

traveling north

The Urth list — 230 messages, 22 voices, 02 Jun 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5619>

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Jane Delawney — 02 Jun 2010, 22:49

Just a quick question (I hope) it's really late at night where I am :)

There seems to be a general assumption (unless I've read it wrong, which would not be the first time of course as some of you have already noticed :) - both Borski and Andre-Driussi appear to support the idea) that the setting of BOTNS is South America. At one point (sorry I can't be more specific without looking stuff up in detail, I don't have time right now, I'm sure one of you will know the place) it's stated outright by one of these writers that Nessus is 'almost certainly Buenos Aires'.

This would mean that as Severian & co. journey to Thrax & beyond, they are moving northward in the southern hemisphere.

However, when Severian takes directions from the pampas herdsman for his journey (directions which will lead him straight into the Stone Town of course) the herdsman instructs him to travel northwest ... 'with the sun over your right shoulder in the morning and in your left eye in the evening' or very similar phrasing.

Perfect directions for a journey north-westwards in the *northern* hemisphere.

With the current planetary orbit and polar configuration, surely it is simply not possible to travel northward in the southern hemisphere with the sun *behind* you, which is evidently what Severian is doing.

What is going on here? Many apologies if this is a topic which has been done to death in the past btw. My initial reaction is that the usage of 'north' and 'south' in Severian's world does not entirely coincide with ours, that there has been a magnetic reversal event or similar, and that for sure Severian is travelling northwards in *his* southern hemisphere ... but that this is not the same as our southern hemisphere. Perhaps the Commonwealth is North America or Eurasia after all; and Ascia, South America or Africa.

As I've mentioned on list previously I'm currently part way through my first read of this book for fifteen years. Would be most interested to hear if there is any further information out there regarding this little puzzle (for instance, I have so far taken less notice than I might have done of any mention of the positions of stars from Severian's point of view - though there is apparently a constellation called the Cross, this could as easily refer to our Swan (Cygnus) as to the Southern Cross. Not to mention that star positions relative to Urth may not be quite the same as they are to our Earth.

got to go, goodnight and thanks for your patience if you have read this.

jd.

brunians at brunians.org — 02 Jun 2010, 23:07 · in reply to Jane Delawney

Very good.

I think probably Wolfe made a mistake.

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Jane Delawney — 02 Jun 2010, 23:09 · in reply to Jane Delawney

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Of course it isn't possible to travel toward the equator in *either* hemisphere with the sun at your back. So something very complicated appears to have happened to the earth's orbit, the position of the continents, or both.

Also awaiting comments from those who will probably tell me that the directions given do not in fact exclude the possibility that the sun was in Sev's face during the rest of the day. I'm sure there are other indications that Urth's north and south are not quite as we know them - but no time to go there now.

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On 02/06/10 23:49, Jane Delawney wrote:

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Jerry Friedman — 03 Jun 2010, 00:34 · in reply to Jane Delawney

I will tell you the directions don't exclude that possibility.

The line is, "Try to pass through it by day, with the sun over the right shoulder by morning and later in the left eye."

On the equinoxes, the sun rises due east everywhere in the world (well, not at the poles), so the sun is over your right shoulder at dawn if you're facing northwest. On the December solstice, the sun rises at its farthest south of due east; on the June solstice, at its farthest north. In the South Temperate and Antarctic Zones, the sun is always in the north at noon, but in the South Tropical Zone, it's in the south at noon around the December solstice, their summer solstice. Since Severian's sun is dim, he could be in the tropics even where we think of the climate as cooler than tropical.

It's quite clear the Commonwealth is in the Southern Hemisphere: the south is cold and the north is hot. I don't see a mistake. The sun could easily be more or less east (over Sev's right shoulder) in the morning and more or less west (in his left eye) later.

Jerry Friedman

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

From: Jane Delawney <jane_delawney at sky.com>

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

Sent: Wed, June 2, 2010 5:09:59 PM

Subject: Re: (urth) traveling north

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

Lee Berman — 03 Jun 2010, 00:42 · follows Jerry Friedman

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FWIW, my opinion is that Urth is presented as less spiritually advanced than Earth, notably lacking two important earthly spiritual events, The Flood and the Coming of Jesus. Thus,

Severian has his roles to play. The Urth we are reading about is much older than our current Earth but being stunted in its spiritual growth is still troubled by some of the ills which plagued our pagan ancestors.

carrlaw at swbell.net — 03 Jun 2010, 00:43 · in reply to Lee Berman

Whoa! Well said

Sent via BlackBerry by AT&T

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

From: Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com>

Date: Wed, 2 Jun 2010 20:42:25

To: <urth at lists.urth.net>

Subject: (urth) traveling north

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Eugene Zaretskiy — 03 Jun 2010, 01:00 · in reply to Lee Berman

On Wed, Jun 2, 2010 at 8:42 PM, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:

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Wasn't the Conciliator the Jesus-like figure? Severian seemed to me to be very much non-divine. Quite the opposite, he very specifically comes from a very dark place, and rises to his status as savior. Severian's respect for the Increate and the sun itself is apparent early in the book, so I suspect Severian's story was meant to, in part, show where the spiritual path you claim is lacking leads: salvation.

The New Busy think 9 to 5 is a cute idea. Combine multiple calendars with Hotmail.

http://www.windowslive.com/campaign/thenewbusy?tile=multicalendar&ocid=PID28326::T:WLMTAGL:ON:WL:en-US:WM_HMP:042010_5

brunians at brunians.org — 03 Jun 2010, 01:04 · in reply to carrlaw at swbell.net

A-yup.

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Roy C. Lackey — 03 Jun 2010, 05:39 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

Jerry Friedman wrote:
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The line is, "Try to pass through it by day, with the sun over the right shoulder by morning and later in the left eye."

[snip]

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I'm so glad you explained that so I didn't have to. <g>

I will just add this bit from Wolfe in the Larry McCaffery interview done in November of 1988:

"Incidentally, I also got into trouble with some reviewers over my presentation of the Ascians, who were my equivalent of the Turks. If you read the book carefully, it's clear that the action is taking place in South America and that the invading Ascians are actually North Americans."

<http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/interviews/wolfe46interview.htm>

-Roy

Roy C. Lackey — 03 Jun 2010, 06:02 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

And for those who don't like extra-textual answers, here is the textual proof Wolfe referenced. It comes from chapter XXV in CITADEL. The old autarch is speaking to Severian of the Ascians:

"Half what you said of them was incorrect. They do not come from the hot countries of the north, but from the continent that lies across the equator."

-Roy

Pedro Pereira — 03 Jun 2010, 09:40 · in reply to Eugene Zaretskiy

I agree. The Conciliator was the "jesus" of Urth. And that already happened in the past of Urth.

Date: Wed, 2 Jun 2010 21:00:40 -0400

From: eugene.zar at gmail.com

To: urth at lists.urth.net

Subject: Re: (urth) traveling north

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brunians at brunians.org — 03 Jun 2010, 09:53 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

Severian is the Conciliator.

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John Watkins — 03 Jun 2010, 10:56 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Among the things I think the story is meant to show

- 1) If Jesus Christ didn't exist, we'd have to invent a roughly similar figure,
- 2) If that roughly similar figure was a flawed human being, the resulting religion would be considerable worse (Wolfe cheats here--Severian isn't a great sage or moral teacher--the Christ-figure of his world's religion was generally not a nice man), and
- 3) Because all faiths are salvific insofar as they participate in truth, even the mock-Christianity of the New Sun world leads to genuine moments of grace.

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brunians at brunians.org — 03 Jun 2010, 11:06 · in reply to John Watkins

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Does this fit in with that?

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John Watkins — 03 Jun 2010, 11:44 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

The Mystical Body of Christ, in Catholic Doctrine, is the Church. The teaching can be found in Ephesians:

"15 But doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in him who is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body, being compacted and fitly joined together, by what every joint supplies, according to the operation in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in charity."

But what is the Church? The Church Militant, the worldly administrative body headquartered in Rome doesn't exist in Severian's world, so that's a poor guess as to Wolfe's meaning. The Catholic Encyclopedia, however, gives that meaning as the third definition of the term *ecclesia. *This is the first:

"It is employed to denote all who, from the beginning of the world, have believed in the one true God, and have been made His children by grace."

Clearly, this is Wolfe's intention.

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2) If that roughly similar figure was a flawed human being, the resulting religion would be considerably worse (Wolfe cheats here--Severian isn't a great sage or moral teacher--the Christ-figure of his world's religion was generally not a nice man), and

3) Because all faiths are salvific insofar as they participate in truth, even the mock-Christianity of the New Sun world leads to genuine moments of grace.

On Thu, Jun 3, 2010 at 5:53 AM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:
Severian is the Conciliator.

Or am I missing something?

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I agree. The Conciliator was the "jesus" of Urth. And that already happened in the past of Urth.

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To: urth at lists.urth.net
Subject: Re: (urth) traveling north

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Pedro Pereira — 03 Jun 2010, 14:57 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

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John Watkins — 03 Jun 2010, 16:06 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

I certainly think that Europe was civilized by Christianity, yes.

As a factual matter, Christianity is the world's largest religion.

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brunians at brunians.org — 03 Jun 2010, 16:20 · in reply to John Watkins

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John Watkins — 03 Jun 2010, 16:37 · in reply to John Watkins

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brunians at brunians.org — 03 Jun 2010, 16:44 · in reply to John Watkins

Probably isn't.

I make stuff up quite frequently.

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brunians at brunians.org — 03 Jun 2010, 16:45 · in reply to John Watkins

And there would be no Christians if Moses hadn't been born.

There would be something.

Why do you think there would be nothing?

There wasn't nothing before.

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John Watkins — 03 Jun 2010, 16:50 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

I don't think there'd be nothing. Just that 3.5 billion people in different faiths would make the world look really different.

I for one think we'd be burying people in the air and praying before sacred fires.

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To: urth at lists.urth.net

Subject: Re: (urth) traveling north

Severian is the Conciliator.

Or am I missing something?

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I agree. The Conciliator was the "jesus" of Urth. And that already happened in the past of Urth.

