre-modern christians believed in the existence of supernatural powers. There wasn't nor isn't anything heretical about that. The thing is that christians believe such powers are as nothing in comparison to God, or can't even be compared. Certainly 'sorcery' can work if the being it is addressed to has the will and power to answer - in an extreme example, if Satan can operate in the World, why not also through answering such calls for assistance as are made to him?

The reason magic arts are condemned is certainly not because of their ineffectiveness, but their tainted nature of commerce with demons.

But there is also something in Christianity about demons being essentially powerless against wary and confident Christians. Going all the way up to considering demons extinct at this time and age. For the modern common Christian, it's as if God had willed all such beings out of existence, and to hint otherwise sounds like questioning God or God's powers - which may be why at first sight people may think that admitting the existence of such beings is heretical.

Lane Haygood — 19 May 2010, 22:50 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

Remember also that the several writers of Biblical texts came from different stages along the evolution of the native Hebrew religion from one essentially indistinguishable from the general polytheism of the region to one of henotheism (in essence, a cult of Yahweh) to one of monotheism. The work of the scholars and priests of Judaism has been to change the religion. This could be a side effect of standardization of practice and teachings, in essence, organizing the religion from its tribal roots to one practiced by a priestly caste and promulgated through the use of standard texts and "orthodox" theology.

The Bible (as well as early Church teachings based on it) represents the cultural, social and theological evolution of a people.

LH

Gwern Branwen — 19 May 2010, 23:05 · in reply to JBarach at aol.com

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Please, please: Someone find the passage and quote it.

Courtesy of the ebooks some have execrated, from Endangered Species:

"No, we didn't worship the Lung-Rin. It was a symbol, that's all. In the long run, if you know what I mean, we were the Lung-Rin. We had ceremonies, yes. We set up a figure to represent all the Yellows. Don made it of wood and leather, and that was the center of the ceremonies. Althea helped him with the face, and I had her make it look something like me-you understand, a little psychology. It's odd, but you can make a thing like that, and have everyone bow in front of it, and offer it the things we took in war, and after a time it becomes . . . I don't

know, something more. More than just the figure you set up in the beginning. Have you talked to Don? "He had a theory-I don't know whether he believed it himself. I didn't, but still. . . . There was something in it. Do you understand what I mean? It wasn't true; but still. . . ." "All right, here's what he thought. Or anyway, what he said he thought. That there are things we don't know about that live in the world with us-things in another plane of reality. And when you make something like that, it comes- one of them comes. It shapes itself to fit your image of it, becoming the real Spirit of the Yellows. Anyway, when we had the torchlight processions, sometimes you might think you could see it move. It was just the flickering light, of course, and the fact that because it was so tall the face was illuminated from the bottom. Any face will look strange when you light it from below, I suppose. We caught rats and pi- geons when we built it and put them inside, so it would make strange sounds; some of them must have lived a long time."

gwern

brunians at brunians.org — 19 May 2010, 23:06 · in reply to António Pedro Marques
Just about everybody believes in the existence of supernatural powers.

Some people consistently assert that they do not, and some fewer people have convinced themselves that they do not.

Not believing in supernatural powers is only a win if they don't actually exist.

James Wynn wrote:

The Fathers and the Biblical Prophets seem to have all agreed that sacrifices to these powers is without practical value. This is different from Latro's world.

Is it heretical to believe that that magic (defined as prayers and sacrifices powers who are not God) *works" even if you believe it is something that is wrong or hurtful to do? .I met a Christian erstwhile fortune-teller who said it definitely did work for him. But he wasn't a theologian and his opinions on the source of its efficacy were more like Paul's than Wolfe's; so, I guess that doesn't really prove anything.

Again generally speaking, most pre-modern christians believed in the existence of supernatural powers. There wasn't nor isn't anything heretical about that. The thing is that christians believe such powers are as nothing in comparison to God, or can't even be compared. Certainly 'sorcery' can work if the being it is addressed to has the will and power to answer - in an extreme example, if Satan can operate in the World, why not also through answering such calls for assistance as are made to him?

The reason magic arts are condemned is certainly not because of their ineffectiveness, but their tainted nature of commerce with demons.