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To: urth at lists.urth.net

Subject: Re: (urth) traveling north

On Wed, Jun 2, 2010 at 8:42 PM, Lee Berman
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http://www.windowslive.com/campaign/thenewbusy?tile=multicalendar&ocid=PID28326::T:WLMTAGL:ON:WL:en-US:WM_HMP:042010_5

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 03 Jun 2010, 16:52 · in reply to John Watkins

I think we wouldn't be doing any such thing because we wouldn't have been born. A world without the Mosaic religions would be so different that the human landscape would be utterly different, if it still existed at all.

On Thu, Jun 3, 2010 at 9:50 AM, John Watkins <john.watkins04 at gmail.com> wrote:
I don't think there'd be nothing. "Just that 3.5 billion people in different faiths would make the world look really different.

I for one think we'd be burying people in the air and praying before sacred fires.

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There would be something.

Why do you think there would be nothing"

There wasn't nothing before.

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I'd also add, just for the sake of it, that there would be zero Muslims and zero Christians if Jesus Christ had never been born. ?It'd

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Christianity, if you include all of its many branches and sects, is indeed the World's largest religion. That's including the Mormons, who I think of as a third branch of Christianity, and who think of themselves (of course) as the True Church, but are thought of by many Christians including some Mormons as something other.

If you exclude the Mormons (there are a lot of Mormons), Islam (in its several branches and sects) is the World's largest religion.

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I certainly think that Europe was civilized by Christianity, yes.

As a factual matter, Christianity is the world's largest religion.

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Pedro Pereira — 03 Jun 2010, 17:06 · in reply to John Watkins

Date: Thu, 3 Jun 2010 12:06:37 -0400
From: john.watkins04 at gmail.com
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Subject: Re: (urth) traveling north

I certainly think that Europe was civilized by Christianity, yes.

That's fair. I won't get into that discussion though, since I'm a non-believer and there's no point in doing so. My interest was in to what extent is that reflected on the Urth's books.

As a factual matter, Christianity is the world's largest religion.

Thanks for clearing that up. I thought it wasn't.

Pedro Pereira — 03 Jun 2010, 17:09 · in reply to John Watkins

Date: Thu, 3 Jun 2010 12:37:16 -0400
From: john.watkins04 at gmail.com
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Subject: Re: (urth) traveling north

I'd also add, just for the sake of it, that there would be zero Muslims and zero Christians if Jesus Christ had never been born. It'd be an interesting world with something like 3.5 billion religious free agents.

They would have kept their previous beliefs or something else would have come along in the meanwhile. It's not like their ancestors were atheists.

Pedro Pereira — 03 Jun 2010, 17:14 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Date: Thu, 3 Jun 2010 09:52:53 -0700
From: danldo at gmail.com
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Subject: Re: (urth) traveling north

I think we wouldn't be doing any such thing because we wouldn't have been born. A world without the Mosaic religions would be so different that the human landscape would be utterly different, if it still existed at all.

I don't see exactly why Humanity wouldn't still be here. The Human landscape, as you put it, would certainly be different, though.

John Watkins — 03 Jun 2010, 17:17 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

Correct--I find the question of what else would have come along to be interesting.

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brunians at brunians.org — 03 Jun 2010, 17:20 · in reply to John Watkins

So for me things would be the same, is what you are saying.

.

I don't think there'd be nothing. Just that 3.5 billion people in different faiths would make the world look really different.

I for one think we'd be burying people in the air and praying before sacred fires.

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brunians at brunians.org — 03 Jun 2010, 17:22 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

I don't think so.

I think that many of the same patterns would exist, and that we, or people enough like us as no matter (cf Borges) would be doing about the same stuff we are doing, more or less.

And in fact, I think that we *are* doing any and all such things in neighboring Worlds. I know I am.

I think *we* wouldn't be doing any such thing because we wouldn't have been born. A world without the Mosaic religions would be so different that the human landscape would be utterly different, if it still existed at all.

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brunians at brunians.org — 03 Jun 2010, 17:24 · in reply to John Watkins

Also nuncupatory.

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Correct--I find the question of what else would have come along to be interesting.

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They would have kept their previous beliefs or something else would have come along in the meanwhile. It's not like their ancestors were atheists.

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Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 03 Jun 2010, 17:29 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

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Jeff Wilson — 03 Jun 2010, 20:08 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

On 6/3/2010 9:57 AM, Pedro Pereira wrote:
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to mention that Christianity isn't even the biggest religion around)? Is
that what Wolfe is going for in these books? I don't know, but
Severian/Conciliator rings like "Jesus" (probably second coming) to me.

In terms of Wolfe's prespective, yes; slavery is the exception rather than the rule, and
democracy has alleviated naked tyranny for most of the world. In the time of Urth, things have
gone back toward the slavery-tyranny end of things.

Some of the "Urth is in a previous universe" is double-talk to cover for the overlooking of the
rainbow covenant.

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

Jeff Wilson — 03 Jun 2010, 20:15 · in reply to John Watkins

On 6/3/2010 11:37 AM, John Watkins wrote:
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I don't think that is supportable; Islam claims it began as Mohammed's reform of the corrupted
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David Stockhoff — 03 Jun 2010, 20:17 · follows Jeff Wilson

Bingo.

Although who exactly is meant by "we"---since the Heiros are knee-deep in the manufacturing
process? Do they express some universal desire for such a figure?

And who determines the requirements for such a project? I suppose the schedule wouldn't
matter if you have all of time...

Message: 2
Date: Thu, 3 Jun 2010 06:56:05 -0400
From: John Watkins <john.watkins04@gmail.com>
To: The Urth Mailing List <urth@lists.urth.net>
Subject: Re: (urth) traveling north
Message-ID:
<AANLkTil6CmRR58EF35nX6WOmT--ltMtl4c_jbG0-8duk@mail.gmail.com>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="iso-8859-1"

Among the things I think the story is meant to show

- 1) If Jesus Christ didn't exist, we'd have to invent a roughly similar figure,
- 2) If that roughly similar figure was a flawed human being, the resulting religion would be considerable worse (Wolfe cheats here--Severian isn't a great sage or moral teacher--the Christ-figure of his world's religion was generally not a nice man), and
- 3) Because all faiths are salvific insofar as they participate in truth, even the mock-Christianity of the New Sun world leads to genuine moments of grace.

John Watkins — 03 Jun 2010, 20:23 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Are we to believe that Mohammed derived veneration of Jesus Christ and His mother from "corrupted Judaism" as well? Mohammed's visitation by the Archangel Gabriel--that too is from Jewish tradition, primarily, and not Christian?

I suppose, if one's definition of "corrupted Judaism" is broad enough to encompass "Christianity."

On Thu, Jun 3, 2010 at 4:15 PM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:
On 6/3/2010 11:37 AM, John Watkins wrote:

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Jerry Friedman — 03 Jun 2010, 22:21 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

From: Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com>

...

Some of the "Urth is in a previous universe" is double-talk to cover for the overlooking of the rainbow covenant.

I kind of suspect that, though I hadn't connected it with the covenant, since I'm in denial about the existence of /TUotNS/. The bit in /Shadow/ about the artifacts that have survived so many centuries of futurity, and photographing the era's few extant buildings, doesn't seem compatible with the "previous universe" business. (AWB, so I'm sorry if I got the wording wrong.) Just a joke?

Jerry Friedman

Jeff Wilson — 03 Jun 2010, 23:44 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

On 6/3/2010 5:21 PM, Jerry Friedman wrote:

From: Jeff Wilson<jwilson at io.com>

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Some of it is kind of jokey, like referring Urth as being much older than our current Earth - of course it's older, duh! The book is set many millenia past our era, whether this cycle or not.

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

brunians at brunians.org — 04 Jun 2010, 01:47 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Islam is Arian Christianity, basically.

.

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IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
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Adam Thornton — 04 Jun 2010, 01:49 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

On Jun 3, 2010, at 5:21 PM, Jerry Friedman wrote:

From: Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com>

...

Some of the "Urth is in a previous universe" is double-talk to cover for the overlooking of the rainbow covenant.

I kind of suspect that, though I hadn't connected it with the covenant, since I'm in denial about the existence of /TUotNS/. The bit in /Shadow/ about the artifacts that have survived so many centuries of futurity, and photographing the era's few extant buildings, doesn't seem compatible with the "previous universe" business. (AWB, so I'm sorry if I got the wording wrong.) Just a joke?

The scene with the plane in the Garden Of Time does it for me.

Adam

John Watkins — 04 Jun 2010, 01:58 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

I agree with this. Actually, Mormonism has significant Arian elements too, and Mormonism and Islam have a lot in common.

On Thu, Jun 3, 2010 at 9:47 PM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:
Islam is Arian Christianity, basically.

.

On 6/3/2010 11:37 AM, John Watkins wrote:

I'd also add, just for the sake of it, that there would be zero Muslims and zero Christians if Jesus Christ had never been born. It'd be an interesting world with something like 3.5 billion religious free agents.

I don't think that is supportable; Islam claims it began as Mohammed's reform of the corrupted Judaism of his time and place.

--

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

Jeff Wilson — 04 Jun 2010, 02:09 · in reply to John Watkins

On 6/3/2010 3:23 PM, John Watkins wrote:

Are we to believe that Mohammed derived veneration of Jesus Christ and His mother from "corrupted Judaism" as well? Mohammed's visitation by the Archangel Gabriel--that too is from Jewish tradition, primarily, and not Christian?

Gabriel appears in the OT as a messenger from G-d to the prophet Daniel. It makes sense for him to appear to Mohammed, also a prophet.

Obviously Jesus is a Christian influence but demoting him to prophet status is not indicative of a great deal of Christian influence. Without consideration of Christianity at all, you'd still have an Islam formed in response to the proliferation of intercessors and corrupt priesthods.

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

Jeff Wilson — 04 Jun 2010, 02:23 · in reply to John Watkins

On 6/3/2010 8:58 PM, John Watkins wrote:

I agree with this. Actually, Mormonism has significant Arian elements too, and Mormonism and Islam have a lot in common.

I still have a problem calling anything non-trinitarian Christianity. It would be like calling the Nation of Islam the same as Islam, despite it maintaining the divinity of its founder, Wallace Fard Muhammad.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
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Matthew Weber — 04 Jun 2010, 02:42 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On Thu, Jun 3, 2010 at 7:23 PM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:
On 6/3/2010 8:58 PM, John Watkins wrote:

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In response to an earlier post on Arianism, I have always thought that the Jehovah's Witnesses were the closest modern equivalent. The creators and subcreators of Mormonism always call to mind, for me, the demiurges, aeons and emanations of Gnosticism.

Islam is a more complicated case, I think. It's very likely that Muhammad considered himself a sort of Christian. I have always thought that the Iconoclastic movement, and later the Swiss Reformers, partook somewhat of the Islamic ethos. Certainly Calvin has more in common with Muhammad than with most of the Fathers...

Matt +

Each of us bears his own Hell.
Virgil [Publius Vergilius Maro] (70-19 B.C.), Aeneid, bk. VI, l. 743

Jerry Friedman — 04 Jun 2010, 03:45 · in reply to Adam Thornton

From: Adam Thornton <adam at io.com>
On Jun 3, 2010, at 5:21 PM, Jerry Friedman wrote:>
From: Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com>
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Some of the "Urth is in a previous universe" is double-talk to cover for the overlooking of the rainbow covenant.

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(AWB, so I'm sorry if I got the wording wrong.) Just a joke?

The scene with the plane in the Garden Of Time does it for me.

Another striking one is that "Verthandi" meant both "now" and "a gift" in some past language. But I see two possibilities in addition to Mr. Wolfe's starting with the idea that Urth was in our future and retconning it into a past universe. One is the apparently Brunian possibility that different universes and iterations will have overwhelming similarities for reasons we don't understand (unless Josh does). In that case many or all of the universes have the names "Robert" and "Marie" at some point ("Marie" coming from "Miriam" even though there was no Mary Mother of Jesus). Even the saints' names could be names of exemplary people who were equivalent to the saints of our world.

This would also explain why Severian learned that a constitutional representative democracy like ours was the highest form of government--his world once had equivalents to our governments of that type, even if none of the history we know about was anything like that. (Which would throw an interesting light on the argument about Jesus' effect, if his universe passed through our stage and returned to widespread tyranny and slavery, as ours could.) The other is that the fictional Wolfe, the translator, says in the appendices that he has used the "closest twentieth-century equivalents" for "yet undiscovered concepts"; he, not Severian, put an athame into Agia's hands. He uses Latin for a language Severian considers obsolete and

presumably changes the images in "a serpent in the last letter but one, and a sword in the last." So along those lines, maybe the names Robert, Marie, Isangoma, Kimleesoong, and Paris are only his translations of names from the distant past that were unfamiliar to Severian, and maybe the translator even changed the description of the plane so we could recognize it. Maybe the double meaning of "Verthandi" was different. Maybe he put in all the clues for South America, for instance by using Quechua to translate a language that Severian says is indigenous, because he knew somehow that the Commonwealth was in South America. Or maybe this is taking the translator conceit too seriously.

Jerry Friedman

Matthew Weber — 04 Jun 2010, 04:02 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

On Thu, Jun 3, 2010 at 8:45 PM, Jerry Friedman <jerry_friedman at yahoo.com> wrote:

But I see two possibilities in addition to Mr. Wolfe's starting with the idea that Urth was in our future and retconning it into a past universe. One is the apparently Brunian possibility that different universes and iterations will have overwhelming similarities for reasons we don't understand (unless Josh does). In that case many or all of the universes have the names "Robert" and "Marie" at some point ("Marie" coming from "Miriam" even though there was no Mary Mother of Jesus). Even the saints' names could be names of exemplary people who were equivalent to the saints of our world.

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Please bear in mind also that in Christian theology, Jesus did not arrive to set human beings free from temporal slavery, suffering, and tyranny, but from spiritual slavery, suffering, and tyranny. The idea that Jesus should have had a ripple-effect of liberation from governmental tyranny, which can never be rolled back, is more closely aligned with the Social Gospel and its antecedents than with most early Christian ideas about government. Ss Paul & Augustine, and up through Luther, put this point most cogently.

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Matt +

Each of us bears his own Hell.
Virgil [Publius Vergilius Maro] (70-19 B.C.), Aeneid, bk. VI, l. 743

brunians at brunians.org — 04 Jun 2010, 06:09 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Whatever.

Nation of Islam is regularly called Islam.

And they are considered Muslims by Muslims, albeit somewhat heretical.

Heresy in Islam is not the same as heresy in Christianity.

.

On 6/3/2010 8:58 PM, John Watkins wrote:

I agree with this. Actually, Mormonism has significant Arian elements too, and Mormonism and Islam have a lot in common.

I still have a problem calling anything non-trinitarian Christianity. It would be like calling the Nation of Islam the same as Islam, despite it maintaining the divinity of its founder, Wallace Fard Muhammad.

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

brunians at brunians.org — 04 Jun 2010, 06:10 · in reply to Matthew Weber

Ouanquerrie.

.

On Thu, Jun 3, 2010 at 7:23 PM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:

On 6/3/2010 8:58 PM, John Watkins wrote:

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In response to an earlier post on Arianism, I have always thought that the Jehovah's Witnesses were the closest modern equivalent. The creators and subcreators of Mormonism always call to mind, for me, the demiurges, aeons and emanations of Gnosticism.

Islam is a more complicated case, I think. It's very likely that Muhammad considered himself a sort of Christian. I have always thought that the Iconoclastic movement, and later the Swiss Reformers, partook somewhat of the Islamic ethos. Certainly Calvin has more in common with Muhammad than with most of the Fathers...

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Matt +

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Jeff Wilson — 04 Jun 2010, 07:47 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

On 6/4/2010 1:09 AM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:
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The equation of a created being (like a human) with Allah is called shirk, which is just about the most severe form of "heresy" Islam has.

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

brunians at brunians.org — 04 Jun 2010, 09:34 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

And what is your point?

.

On 6/4/2010 1:09 AM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:
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Adam Thornton — 04 Jun 2010, 13:10 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

On Jun 3, 2010, at 10:45 PM, Jerry Friedman wrote:

The other is that the fictional Wolfe, the translator, says in the appendices that he has used the "closest twentieth-century equivalents" for "yet undiscovered concepts"; he, not Severian, put an athame into Agia's hands. He uses Latin for a language Severian considers obsolete and presumably changes the images in "a serpent in the last letter but one, and a sword in the last." So along those lines, maybe the names Robert, Marie, Isangoma, Kimleesoong, and Paris are only his translations of names from the distant past that were unfamiliar to Severian, and maybe the translator even changed the description of the plane so we could recognize it. Maybe the double meaning of "Verthandi" was different. Maybe he put in all the clues for South America, for instance by using Quechua to translate a language that Severian says is indigenous, because he knew somehow that the Commonwealth was in South America.

Along this line of reasoning lies A Deepness In The Sky, with horrible spider-monsters whose tales are told as if they were hobbits.

Adam

Matthew Weber — 04 Jun 2010, 13:42 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Touatte.

On Thu, Jun 3, 2010 at 11:10 PM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:
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.

On Thu, Jun 3, 2010 at 7:23 PM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:

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brunians at brunians.org — 04 Jun 2010, 13:52 · in reply to Matthew Weber
Damn!

.

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On Thu, Jun 3, 2010 at 11:10 PM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:
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Jerry Friedman — 04 Jun 2010, 22:29 · in reply to Matthew Weber

From: Matthew Weber <palaeologos at gmail.com>
On Thu, Jun 3, 2010 at 8:45 PM, Jerry Friedman <jerry_friedman at yahoo.com> wrote:

But I see two possibilities in addition to Mr. Wolfe's starting with the idea that Urth was in our future and retconning it into a past universe. One is the apparently Brunian possibility that different universes and iterations will have overwhelming similarities for reasons we don't understand (unless Josh does). In that case many or all of the universes have the names "Robert" and "Marie" at some point ("Marie" coming from "Miriam" even though there was no Mary Mother of Jesus). Even the saints' names could be names of exemplary people who were equivalent to the saints of our world.

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Sorry, maybe I should have said Severian had been taught that our kind of government was the highest. I find it a bit surprising that such a belief had existed on Urth and that the aquastor of Master Malrubius would need to correct it.

Please bear in mind also that in Christian theology, Jesus did not arrive to set human beings free from temporal slavery, suffering, and tyranny, but from spiritual slavery, suffering, and tyranny. The idea that Jesus should have had a ripple-effect of liberation from governmental tyranny, which

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Yes, that's what I'm suggesting, and I should have thought of the parallel to *The Lord of the Rings*/. The question I'm asking is how far it goes. The names Robert, Marie etc. Other names? The pun on "present"? How about what Severian says Thecla said Father Inire said, "light is so weightless that we have given its name to that condition"?

Maybe Mr. Wolfe's definitive statement on cycles of the universe is from the James Jordan interview: "I was toying with those ideas, I think, rather than trying to make sense of them."

Jerry Friedman

John Watkins — 04 Jun 2010, 23:21 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

A pedantic point:

Tolkien most assuredly meant for Middle-Earth to be set in the distant past of our own world.

Linguistically, however, the commonalities were indeed meant to be fictive.

On 6/4/10, Jerry Friedman <jerry_friedman at yahoo.com> wrote:
From: Matthew Weber <palaeologos at gmail.com>

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Jerry Friedman

Jeff Wilson — 04 Jun 2010, 23:32 · in reply to John Watkins

On 6/4/2010 6:21 PM, John Watkins wrote:
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It's my understanding that was how it started with he drawing distant time and CS Lewis drawing distant space, but as it took on a life of its own it became increasingly allegorical and less literally our world. Though with events like the Bending of the Roads, pretty much any discrepancies can be explained away.

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

brunians at brunians.org — 04 Jun 2010, 23:36 · in reply to John Watkins

Tolkien was learned.

.

brunians at brunians.org — 04 Jun 2010, 23:42 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Tolkien had similar ideas about deep history as Wolfe and I do.

.

On 6/4/2010 6:21 PM, John Watkins wrote:

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James Wynn — 05 Jun 2010, 03:00 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

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to some other work that I just wasn't getting.