But there is also something in Christianity about demons being essentially powerless against wary and confident christians. Going all the way up to considering demons extinct at this time and age. For the modern common christian, it's as if God had willed all such beings out of existence, and to hint otherwise sounds like questioning God or God's powers - which may

be

why at first sight people may think that admitting the existence of such beings is heretical.

Matthew Weber — 19 May 2010, 23:18 · in reply to Lane Haygood

On Wed, May 19, 2010 at 3:50 PM, Lane Haygood <lhaygood at gmail.com> wrote:

Remember also that the several writers of Biblical texts came from different stages along the evolution of the native Hebrew religion from one essentially indistinguishable from the general polytheism of the region to one of henotheism (in essence, a cult of Yahweh) to one of monotheism. The work of the scholars and priests of Judaism has been to change the religion. This could be a side effect of standardization of practice and teachings, in essence, organizing the religion from its tribal roots to one practiced by a priestly caste and promulgated through the use of standard texts and "orthodox" theology.

The Bible (as well as early Church teachings based on it) represents the cultural, social and theological evolution of a people.

LH

Urth Mailing List

To post, write urth at urth.net

Subscription/information: <http://www.urth.net>

That's one theory, certainly, but it's not uncontroversial even among comparative religionists. Judaism was constantly cheek-by-jowl with paganism, and there was a constant struggle to keep it free of the religious observances of "the nations". There is an observable change from the Pentateuch's language concerning other gods (what Max Mueller termed "henotheistic") to that of the later Writings and Prophets, but that may not be as significant as Mueller thought it was. And Mueller himself was far from an objective observer, since his teleology leads ultimately to a non-personal, transcendent God which is inseparable from Nature--familiar to those who have read widely in late 19th-century liberal Christianity.

I will grumpily admit, however, that "henotheism" is a useful word.

Just a brief comment on Antonio's point earlier : The position of the Vatican, as far as I'm aware, is that Satan indeed has objective existence, and power to tempt humanity. Magic has always been forbidden (despite Renaissance speculations and hair-splitting), not because it doesn't work, but because one petitions the wrong forces in using it. In James Blish's excellent novel *The Day After Judgment*, the black magician Theron Ware upbraids a Dominican who practices ritual magic and divination by saying something like "There is no such thing as 'white magic'. It is all black, black, black as the ace of spades." That's the official RC position as near as I can figure, and although to believe in the efficacy of sorcery might be old-fashioned, it ain't heretical.

Matt +

I feel again a spark of that ancient flame.

Virgil [Publius Vergilius Maro] (70-19 B.C.), Aeneid, bk. IV, l. 23

brunians at brunians.org — 19 May 2010, 23:26 · in reply to Matthew Weber

Satan works for the Management.

You're not supposed to have to do with him: better, if you are lucky he won't have anything to do with you. You hope he doesn't have to do with you.

When he thinks someone is doing really well, he brings him to God's attention. Everything after that is on God. God can choose not to test you, and presumably does occasionally, since good people do occasionally do well without the kinds of ups and downs Job had.

It is not ever good to come to the attention of the powerful.

But if you have to do with him professionally, or in the course of your business, it's not necessarily a huge deal. It all depends on your attitude.

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Lane Haygood — 20 May 2010, 00:20 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

The term "Satan" means accuser, and in most texts, the angel known as "Satan" (which can be a term of office as well as name, acts as "God's prosecutor," seeking to tempt man into sin.

Consider the book of Job:

Satan is given free reign to walk into heaven and make a challenge to God, basically betting on Job's life. God ultimately wins (Job is found righteous through his trial) but it is Satan that puts him to the test.

A lot of this gets obscured throughout the ages as words and terms are translated and Christianity begins to piggyback onto folk beliefs, plus every two-bit occultist throughout history who has muddied the waters with their ravings. The difference between an Anton LaVey and a more "respectable" occultist like Albertus Magnus is one of age, not necessarily credibility.

As I understand Catholic doctrine (again, not a Catholic myself), none of the angels that fell with Lucifer are able to take action directly against humans, because like all angels, they lack independent will. However, they are able to tempt humans and humans are free to enter into exchanges with them for supernatural efficacy, e.g., spells or magic.