I thought that too, and I think many people have.
Has anyone ever identified it?
Someone said Robert Borski had, but I'd like to see it.

I don't know if this is who Borski fingered, but I had presumed that they were the Scottish missionaries Robert and Mary Moffat. Robert's vision was to plant a "Garden for God" in Africa. The problem is that the Moffats served in the late 18th-early 19th century, and of course Sev sees a plane just before encountering the hut. Of course he could have been moving back in time.

J.

brunians at brunians.org — 05 Jun 2010, 03:15 · in reply to James Wynn

They are waiting for the plane.

And they talk of Paris.

.

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>>to some other work that I just wasn't getting.

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J.

brunians at brunians.org — 05 Jun 2010, 03:15 · in reply to James Wynn

Rather, they knew about the plane. They talked about how they could catch it.

.

>> I had always thought that Robert and Marie was a reference
>>to some other work that I just wasn't getting.

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J.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 05 Jun 2010, 16:59 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On Fri, Jun 4, 2010 at 4:32 PM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:
It's my understanding that was how it started with he drawing distant time and CS Lewis drawing distant space, but as it took on a life of its own it became increasingly allegorical and less literally our world. Though with events like the Bending of the Roads, pretty much any discrepancies can be explained away.

No; Middle-earth (or, more properly, Arda) goes back to long before his famous "bargain" with Lewis. He began writing what would become _The Silmarillion_ during WWI.

The product of the "bargain" was never completed.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

John Watkins — 05 Jun 2010, 17:17 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

And Tolkien would weep a silent tear to see his work called "allegorical."

On Sat, Jun 5, 2010 at 12:59 PM, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:
On Fri, Jun 4, 2010 at 4:32 PM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:

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Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Craig Brewer — 05 Jun 2010, 18:22 · in reply to John Watkins

So recent discussions have me thinking about a book that's a couple of years old new, but on topic: *The Magician's Book: A Skeptic's Adventures in Narnia* by Laura Miller. Basically: young girl loves Narnia, clueless about the religious aspect. Grows up, eyes open, feels betrayed by the allegory. Gets even older, comes to terms with loving a book that she does not at all "believe."

But it brings to mind two questions about Wolfe:

- 1) In what sense do people feel that his books are "allegorical" (even in the loosest sense) of his (or any) religious views? I take it here that allegorical means more than being informed-by-religion and actually instructive-of or apologetic-for a certain theology, as Lewis apparently wanted Narnia to be?
- 2) How do his non-Catholic readers react to the overt theologizing and moralizing that is obviously there at times? (This would go for even Catholic readers who might find something non-orthodox.)

I know my views aren't shared by everyone on the list, but I'm skeptical of the idea that Wolfe is always or even primarily interested in writing his own beliefs into his books in any overall consistent way. He seems more to be experimenting with ideas rather than working out a consistent theology, as it were.

But even when he's doing something obvious, like the Severian-as-*proto-Christian* angle, I find myself fascinated although I'm not particularly Christian (or particularly anything). I've had other friends, particularly the a-religious type, who can't get past the feeling that he's preaching to them to the "what-if" attitude in which I read him.

But I was curious about any variety of views we have on the list.

Pedro Pereira — 05 Jun 2010, 18:48 · in reply to Craig Brewer

I'm an atheist. Sometimes I do feel here and there a certain morality aspect rising from the books at certain points, but I can't say I ever felt preached to by Wolfe. Plus, I view the character as someone different from me and not necessarily sharing my world views so I can live with that.

Curiously I have more problems with Wolfe's interviews than his books. He is viewing the world from the point of view of a religious person (nothing wrong with that and obviously expected) but sometimes his opinions, specially moral ones, feel to "colored" for my tastes, if you know what I mean. Sometimes I even feel somewhat offended, like when he attributes the "good morals" of the world to the rise of christianity (respect for others, charity, etc) and kind of goes against Islam, giving as example an experience from a friend of his who was at some point in some islamic country, etc. Maybe some of you remember this interview. I felt that it was such a naive and simplistic view of things, and being an admirer of an obviously very smart person I felt disappointed.

His work, however, never made me feel as an "outsider" (lol), I was always able to connect with the characters, the story, etc, without feeling that I was reading a book whose main objective was to preach to me through some dissimulated means. I'm also able to feel the sense of wonder at "revelation", like Silk when he finds the Outsider and so on, even though I'm not religious myself.

I fell in love with Wolfe's prose when I was in my early teens (12 maybe), I had no idea who he was and I had this book called "shadow of the torturer" that I borrowed from an uncle of mine. Even though it was a translation it felt special, unique, and quite different from what I had read before. And then there was the beautifully imagined world, which has no paralel. Even after I

discovered that Wolfe's religious beliefs/views played a big part in his work, I never really felt betrayed or dissatisfied. I guess it actually made the whole thing more interesting, more "real".

Date: Sat, 5 Jun 2010 11:22:16 -0700
From: cnbrewer at yahoo.com
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Subject: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

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But I was curious about any variety of views we have on the list.

From: John Watkins <john.watkins04 at gmail.com>
To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
Sent: Sat, June 5, 2010 12:17:31 PM
Subject: Re: (urth) traveling north

And Tolkien would weep a silent tear to see his work called "allegorical."

On Sat, Jun 5, 2010 at 12:59 PM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:

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John Watkins — 05 Jun 2010, 20:53 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

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

Jeff Wilson — 05 Jun 2010, 23:01 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

On 6/5/2010 11:59 AM, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:

On Fri, Jun 4, 2010 at 4:32 PM, Jeff Wilson<jwilson at io.com> wrote:

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My point remains that around this time (1936 or so) he placed the setting we know as Middle Earth in the literal past, slightly overlapping the historic era, with bloodlines continuing to this day allowing retrogression from our time to that. Things accumulated and by the 70s he was reported saying it was in an imaginary world rather than an historical one.

ISTR he similarly entertained some biological justification for elves' longevity in letters with a friend or colleague then ultimately decided it wasn't necessary.

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

Jeff Wilson — 05 Jun 2010, 23:09 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On 6/5/2010 6:01 PM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

On 6/5/2010 11:59 AM, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:

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I cut that loose a bit early. I just now reviewed a BBC interview from 71 and he says:

T: Oh yes, they're the same word. Most people have made this mistake of thinking Middle-earth is a particular kind of Earth or is another planet of the science fiction sort but it's just an old fashioned word for this world we live in, as imagined surrounded by the Ocean.

G: It seemed to me that Middle-earth was in a sense as you say this world we live in but at a different era.

T: No ... at a different stage of imagination, yes.

<http://web.archive.org/web/20040911093705/www.geocities.com/misctolkien/TolkieninterviewBBC1971.txt>

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

Jeff Wilson — 05 Jun 2010, 23:12 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On 6/5/2010 6:01 PM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

On 6/5/2010 11:59 AM, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:

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So it's somehow this earth, but without even fictional continuity.

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David Stockhoff — 05 Jun 2010, 23:58 · follows John Watkins

The comparison is a personally interesting one. Perhaps the difference is largely one of timing. I too felt somewhat betrayed by Lewis; I encountered Narnia not long after Middle-Earth, around second and third grade.

Wolfe I discovered much later, and while I'm still waiting for the Great Atheist Novel, I don't feel betrayed at all. And Rand was clearly insane from the beginning.

Message: 4

Date: Sat, 5 Jun 2010 16:53:02 -0400
From: John Watkins <john.watkins04 at gmail.com>
To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences
Message-ID:
<AANLkTinjYKw22zcNqAXleQGE49YCYID9jhZRTChMEgF5 at mail.gmail.com>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="iso-8859-1"

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John Watkins — 06 Jun 2010, 00:01 · in reply to David Stockhoff

Do people feel similarly betrayed by Doestoevsky?

Again, I find it bizarre. I can't imagine thinking to myself "How dare Author X have different views than me!" I can imagine thinking "Well, I don't choose to spend time on this," but not a sense of betrayal per se.

On Sat, Jun 5, 2010 at 7:58 PM, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:
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brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 00:34 · in reply to John Watkins
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.
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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 00:47 · in reply to David Stockhoff

All atheists are insane.

.

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brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 00:48 · in reply to John Watkins

Atheists don't believe in God, so there's a gap.

They normally try to fit themselves into the gap.

So of course they get to order the World.

And the World stubbornly insists upon remaining as it is.

.

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Jane Delawney — 06 Jun 2010, 00:57 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

First of all many many apologies if I have started a hare and then not been around to follow it up. it is a classic troll tactic and I am not a troll (although stating you are not is also a classic tactic of course, right now I know I can't win). Instead color me guilty of not thinking (ie. that I was on 3 12 hour shifts immediately following my last post) before posting. Will try very hard not to do this again.

Second: many many thanks to all those who have responded. I see that my 15 years out of the fandom have resulted in some serious lacunae in my knowledge; I had not previously been aware of Gene Wolfe's statements on the issue of north/south on Urth and also of the identity of the Ascians.

[As an aside though - I wonder very much now why Wolfe initially identifies the Ascians as his 'equivalent of the Turks'. Turks of what era? I'm guessing ancient, warlike, sweeping across the plains Turks, not the inhabitants of the modern land of Turkey who are not well known for Ascian-like behavior.

The real puzzle for me in this identification however is their evident totalitarian mentality, how this relates to the Turks of any era I am not sure.]

Anyway - I finally remembered the other place (well actually one of the others, but this is the most immediate one) where my vague recollection of a sense of north/south 'wrongness' came from.

The passage is right at the end of **Shadow**; on the last but one page of my Arrow Paperbacks copy (p.300 of the 1981 printing). The speaker is Jonas.

"In the old times, the Lords of this world feared no one but their own people, and to defend themselves against them built a great fortress on a hill to the **north** of the city. It was not

called Nessus then, because the river was unpoisoned.

"Many of the people were angry at the building of that *citadel*, holding it to be their right to slay their lords without hindrance if they so desired. But others went out in the ships that ply between the stars, returning with treasure and knowledge."

[All emphases mine of course. Also of course, the Citadel where Severian was raised is in the far *south* of 'contemporary' Nessus.]

And so on. Of course at this point Jonas diverges into a tale which sounds like a fairy-story or legend, and it's entirely possible that the whole statement is such a tale, that the reference to the 'citadel in the north' is storytelling, and not related to the (subcreated) 'reality' of Urth. But Jonas is a survivor of ancient times and at base a machine, not a human; this is in addition 'the only tale (he) knows - or nearly so'. Do robots tell fairy stories?

In Wolfe, they probably do :) However this entire passage gives me pause.

If I remember / note anything else, I'll present it if the whole list hasn't gotten tired of the subject; but any comment as helpful as those already received would be very very welcome.

kind regards

JD

On 03/06/10 01:34, Jerry Friedman wrote:
I will tell you the directions don't exclude that possibility.

The line is, "Try to pass through it by day, with the sun over the right shoulder by morning and later in the left eye."

On the equinoxes, the sun rises due east everywhere in the world (well, not at the poles), so the sun is over your right shoulder at dawn if you're facing northwest. On the December solstice, the sun rises at its farthest south of due east; on the June solstice, at its farthest north. In the South Temperate and Antarctic Zones, the sun is always in the north at noon, but in the South Tropical Zone, it's in the south at noon around the December solstice, their summer solstice. Since Severian's sun is dim, he could be in the tropics even where we think of the climate as cooler than tropical.

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Jerry Friedman

----- Original Message -----
From: Jane Delawney<jane_delawney at sky.com>

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 01:00 · in reply to Jane Delawney

The Commonwealth is politically similar - identical, really - to the Byzantine empire.

First of all many many apologies if I have started a hare and then not been around to follow it up. it is a classic troll tactic and I am not a troll (although stating you are not is also a classic tactic of course, right now I know I can't win). Instead color me guilty of not thinking

(ie. that I was on 3 12 hour shifts immediately following my last post) before posting. Will try very hard not to do this again.

Second: many many thanks to all those who have responded. I see that my 15 years out of the fandom have resulted in some serious lacunae in my knowledge; I had not previously been aware of Gene Wolfe's statements on the issue of north/south on Urth and also of the identity of the Ascians.

[As an aside though - I wonder very much now why Wolfe initially identifies the Ascians as his 'equivalent of the Turks'. Turks of what era? I'm guessing ancient, warlike, sweeping across the plains Turks, not the inhabitants of the modern land of Turkey who are not well known for Ascian-like behavior.

The real puzzle for me in this identification however is their evident totalitarian mentality, how this relates to the Turks of any era I am not sure.]

Anyway - I finally remembered the other place (well actually one of the others, but this is the most immediate one) where my vague recollection of a sense of north/south 'wrongness' came from.

The passage is right at the end of *Shadow*; on the last but one page of my Arrow Paperbacks copy (p.300 of the 1981 printing). The speaker is Jonas.

"In the old times, the Lords of this world feared no one but their own people, and to defend themselves against them built a great fortress on a hill to the *north* of the city. It was not called Nessus then, because the river was unpoisoned.

"Many of the people were angry at the building of that *citadel*, holding it to be their right to slay their lords without hindrance if they so desired. But others went out in the ships that ply between the stars, returning with treasure and knowledge."

[All emphases mine of course. Also of course, the Citadel where Severian was raised is in the far *south* of 'contemporary' Nessus.]

And so on. Of course at this point Jonas diverges into a tale which sounds like a fairy-story or legend, and it's entirely possible that the whole statement is such a tale, that the reference to the 'citadel in the north' is storytelling, and not related to the (subcreated) 'reality' of Urth. But Jonas is a survivor of ancient times and at base a machine, not a human; this is in addition 'the only tale (he) knows - or nearly so'. Do robots tell fairy stories?

In Wolfe, they probably do :) However this entire passage gives me pause.

If I remember / note anything else, I'll present it if the whole list hasn't gotten tired of the subject; but any comment as helpful as those already received would be very very welcome.

kind regards

JD

On 03/06/10 01:34, Jerry Friedman wrote:

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Jerry Friedman

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

From: Jane Delawney <jane_delawney at sky.com>

Jack Smith — 06 Jun 2010, 01:24 · in reply to Jane Delawney

When Wolfe says the Ascians are the equivalents of Turks, I believe he's referring to the Ottoman Empire, which was a powerful enemy of Christian Europe and which nearly overwhelmed the Europeans in the 16th century. The Turks conquered the middle east, north Africa, and large parts of Europe.

They reached the gates of Vienna a couple of times. Read Shakespeare's *Othello
*for how the Turks were feared.

Of course the Ottomans were not as totalitarian as the Ascians. But they were powerful, well-organized, and different in language and culture.

Best wishes,
Jack

On Sat, Jun 5, 2010 at 8:57 PM, Jane Delawney <jane_delawney at sky.com> wrote:
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Jerry Friedman

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

From: Jane Delawney<jane_delawney at sky.com>

John Watkins — 06 Jun 2010, 01:31 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Is that the friendliness we talked about earlier?

On Sat, Jun 5, 2010 at 8:47 PM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:
All atheists are insane.

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The comparison is a personally interesting one. Perhaps the difference is largely one of timing. I too felt somewhat betrayed by Lewis; I encountered Narnia not long after Middle-Earth, around second and third grade.

Wolfe I discovered much later, and while I'm still waiting for the Great Atheist Novel, I don't feel betrayed at all. And Rand was clearly insane from the beginning.

Message: 4

Date: Sat, 5 Jun 2010 16:53:02 -0400

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

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

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Message-ID:

<AANLkTinjYKw22zcNqAXleQGE49YCYID9jhZRTChMEgF5 at mail.gmail.com>

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

Personally I find the "betrayal" narrative bizarre whenever I hear it. Secular writers and religious writers alike "color" their fiction to reflect their political, moral and/or metaphysical beliefs, yet one very rarely

encounters this "betrayal" storyline outside of discussion of certain Christian genre writers. I guess in the right-wing fringe media we hear about evil homosexual/pagan agendas hidden in works, but no one takes that stuff seriously.

I might ascribe this to the generally liberal or progressive attitudes of most literary critics, academics, and, plausibly, much of the educated reading class in the United States. But that doesn't really wash in my experience. I know countless people, many of liberal predispositions, who have read and allegedly enjoyed *The Fountainhead*--and Rand is far preachier than Lewis, Wolfe, or even Card. And Neil Gaiman has written about his feelings of betrayal as to Lewis's religiosity, but never expressed similar feelings toward, for example, Kipling's imperialism.

I think the problem (if there is a unique problem here and not just soft bigotry against religion in general or a particular religion) must be the perceived deception. The idea that Lewis might be planting ideas and images surreptitiously in one's head that would act to soften one's views towards traditional Christianity can be conceived of nefariously.

James Wynn — 06 Jun 2010, 01:37 · in reply to Craig Brewer

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- 1) In what sense do people feel that his books are "allegorical" (even in the loosest sense) of his (or any) religious views? I take it here that allegorical means more than being informed-by-religion and actually instructive-of or apologetic-for a certain theology, as Lewis apparently wanted Narnia to be?

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J.

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 01:37 · in reply to John Watkins

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

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Message-ID:

<AANLkTinJYKw22zcNqAXleQGE49YCYID9jhZRTChMEgF5 at mail.gmail.com>

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

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brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 01:38 · in reply to James Wynn

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J.

Jeff Wilson — 06 Jun 2010, 02:14 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

On 6/5/2010 7:34 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:
He'd whine loudly.

In the interview he said he disliked allegory wherever he smelled it. But that didn't stop him from producing some, however unintentionally.

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

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 02:25 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

I bet he didn't admit to it.

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Russ Allbery — 06 Jun 2010, 02:25 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

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By Tolkien's definition of allegory, which emphasizes authorial intention, unintentional allegory isn't allegory.

But I cordially dislike allegory in all its manifestations, and always have done so since I grew old and wary enough to detect its presence. I much prefer history, true or feigned, with its varied applicability to the thought and experience of readers. I think that many confuse 'applicability' with 'allegory'; but the one resides in the freedom of the reader, and the other in the purposed domination of the author.

(From the introduction to LotR.)

Russ Allbery (rra at stanford.edu) <<http://www.eyrie.org/~eagle/>>

Craig Brewer — 06 Jun 2010, 02:27 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Whose? Wolfe's? Lewis'? Pullman's?

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

From: "brunians at brunians.org" <brunians at brunians.org> To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net> Sent: Sat, June 5, 2010 8:38:15 PM Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

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Urth Mailing List

To post, write urth at urth.net

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

Russ Allbery — 06 Jun 2010, 02:32 · in reply to James Wynn

James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> writes:

As for Narnia, if people didn't continuously and erroneously INTRODUCE people to the books as "Christian allegory", not that many people would catch on to the Christian themes mixed in there -- not until the final volume if at all.

I agree for most of the series, but the explicit Christian parallels in The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe are pretty blatantly obvious if you know the corresponding bits of Christianity. The stone table scene in particular is, I think, difficult to read as anything other than an explicit parallel to the death and resurrection of Christ.

The degree of explicit parallelism drops off a *lot* in the other books, with (as you note) the possible exception of The Last Battle.

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Til We Have Faces is more in line with books like The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, where the Christianity is there if you want to look for it but it's fairly easy to not see it if you're not looking for it.

Russ Allbery (rra at stanford.edu) <<http://www.eyrie.org/~eagle/>>

Craig Brewer — 06 Jun 2010, 02:39 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

I think it's important to remember that Tolkien was a scholar of ancient languages who also had to spend plenty of time teaching medieval literature. Apparently, his colleagues say that his reaction to "allegory" was specifically targeted against the strain of Piers Plowman/Confessio Amantis brand that was part of his teaching duties and which he was of course familiar with. (I'm getting this from my memory of The Inklings and other stuff from his letters.)

To the point: what bothered him about allegory was what it did to mythology and romance in the middle ages, such as removing it from its original context and placing a veneer of teaching or instruction over it. But Tolkien himself was not averse to literature-with-an-overt "message," if that's what we mean by allegory. The Eddas, Beowulf, even the Bible, all of which he loved for their mythic status, are generally "allegorical" but not allegorical in the same way that The Romance of the Rose or The Pearl is allegorical. They model a way of living, a mindset, an idealized culture, etc., but they aren't allegorical in the reductive way that Pilgrim's Progress has walking personifications and where meanings can be decoded in a this-means-that relationship.