LH

On Wed, May 19, 2010 at 6:26 PM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:
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LH

brunians at brunians.org — 20 May 2010, 00:31 · in reply to Lane Haygood

The term haSatan (The Accuser) is the title of an office.

In esoteric Judaism, you learn that this office is filled, aeon after aeon, by various archangels, and that the archangel who was filling the office in Job's time and is still fulfilling it in ours is Gabriel.

He performs this office twice that is recorded in the Bible, and of course he performs this office every day. The two times in the Bible his client is Job on the one hand and Jesus on the other.

Christians of various stripes and types have various other ideas which they take from the common religion, or the religion of the World, or Zoroastrianism or whatever.

This is all discussed in the various Mishnahs and Talmuds and so on, copies of which I need to obtain at some point.

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brunians at brunians.org — 20 May 2010, 00:39 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

I don't see Aa Gabriel (by the theory) as issuing a challenge, but as fulfilling the duties of his office.

Does not the conversation run more or less like this?:

God: Have you seen Job? He's pretty good.

AaG: Not as good as you think: He's good because you treat him well.

It's a stretch to see what follows as a challenge on Satan's part.

.

The term haSatan (The Accuser) is the title of an office.

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LH

Craig Brewer — 20 May 2010, 01:18 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

All the theological discussion makes me wonder: Do we have a list anywhere of specifically non-fiction books that Wolfe has actually mentioned or read? Castle of Days mentions various linguistic references, but what about philosophy or theology? It seems that if we had a better grasp of what specific texts Wolfe is familiar with, a lot of these discussions would be more focused and less speculative.

Jeff Wilson — 20 May 2010, 01:21 · in reply to Lane Haygood

On 5/19/2010 7:20 PM, Lane Haygood wrote:

As I understand Catholic doctrine (again, not a Catholic myself), none of the angels that fell with Lucifer are able to take action directly against humans, because like all angels, they lack independent will.

How does the lack of free will prevent direct action against humans?

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

John Watkins — 20 May 2010, 01:42 · in reply to Craig Brewer

In one interview, Wolfe claimed to have gone through phases in which he read "everything" he could obtain by Chesterton and Lewis. Without specific references, I think it is very, very safe to assume that he has read:

Chesterton

- The Everlasting Man
- Orthodoxy
- Charles Dickens
- Thomas Aquinas
- The Man Who Was Thursday
- The Ballad of the White Horse
- Pretty much all of Father Brown

Lewis

- All seven Narnia books
- All three Ransom books
- Screwtape
- Mere Christianity
- Till We Have Faces
- The Great Divorce
- The Discarded Image

He's also evidently read not only The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings, but also Leaf by Niggle and probably Smith of Wootton Major.

On Wed, May 19, 2010 at 9:18 PM, Craig Brewer <cnbrewer at yahoo.com> wrote:
All the theological discussion makes me wonder: Do we have a list anywhere of specifically non-fiction books that Wolfe has actually mentioned or read? Castle of Days mentions various linguistic references, but what about philosophy or theology? It seems that if we had a better grasp of what specific texts Wolfe is familiar with, a lot of these discussions would be more focused and less speculative.

Lee Berman — 20 May 2010, 04:06 · follows Jeff Wilson

Perhaps this well-known quote is relevant here. Toward the end is, maybe, a statement regarding gnosticism.

We believe that we invent symbols. The truth is that they invent us; we are their creatures, shaped by their hard, defining edges. When soldiers take their oath they are given a coin, an asimi stamped a profile of the Autarch. The acceptance of that coin is their acceptance of the special duties and burdens of military life--they are soldiers from that moment, though they may know nothing of the management of arms. I did not know that then, but it is a profound mistake to believe that we must know of such things to be influenced by them, and in fact to believe so is to believe in the most debased and superstitious kind of magic. The would-be sorcerer alone has faith in the efficacy of pure knowledge;

rational people know that things act of themselves or not at all.

James Wynn — 20 May 2010, 14:56 · in reply to John Watkins

He has recommended Robert Graves' "The Greek Myths". He's implied that he has not finished "The White Goddess". "Only enough to know he was crazy" was sort of how he phrased it IIRC.

Jeff Wilson — 20 May 2010, 16:05 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

On 5/19/2010 6:06 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

Just about everybody believes in the existence of supernatural powers.