They also aren't topically allegorical, and of course Tolkien hated the idea that LotR was sometimes received as a big anti-Germany "allegory." I think Tolkien was fine with the general idea that his books could be thought of as contributing to thinking about certain situations like

that -- after all, what use is myth if it doesn't try to define our outlook? But he resisted the idea that his books were allegory if that meant that you say "Sauron is Hitler" and walk away thinking you solved the puzzle.

Relation to Wolfe? I've always put New Sun in the same category as Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, which is a very non-reductive allegory that uses its symbols to create interesting ambiguities rather than just reduce an icon to a static meaning. New Sun's imagery often works the same way for me.

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

From: Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com>

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

Sent: Sat, June 5, 2010 9:14:12 PM

Subject: Re: (urth) traveling north

On 6/5/2010 7:34 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

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brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 02:41 · in reply to Craig Brewer

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J.

Craig Brewer — 06 Jun 2010, 02:47 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Shouldn't a master of high propaganda hit the best seller list more often? heh

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

From: "brunians at brunians.org" <brunians at brunians.org> To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net> Sent: Sat, June 5, 2010 9:41:00 PM Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Wolfe.

Whose? Wolfe's? Lewis'? Pullman's?

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

From: "brunians at brunians.org" <brunians at brunians.org>

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

Sent: Sat, June 5, 2010 8:38:15 PM

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

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brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 02:57 · in reply to Craig Brewer

What does the high in high propaganda mean?

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J.

Jack Smith — 06 Jun 2010, 03:03 · in reply to Craig Brewer

"But I cordially dislike allegory in all its manifestations, and always have done so since I grew old and wary enough to detect its presence. I much prefer history, true or feigned, with its varied applicability to the thought and experience of readers. I think that many confuse 'applicability' with 'allegory'; but the one resides in the freedom of the reader, and the other in the purposed domination of the author." --Tolkien, Foreword to *The Lord of the Rings*

Best wishes,
Jack

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To the point: what bothered him about allegory was what it did to mythology and romance in the middle ages, such as removing it from its original context and placing a veneer of teaching or instruction over it. But Tolkien himself was not averse to literature-with-an-overt "message," if that's what we mean by allegory. The *Eddas*, *Beowulf*, even the Bible, all of which he loved for their mythic status, are generally "allegorical" but not allegorical in the same way that *The Romance of the Rose* or *The Pearl* is allegorical. They model a way of living, a mindset, an idealized culture, etc., but they aren't allegorical in the reductive way that *Pilgrim's Progress* has walking personifications and where meanings can be decoded in a this-means-that relationship.

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

From: Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com>

Jane Delawney — 06 Jun 2010, 03:10 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

On 06/06/10 02:00, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

The Commonwealth is politically similar - identical, really - to the Byzantine empire.

So the Ascians are intended to be **geopolitically** similar to the Turks rather than having a cultural or internal-political resemblance? Tx Brunians, this now makes sense to me.

regards

JD

ps Please forgive if sometimes my responses are vaguer than they should be - my ISP's mail server, however I fiddle with the settings, **will not** return my own mailing list posts to me unless I start a new thread. I can only see others' responses unless I go to the ISP website and check out the stored messages, or to urth.net and check out list mails there. I don't often have time to do those things.

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 03:16 · in reply to Jane Delawney

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Jeff Wilson — 06 Jun 2010, 04:51 · in reply to Jane Delawney

On 6/5/2010 7:57 PM, Jane Delawney wrote:

And so on. Of course at this point Jonas diverges into a tale which sounds like a fairy-story or legend, and it's entirely possible that the whole statement is such a tale, that the reference to the 'citadel in the north' is storytelling, and not related to the (subcreated) 'reality' of Urth. But Jonas is a survivor of ancient times and at base a machine, not a human; this is in addition 'the only tale (he) knows - or nearly so'. Do robots tell fairy stories?

In Wolfe, they probably do :) However this entire passage gives me pause.

In Wolfe, a "robot" is often the most or the only reliable source of information. The can go wrong or be fed bad data, but they generally seem free of motivation to lie, though for this purpose you'd have to rule out the recorded personalities on the Whorl.

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

John Watkins — 06 Jun 2010, 04:53 · in reply to Jack Smith

I rather doubt that Tolkien considered The Pearl to be an allegory. He took the time to translate it, after all.

On Sat, Jun 5, 2010 at 11:03 PM, Jack Smith <jack.smith.1946 at gmail.com> wrote:

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Best wishes,
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----- Original Message -----
From: Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com>

Roy C. Lackey — 06 Jun 2010, 05:02 · in reply to Jane Delawney

Jane Delawney wrote:

[snip]

Anyway - I finally remembered the other place (well actually one of the others, but this is the most immediate one) where my vague recollection of a sense of north/south 'wrongness' came from.

The passage is right at the end of **Shadow**; on the last but one page of my Arrow Paperbacks copy (p.300 of the 1981 printing). The speaker is Jonas.

"In the old times, the Lords of this world feared no one but their own people, and to defend themselves against them built a great fortress on a hill to the **north** of the city. It was not called Nessus then, because the river was unpoisoned.

"Many of the people were angry at the building of that **citadel**, holding it to be their right to slay their lords without hindrance if they so desired. But others went out in the ships that ply between the stars, returning with treasure and knowledge."

[All emphases mine of course. Also of course, the Citadel where Severian was raised is in the far **south** of 'contemporary' Nessus.]

Nessus started out on the Gyll on or near the southwest coast of the continent. As the river became polluted, the city kept growing upstream, in a generally northern direction. At some point, the rulers built the Citadel to the north of the city as it then existed. Over many years, the

living city grew and caught up with the Citadel, then grew beyond it, so that by the time Sev was born the Citadel was near the southern edge of the inhabited portion of the city.

-Roy

Craig Brewer — 06 Jun 2010, 05:15 · in reply to John Watkins

Of course it's an allegory...just a "good" one. Even Tolkien broke his own rules: what is "Leaf by Niggle" if not an allegory?

John Watkins — 06 Jun 2010, 05:19 · in reply to Craig Brewer

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On Sun, Jun 6, 2010 at 1:15 AM, Craig Brewer <cnbrewer at yahoo.com> wrote:
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From: John Watkins <john.watkins04 at gmail.com>

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

Sent: Sat, June 5, 2010 11:53:32 PM

Subject: Re: (urth) Allegory

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From: Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com>

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 05:36 · in reply to John Watkins

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

From: Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com>

Craig Brewer — 06 Jun 2010, 06:11 · in reply to John Watkins

Well, maybe. But now we're quibbling. You're a fan of "fable." I'm a fan of "allegory." But we likely think the words mean similar things.

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brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 06:31 · in reply to Craig Brewer

They are terms.

They have specific meanings.

Allegories and fables are different.

The differences can be described.

.

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From: John Watkins <john.watkins04 at gmail.com>
To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
Sent: Sun, June 6, 2010 12:19:05 AM
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Jack

On Sat, Jun 5, 2010 at 10:39 PM, Craig Brewer <cnbrewer at yahoo.com> wrote:

I think it's important to remember that Tolkien was a scholar of ancient languages who also had to spend plenty of time teaching medieval literature. Apparently, his colleagues say that his reaction to "allegory" was specifically targeted against the strain of *Piers Plowman* / *Confessio Amantis* brand that was part of his teaching duties and which he was of course familiar with. (I'm getting this from my memory of *The Inklings* and other stuff from his letters.)

To the point: what bothered him about allegory was what it did to mythology and romance in the middle ages, such as removing it from its original context and placing a veneer of teaching or instruction over it. But Tolkien himself was not averse to literature-with-an-overt "message," if that's what we mean by allegory. The *Eddas*, *Beowulf*, even the Bible, all of which he loved for their mythic status, are generally "allegorical" but not allegorical in the same way that *The Romance of the Rose* or *The Pearl* is allegorical. They model a way of living, a mindset, an idealized culture, etc., but they aren't allegorical in the

reductive way that Pilgrim's Progress has walking personifications and where meanings can be decoded in a this-means-that relationship.

They also aren't topically allegorical, and of course Tolkien hated the idea that LotR was sometimes received as a big anti-Germany "allegory." I think Tolkien was fine with the general idea that his books could be thought of as contributing to thinking about certain situations like that -- after all, what use is myth if it doesn't try to define our outlook? But he resisted the idea that his books were allegory if that meant that you say "Sauron is Hitler" and walk away thinking you solved the puzzle.

Relation to Wolfe? I've always put New Sun in the same category as Spenser's Faerie Queene, which is a very non-reductive allegory that uses its symbols to create interesting ambiguities rather than just reduce an icon to a static meaning. New Sun's imagery often works the same way for me.

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

From: Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com>

Pedro Pereira — 06 Jun 2010, 10:53 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Date: Sat, 5 Jun 2010 20:47:30 -0400

From: brunians at brunians.org

To: urth at lists.urth.net

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

All atheists are insane.

Thanks for that pearl of wisdom. Thanks to you I'll apply tomorrow for a place at the local sanatorium.

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 11:00 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

Why?

I didn't say y'all were mentally ill.

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<https://signup.live.com/signup.aspx?id=60969>

Pedro Pereira — 06 Jun 2010, 11:18 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Oh, thanksfor clearing that up. I'm just nuts then ;)

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 07:00:44 -0400
From: brunians at brunians.org
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

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brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 11:25 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

In the old days insane people were confined to what were called lunatic asylums.

But in this MODERN DAY, only people who can be diagnosed with a mental illness are treated in psychiatric hospitals.

Insane people are mostly at large these days.

Hell, they're mostly running things.

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Oh, thanksfor clearing that up. I'm just nuts then ;)
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Pedro Pereira — 06 Jun 2010, 11:28 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

I'm still not certain exactly why I'm insane, though.

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 07:25:10 -0400
From: brunians at brunians.org
To: urth at lists.urth.net
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brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 12:00 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

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If it does you won't be insane any longer.

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Pedro Pereira — 06 Jun 2010, 12:03 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

So you basically don't have an argument. That's sane!