Some people consistently assert that they do not, and some fewer people have convinced themselves that they do not.

Not believing in supernatural powers is only a win if they don't actually exist.

Actual existence in a context that is beyond nature seems like a combination of attributes that is almost free of meaning. If the supernatural powers have ceased to provide fishing tackle and dispense only subjective spiritual gifts, where's the loss?

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

brunians at brunians.org — 20 May 2010, 16:09 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

I never said that they 'ceased to provide fishing tackle and dispense only subjective spiritual gifts'. If that's what you believe, that's what you believe.

It was, let me see, I was mostly convinced by my second miraculous escape from death, but the third one was definitely the clincher, with the classical answered prayers and all. There's been several since then.

I don't know if I'd call what I believe supernatural. There's nothing beyond nature. Nature, however, has a number of poorly documented features.

Knowledge is based upon experience. Telepathy, bilocation and parallel Worlds are all within mine.

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Jeff Wilson — 21 May 2010, 02:18 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

On 5/20/2010 11:09 AM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

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brunians at brunians.org — 21 May 2010, 02:51 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

It's established for me.

You, who cares about you?

.

On 5/20/2010 11:09 AM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

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Lane Haygood — 21 May 2010, 03:00 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

I care about Jeff.

Lane

On May 20, 2010, at 9:51 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:
It's established for me.

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Robert Thornton — 21 May 2010, 03:01 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

So what do you say to your fellow solipsists?

rob

On May 20, 2010, at 10:51 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:
It's established for me.

You, who cares about you?

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On 5/20/2010 11:09 AM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

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Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
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Adam Thornton — 21 May 2010, 03:02 · in reply to Robert Thornton

On May 20, 2010, at 10:01 PM, Robert Thornton wrote:

So what do you say to your fellow solipsists?

"Bite me."

Adam

P.S. Why are my teeth sore?

Jeff Wilson — 21 May 2010, 03:09 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

On 5/20/2010 9:51 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:
It's established for me.

You, who cares about you?

You do, if you want to meaningfully communicate about actual existence.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

Jeff Wilson — 21 May 2010, 03:11 · in reply to Lane Haygood

On 5/20/2010 10:00 PM, Lane Haygood wrote:

I care about Jeff.

I love you, man!

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com

IEEE Student Chapter Blog at

< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

brunians at brunians.org — 21 May 2010, 03:23 · in reply to Lane Haygood

Good! I am also, actually, well disposed towards him.

Is it important to you that he believes a particular way?

.

I care about Jeff.

Lane

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Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com

IEEE Student Chapter Blog at

< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

brunians at brunians.org — 21 May 2010, 03:26 · in reply to Robert Thornton

It's also established for people who have had similar experiences to mine.

Knowledge is based upon experience.

I have in fact discussed such things with folks who have had similar experiences.

.

So what do you say to your fellow solipsists?

rob

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I never said that they 'ceased to provide fishing tackle and dispense only subjective spiritual gifts'. If that's what you believe, that's what you believe.

It's a HUCK FINN reference.

It was, let me see, I was mostly convinced by my second miraculous escape from death, but the third one was definitely the clincher, with the classical answered prayers and all. There's been several since then.

I don't know if I'd call what I believe supernatural. There's nothing beyond nature. Nature, however, has a number of poorly documented features.

Knowledge is based upon experience. Telepathy, bilocation and parallel Worlds are all within mine.

You've yet to contribute to establishing their actual existence (as opposed to subjective existence), however.

--

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

brunians at brunians.org — 21 May 2010, 03:30 · in reply to Adam Thornton

I've been known to say that also.

And, you know, go into some detail about various anatomical peculiarities my interlocutor may encounter whilst proctosculating me.

Etc.

.

On May 20, 2010, at 10:01 PM, Robert Thornton wrote:

So what do you say to your fellow solipsists?

"Bite me."

Adam

P.S. Why are my teeth sore? _____

brunians at brunians.org — 21 May 2010, 03:31 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

I disagree.

.

On 5/20/2010 9:51 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

It's established for me.

You, who cares about you?

You do, if you want to meaningfully communicate about actual existence.

--

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com

IEEE Student Chapter Blog at

< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

Robert Thornton — 21 May 2010, 03:33 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

I respect your opinion. From my vantage point, most belief in the supernatural is based in our instinctive reflex to impose cause and effect on everything.

rob

On May 20, 2010, at 11:26 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

It's also established for people who have had similar experiences to mine.

Knowledge is based upon experience.

I have in fact discussed such things with folks who have had similar experiences.

.

So what do you say to your fellow solipsists?

rob

On May 20, 2010, at 10:51 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

It's established for me.

You, who cares about you?

.

On 5/20/2010 11:09 AM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

I never said that they 'ceased to provide fishing tackle and dispense only subjective spiritual gifts'. If that's what you believe, that's what you believe.

It's a HUCK FINN reference.

It was, let me see, I was mostly convinced by my second miraculous escape from death, but the third one was definitely the clincher, with the classical answered prayers and all. There's been several since then.

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Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
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Craig Brewer — 21 May 2010, 03:36 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Will whoever actually writes about Gene Wolfe next please change the subject line so I know to start reading again. I mean that sincerely and without snark.

Jeff Wilson — 21 May 2010, 03:40 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

On 5/20/2010 10:26 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

It's also established for people who have had similar experiences to mine.

Knowledge is based upon experience.

I happen to agree with this very strongly, in that the qualities of the knowledge is often very heavily dependent on the qualities of the experience. I have objective knowledge that springs from objective experience as well as subjective knowledge that springs from very personal, subjective experiences. But I am careful to distinguish between them where they disagree. I am not the buddha, but I have grasped this bit of the buddha-nature.

I have in fact discussed such things with folks who have had similar experiences.

Do you have objective reasons to think they have, or is the belief based on their consistent assertion that they have?

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

Jeff Wilson — 21 May 2010, 03:44 · in reply to Craig Brewer

On 5/20/2010 10:36 PM, Craig Brewer wrote:

Will whoever actually writes about Gene Wolfe next please change the subject line so I know to start reading again. I mean that sincerely and without snark.

Doubtless Wolfe has read Twain. Does anyone see a particular influence on Wolfe, other than the probably accidental superficial plot similarities between HUCK FINN and BOTNS?

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

brunians at brunians.org — 21 May 2010, 03:44 · in reply to Robert Thornton

How many miraculous escapes from death have you had?

.

I respect your opinion. From my vantage point, most belief in the supernatural is based in our instinctive reflex to impose cause and effect on everything.

rob

On May 20, 2010, at 11:26 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

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Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

brunians at brunians.org — 21 May 2010, 03:45 · in reply to Craig Brewer

The hell you do.

.

Will whoever actually writes about Gene Wolfe next please change the subject line so I know to start reading again. I mean that sincerely and without snark.

Craig Brewer — 21 May 2010, 03:47 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

TWK is obviously just a reboot of _A Connecticut Yankee_...

But, seriously, couldn't we at least put an OT or "Off Topic" in the subject line once discussions go severely off-Wolfe-related-topic?

----- Original Message -----

From: Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com>
To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
Sent: Thu, May 20, 2010 10:44:49 PM
Subject: (urth) Wolfe as Steamboat Pilot

On 5/20/2010 10:36 PM, Craig Brewer wrote:

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-- Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at

< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

brunians at brunians.org — 21 May 2010, 03:48 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

In at least one case it is based upon a shared experience.

Not a miraculous escape from death, but something truly wierd.

I've been around the block a couple of times.

I don't expect people who don't share my peculiar experiences to share my beliefs.

As I say, what you believe doesn't matter to me. You may believe what you like.

.

On 5/20/2010 10:26 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

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--

Jeff Wilson - [jwilson at io.com](mailto:jwilson@io.com)
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

Craig Brewer — 21 May 2010, 03:49 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Talk about whatever you want. I don't even care if it ends up in my mailbox. I just want to know if I can delete it without having to read it first. I like to think that emails from a Gene Wolfe mailing list with "Wolfe" in the subject line might actually be about Wolfe rather than someone's own personal theology and other peoples' arguments about it.

----- Original Message -----

From: "brunians at brunians.org" <[brunians at brunians.org](mailto:brunians@brunians.org)> To: The Urth Mailing List <[urth at lists.urth.net](mailto:urth@lists.urth.net)> Sent: Thu, May 20, 2010 10:45:37 PM Subject: (urth) Gene Wolfe

The hell you do.