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 08:00:49 -0400
From: brunians at brunians.org
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

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brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 12:17 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

You are confusing sanity with verbal logic and consistency.

Do you seriously believe that the two are identical?

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So you basically don't have an argument. That's sane!

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Pedro Pereira — 06 Jun 2010, 12:21 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Please forgive my ignorance and stupidity, dear sir. Could you please just make things simple for this poor ignorant soul and provide a straight answer/argument to why I'm insane? Because at this point it just seems like you're trying to evade it.

Thank you.

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brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 12:43 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

You are confusing sanity with verbal logic and consistency.

Do you seriously believe that the two are identical?

What does the term 'sane' mean?

What is the radical meaning of the term 'sane'?

You may take that as one question or as two.

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Please forgive my ignorance and stupidity, dear sir. Could you please just make things simple for this poor ignorant soul and provide a straight answer/argument to why I'm insane? Because at this point it just seems like you're trying to evade it.

Thank you.

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Pedro Pereira — 06 Jun 2010, 12:57 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

At this point I'm not confusing anything. No, I don't think that possessing verbal logic and consistency in one's arguments equal sanity. However that is not what I asked you. I just asked you a straight and simple question: Why am I (and all atheists) insane? Could you please answer the question? I'm asking you why are you accusing me (and others) of insanity and you continuously fail to provide a straight answer. Do you have one or not?

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 08:43:05 -0400
From: brunians at brunians.org
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

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David Stockhoff — 06 Jun 2010, 13:24 · follows Pedro Pereira

Well, as I suggested, it was a childish response. I think I regarded Middle-earth and Narnia etc. as my own personal escape from a mindless existence in which being dragged (sometimes literally) to church every Sunday played no small role. So finding that Narnia was no escape at all but rather, at worst, a trap set by the very people I resisted, represented exactly the betrayal you might imagine it to be in such circumstances. (Plenty of literary references I could draw on there...) On the other hand, I was able to find in Tolkien a fellow resister of sorts. Thank god for the Church of England and its ingrained agnosticism! ----- Message: 5 Date: Sat, 5 Jun 2010 20:01:27 -0400 From: John Watkins <john.watkins04 at gmail.com> To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net> Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences Message-ID: <AANLkTimnooSNDRsyOfnWONyo2U9XNELCmvkUfXuFpZe5 at mail.gmail.com> Content-Type: text/plain; charset="iso-8859-1" Do people feel similarly betrayed by Doestoevsky? Again, I find it bizarre. I can't imagine thinking to myself "How dare Author X have different views than me!" I can imagine thinking "Well, I don't choose to spend time on this," but not a sense of betrayal per se. On Sat, Jun 5, 2010 at 7:58 PM, David

Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:

The comparison is a personally interesting one. Perhaps the difference is largely one of timing. I too felt somewhat betrayed by Lewis; I encountered Narnia not long after Middle-Earth, around second and third grade. Wolfe I discovered much later, and while I'm still waiting for the Great Atheist Novel, I don't feel betrayed at all. And Rand was clearly insane from the beginning.

David Stockhoff — 06 Jun 2010, 13:26 · follows David Stockhoff

You're being "friendly," right?

Message: 7

Date: Sat, 5 Jun 2010 20:47:30 -0400

From: brunians at brunians.org

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

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Message-ID: <8bcd673ef83c0c5d8dc5e0e10c7a78ce.squirrel at brunians.org>

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

All atheists are insane.

.

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 13:34 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

Do you insist that Gene Wolfe be explicit in his writing?

He is one of my major influences.

This insistence that something perfectly implicit be stated explicitly is part of what I am talking about.

I'd like to thank you for being as obliging as you are being.

.

At this point I'm not confusing anything. No, I don't think that possessing verbal logic and consistency in one's arguments equal sanity. However that is not what I asked you. I just asked you a straight and simple question: Why am I (and all atheists) insane? Could you please answer the question? I'm asking you why are you accusing me (and others) of insanity and you continuously fail to provide a straight answer. Do you have one or not?

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Oh, thanksfor clearing that up. I'm just nuts then ;)

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From: brunians at brunians.org

To: urth at lists.urth.net

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

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David Stockhoff — 06 Jun 2010, 13:34 · follows Roy C. Lackey

The Ottomans laid siege to Vienna three times over centuries, each time failing to capture the city. They did however take Constantinople and never gave it up. Note that Nessus is based on

Byzantium, so the enemy would have to be Turks anyway.

But additionally Turks therefore are the Saracens of the Renaissance and represent the eternal Orientalist European "Invader from the East," but with an implacable and bureaucratic flavor rather than a wild, animal-like flavor (like the Mongols on their ponies). Take that to the nth degree and you might get something like the Ascians.

Nessus and the Commonwealth have a very obvious Middle-earth-like mentality regarding the geography of Urth. (See the classic New Yorker cover about the view of the world from Manhattan for a modern version.)

Message: 2

Date: Sun, 06 Jun 2010 01:57:23 +0100

From: Jane Delawney <jane_delawney at sky.com>

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

Subject: Re: (urth) traveling north

Message-ID: <4C0AF273.7070303 at sky.com>

Content-Type: text/plain; charset=ISO-8859-1; format=flowed

First of all many many apologies if I have started a hare and then not been around to follow it up. it is a classic troll tactic and I am not a troll (although stating you are not is also a classic tactic of course, right now I know I can't win). Instead color me guilty of not thinking (ie. that I was on 3 12 hour shifts immediately following my last post) before posting. Will try very hard not to do this again.

Second: many many thanks to all those who have responded. I see that my 15 years out of the fandom have resulted in some serious lacunae in my knowledge; I had not previously been aware of Gene Wolfe's statements on the issue of north/south on Urth and also of the identity of the Ascians.

[As an aside though - I wonder very much now why Wolfe initially identifies the Ascians as his 'equivalent of the Turks'. Turks of what era? I'm guessing ancient, warlike, sweeping across the plains Turks, not the inhabitants of the modern land of Turkey who are not well known for Ascian-like behavior.

The real puzzle for me in this identification however is their evident totalitarian mentality, how this relates to the Turks of any era I am not sure.]

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 13:39 · in reply to David Stockhoff

Absolutely.

.

You're being "friendly," right?

Message: 7

Date: Sat, 5 Jun 2010 20:47:30 -0400

From: brunians at brunians.org

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

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Message-ID: <8bcd673ef83c0c5d8dc5e0e10c7a78ce.squirrel at brunians.org>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=iso-8859-1

All atheists are insane.

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brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 13:40 · in reply to David Stockhoff

In the centuries before the Ottomans took Byzantium, they were behaving as they later behaved in reference to Vienna.

People were concerned.

.

The Ottomans laid siege to Vienna three times over centuries, each time failing to capture the city. They did however take Constantinople and never gave it up. Note that Nessus is based on Byzantium, so the enemy would have to be Turks anyway.

But additionally Turks therefore are the Saracens of the Renaissance and represent the eternal Orientalist European "Invader from the East," but with an implacable and bureaucratic flavor rather than a wild, animal-like flavor (like the Mongols on their ponies). Take that to the nth degree and you might get something like the Ascians.

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Content-Type: text/plain; charset=ISO-8859-1; format=flowed

First of all many many apologies if I have started a hare and then not been around to follow it up. it is a classic troll tactic and I am not a troll (although stating you are not is also a classic tactic of course, right now I know I can't win). Instead color me guilty of not thinking (ie. that I was on 3 12 hour shifts immediately following my last post) before posting. Will try very hard not to do this again.

Second: many many thanks to all those who have responded. I see that my 15 years out of the fandom have resulted in some serious lacunae in my knowledge; I had not previously been aware of Gene Wolfe's statements on the issue of north/south on Urth and also of the identity of the Ascians.

[As an aside though - I wonder very much now why Wolfe initially identifies the Ascians as his 'equivalent of the Turks'. Turks of what

era? I'm guessing ancient, warlike, sweeping across the plains Turks, not the inhabitants of the modern land of Turkey who are not well known for Ascan-like behavior.

The real puzzle for me in this identification however is their evident totalitarian mentality, how this relates to the Turks of any era I am not sure.]

Pedro Pereira — 06 Jun 2010, 13:41 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

What!?!?!?

I'm not reading a book and demanding that the author makes it "easier" for me; I'm asking for a straight answer from someone that accuses me (and others) of being insane in an internet forum. But thanks for nothing. I'm not going to waste more time with this.

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 09:34:08 -0400
From: brunians at brunians.org
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Do you insist that Gene Wolfe be explicit in his writing?

He is one of my major influences.

This insistence that something perfectly implicit be stated explicitly is part of what I am talking about.

I'd like to thank you for being as obliging as you are being.

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At this point I'm not confusing anything. No, I don't think that possessing verbal logic and consistency in one's arguments equal sanity. However that is not what I asked you. I just asked you a straight and simple question: Why am I (and all atheists) insane? Could you please answer the question? I'm asking you why are you accusing me (and others) of insanity and you continuously fail to provide a straight answer. Do you have one or not?

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What is the radical meaning of the term 'sane'?

You may take that as one question or as two.

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Please forgive my ignorance and stupidity, dear sir. Could you please just make things simple for this poor ignorant soul and provide a straight answer/argument to why I'm insane? Because at this point it just seems like you're trying to evade it.

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So you basically don't have an argument. That's sane!

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It may become clear with time.

If it does you won't be insane any longer.

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I'm still not certain exactly why I'm insane, though.

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But in this MODERN DAY, only people who can be diagnosed with a mental illness are treated in psychiatric hospitals.

Insane people are mostly at large these days.

Hell, they're mostly running things.

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Oh, thanksfor clearing that up. I'm just nuts then ;)

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From: brunians at brunians.org
To: urth at lists.urth.net

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Why?

I didn't say y'all were mentally ill.

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Date: Sat, 5 Jun 2010 20:47:30 -0400

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To: urth at lists.urth.net

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

All atheists are insane.

Thanks for that pearl of wisdom. Thanks to you I'll apply tomorrow for a place at the local sanatorium.

Hotmail: Powerful Free email with security by Microsoft.

<https://signup.live.com/signup.aspx?id`969>

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 13:47 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

Accuse is a strong word.