.

Will whoever actually writes about Gene Wolfe next please change the subject line so I know to start reading again. I mean that sincerely and without snark.

Urth Mailing List

To post, write urth at urth.net

Subscription/information: <http://www.urth.net>

brunians at brunians.org — 21 May 2010, 03:50 · in reply to Craig Brewer

God gave you freewill.

RUSH and Ayn Rand remain unhappy about this.

.

TWK is obviously just a reboot of _A Connecticut Yankee_...

But, seriously, couldn't we at least put an OT or "Off Topic" in the subject line once discussions go severely off-Wolfe-related-topic?

----- Original Message -----

From: Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com>

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-- Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com

IEEE Student Chapter Blog at

< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

brunians at brunians.org — 21 May 2010, 03:53 · in reply to Craig Brewer

There are things that are under your control and things that are not under your control.

I often receive mails that I do not wish to read and do not read.

I follow this simple procedure, which I recommend to you.

My mailer exposes normally four to half a dozen lines of the post.

I can tell if I wish to read it from those lines.

If I do not wish to read a post, I look at it for perhaps a quarter of a second, and delete it.

I then spend absolutely no time bitching, whining, complaining or protesting. I move right on the next post.

You understand, the exact number of lines is unimportant. You don't even have to read them all.

.

Talk about whatever you want. I don't even care if it ends up in my mailbox. I just want to know if I can delete it without having to read it first. I like to think that emails from a Gene Wolfe mailing list with "Wolfe" in the subject line might actually be about Wolfe rather than someone's own personal theology and other peoples' arguments about it.

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Subject: (urth) Gene Wolfe

The hell you do.

.

Will whoever actually writes about Gene Wolfe next please change the subject line so I know to start reading again. I mean that sincerely and without snark.

brunians at brunians.org — 21 May 2010, 03:54 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Because I choose to.

.

On 5/20/2010 10:48 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

In at least one case it is based upon a shared experience.

Not a miraculous escape from death, but something truly wierd.

I've been around the block a couple of times.

I don't expect people who don't share my peculiar experiences to share my beliefs.

As I say, what you believe doesn't matter to me. You may believe what you like.

then why are you talking?

--

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

Jeff Wilson — 21 May 2010, 03:54 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

On 5/20/2010 10:48 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:
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then why are you talking?

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

John Watkins — 21 May 2010, 03:59 · in reply to Craig Brewer

I have to agree.

On Thu, May 20, 2010 at 11:49 PM, Craig Brewer <cnbrewer at yahoo.com> wrote:
Talk about whatever you want. I don't even care if it ends up in my mailbox. I just want to know if I can delete it without having to read it first. I like to think that emails from a Gene Wolfe mailing list with "Wolfe" in the subject line might actually be about Wolfe rather than someone's own personal theology and other peoples' arguments about it.

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The hell you do.

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Will whoever actually writes about Gene Wolfe next please change the subject line so I know to start reading again. I mean that sincerely and without snark.

Jeff Wilson — 21 May 2010, 04:01 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

On 5/20/2010 10:54 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

Because I choose to.

At least you're sincere about being insincere.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com

IEEE Student Chapter Blog at

< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

Jeff Wilson — 21 May 2010, 04:03 · in reply to John Watkins

On 5/20/2010 10:59 PM, John Watkins wrote:

I have to agree.

It's just Brunians' time of the month, it'll pass.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com

IEEE Student Chapter Blog at

< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

brunians at brunians.org — 21 May 2010, 04:03 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

I'm a sincere guy.

.

On 5/20/2010 10:54 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

Because I choose to.

At least you're sincere about being insincere.

--

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com

IEEE Student Chapter Blog at

< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

Greg Bates — 21 May 2010, 15:48 · in reply to James Wynn

He's also read Bulgakov's "The Master and Margarita" (which, incidentally, I always thought he got the idea for abducting a woman named Catherine/Katherine each year for the Feast of St. Katherine)

On Thu, May 20, 2010 at 10:56 AM, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:

He has recommended Robert Graves' "The Greek Myths". He's implied that he has not finished "The White Goddess". "Only enough to know he was crazy" was sort of how he phrased it IIRC.