You play fast and loose with terms.

What does the term 'insane' mean?

What is the radical meaning of the term 'insane'?

You may take this as one question or two.

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What!?!?!?

I'm not reading a book and demanding that the author makes it "easier" for me; I'm asking for a straight answer from someone that accuses me (and others) of being insane in an internet forum. But thanks for nothing. I'm not going to waste more time with this.

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Hotmail: Powerful Free email with security by
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<https://signup.live.com/signup.aspx?id`969>

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 13:48 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

You are participating in a correspondance.

What do you think you are doing?

What does the term 'insane' mean?

.

What!?!?!?

I'm not reading a book and demanding that the author makes it "easier" for me; I'm asking for a straight answer from someone that accuses me (and others) of beying insane in an internet forum. But thanks for nothing. I'm not going to waste more time with this.

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brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 13:49 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

This is not accusation.

This is demonstration.

.

What!?!?!?

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David Stockhoff — 06 Jun 2010, 14:05 · follows brunians at brunians.org

Pedro

Brunians is not being evasive. Rather, as far as I can tell, he considers the existence of the natural world (as he defines it) and the entire universe to be an argument for his beliefs; in short, his observations are beliefs and his beliefs are observations. There is no light between them and therefore no need to construct an argument for them.

Message: 3
Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 16:41:17 +0300
From: Pedro Pereira <domus_artemis at hotmail.com>
To: <urth at lists.urth.net>
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences
Message-ID: <COL105-W362F28CE7274F1620D236285D40 at phx.gbl>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="windows-1252"

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John Watkins — 06 Jun 2010, 14:09 · in reply to David Stockhoff

I think that's right. brunians has repeatedly referred to his direct experiences of what others would call the supernatural. It may be that, from his perspective (or feigned perspective), it

makes as much sense to deny the existence of God as to deny the existence of the sun.

Even if I shared this perspective, I'd like to think I'd understand that most other people didn't and behave accordingly.

On Sun, Jun 6, 2010 at 10:05 AM, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:
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brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 14:24 · in reply to David Stockhoff

Pedro's words demonstrate what I am talking about.

What does the term 'sane' mean?

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Pedro

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And if this perspective was true, where then would you be?

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John Watkins — 06 Jun 2010, 14:49 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Where would I be if I shared the perspective but acted as though I understood that there were those who didn't and that those people remain rational?

I guess I'd have ironclad faith and yet be an accepted and polite member of civil society. Doesn't sound too bad.

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Craig Brewer — 06 Jun 2010, 14:52 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Well, sure. But they're also serving very similar purposes as far as this discussion goes. (There's context as well as definition.) Both are didactic types of writing. And the discussion so far about allegory has focused on an author's didactic purposes rather than the difference, say, between personification-allegory and beast fables.

If we go with Tolkien's distinction between "applicability" and "allegory," I would think that insofar as a fable has a "lesson" to be learned, it's still didactic and, to use Tolkien's phrase about allegory, something that "resides...in the purposed domination of the author."

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

From: "brunians at brunians.org" <brunians at brunians.org> To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net> Sent: Sun, June 6, 2010 1:31:05 AM Subject: Re: (urth) Allegory

They are terms.

They have specific meanings.

Allegories and fables are different.

The differences can be described.

.

Well, maybe. But now we're quibbling. You're a fan of "fable." I'm a fan of "allegory." But we likely think the words mean similar things.

From: John Watkins <john.watkins04 at gmail.com>
To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
Sent: Sun, June 6, 2010 12:19:05 AM
Subject: Re: (urth) Allegory

It's a fable. If every work that used a journey as a metaphor for death was deemed an allegory, the word would be stretched out of meaning.

On Sun, Jun 6, 2010 at 1:15 AM, Craig Brewer <cnbrewer at yahoo.com> wrote:

Of course it's an allegory...just a "good" one. Even Tolkien broke his own rules: what is "Leaf by Niggle" if not an allegory?

From: John Watkins <john.watkins04 at gmail.com>
To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
Sent: Sat, June 5, 2010 11:53:32 PM
Subject: Re: (urth) Allegory

I rather doubt that Tolkien considered The Pearl to be an allegory. He took the time to translate it, after all.

On Sat, Jun 5, 2010 at 11:03 PM, Jack Smith <jack.smith.1946 at gmail.com> wrote:

"But I cordially dislike allegory in all its manifestations, and always have done so since I grew old and wary enough to detect its presence. I much prefer history, true or feigned, with its varied applicability to the thought and experience of readers. I think that many confuse 'applicability' with 'allegory'; but the one resides in the freedom of the reader, and the other in the purposed domination of the author."
--Tolkien, Foreword to The Lord of the Rings

Best wishes,
Jack

On Sat, Jun 5, 2010 at 10:39 PM, Craig Brewer <cnbrewer at yahoo.com> wrote:

I think it's important to remember that Tolkien was a scholar of ancient languages who also had to spend plenty of time teaching medieval literature. Apparently, his colleagues say that his reaction to "allegory" was specifically targeted against the strain of *Piers Plowman* / *Confessio Amantis* brand that was part of his teaching duties and which he was of course familiar with. (I'm getting this from my memory of *The Inklings* and other stuff from his letters.)

To the point: what bothered him about allegory was what it did to mythology and romance in the middle ages, such as removing it from its original context and placing a veneer of teaching or instruction over it. But Tolkien himself was not averse to literature-with-an-overt "message," if that's what we mean by allegory. The Eddas, Beowulf, even the Bible, all of which he loved for their mythic status, are generally "allegorical" but not allegorical in the same way that *The Romance of the Rose* or *The Pearl* is allegorical. They model a way of living, a mindset, an idealized culture, etc., but they aren't allegorical in the reductive way that *Pilgrim's Progress* has walking personifications and where meanings can be decoded in a this-means-that relationship.

They also aren't topically allegorical, and of course Tolkien hated the idea that LotR was sometimes received as a big anti-Germany "allegory." I think Tolkien was fine with the general idea that his books could be thought of as contributing to thinking about certain situations like that -- after all, what use is myth if it doesn't try to define our outlook? But he resisted the idea that his books were allegory if that meant that you say "Sauron is Hitler" and walk away thinking you solved the puzzle.

Relation to Wolfe? I've always put *New Sun* in the same category as Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, which is a very non-reductive allegory that uses its symbols to create interesting ambiguities rather than just reduce an icon to a static meaning. *New Sun*'s imagery often works the same way for me.

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

From: Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com>

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

Sent: Sat, June 5, 2010 9:14:12 PM

Subject: Re: (urth) traveling north

On 6/5/2010 7:34 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

He'd whine loudly.

In the interview he said he disliked allegory wherever he smelled it. But that didn't stop him from producing some, however unintentionally.

-- Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com

IEEE Student Chapter Blog at

< <http://ieeetamut.org/> >

Urth Mailing List

To post, write urth at urth.net

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

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--

Best wishes,
Jack

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Urth Mailing List

To post, write urth at urth.net

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

Craig Brewer — 06 Jun 2010, 14:59 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Just out of curiosity: are you implying that we should assume that your emails have the same subtlety, depth, and layers as Wolfe's fiction?

Who's going to write the Lexicon Brunians for the rest of us so that we can have the vast meaning unpacked from your so often terse and dense missives? heh...

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

From: "brunians at brunians.org" <brunians at brunians.org> To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net> Sent: Sun, June 6, 2010 8:34:08 AM Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Do you insist that Gene Wolfe be explicit in his writing?

He is one of my major influences.

This insistence that something perfectly implicit be stated explicitly is part of what I am talking about.

I'd like to thank you for being as obliging as you are being.

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At this point I'm not confusing anything. No, I don't think that possessing verbal logic and consistency in one's arguments equal sanity. However that is not what I asked you. I just asked you a straight and simple question: Why am I (and all atheists) insane? Could you please answer the question? I'm asking you why are you accusing me (and others) of insanity and you continuously fail to provide a straight answer. Do you have one or not?

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 08:43:05 -0400

From: brunians at brunians.org

To: urth at lists.urth.net

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

You are confusing sanity with verbal logic and consistency.

Do you seriously believe that the two are identical?

What does the term 'sane' mean?

What is the radical meaning of the term 'sane'?

You may take that as one question or as two.

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Please forgive my ignorance and stupidity, dear sir. Could you please just make things simple for this poor ignorant soul and provide a straight answer/argument to why I'm insane? Because at this point it just seems like you're trying to evade it.

Thank you.

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So you basically don't have an argument. That's sane!

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It may become clear with time.

If it does you won't be insane any longer.

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I'm still not certain exactly why I'm insane, though.

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But in this MODERN DAY, only people who can be diagnosed with a mental illness are treated in psychiatric hospitals.

Insane people are mostly at large these days.

Hell, they're mostly running things.

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Oh, thanksfor clearing that up. I'm just nuts then ;)

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From: brunians at brunians.org

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Why?

I didn't say y'all were mentally ill.

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Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

All atheists are insane.

Thanks for that pearl of wisdom. Thanks to you I'll apply
tomorrow
for
a
place at the local sanatorium.

Hotmail: Powerful Free email with security by Microsoft.

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Urth Mailing List
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Urth Mailing List
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Pedro Pereira — 06 Jun 2010, 15:02 · in reply to David Stockhoff

Fair enough. Guess I missed the memo on Brunians' views and I misinterpreted him. However it is in my opinion pointless to argue such views (or at least I have no interest in arguing those and for that I apologise to Brunians) when one takes "the natural world (as he defines it) and the entire universe to be an argument for his beliefs and in short, his observations are beliefs and his beliefs are observations".

Over and out.

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 10:05:12 -0400
From: dstockhoff at verizon.net
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Pedro

Brunians is not being evasive. Rather, as far as I can tell, he considers the existence of the natural world (as he defines it) and the entire universe to be an argument for his beliefs; in short, his observations are beliefs and his beliefs are observations. There is no light between them and

therefore no need to construct an argument for them.

Message: 3

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 16:41:17 +0300

From: Pedro Pereira <domus_artemis at hotmail.com>

To: <urth at lists.urth.net>

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Message-ID: <COL105-W362F28CE7274F1620D236285D40 at phx.gbl>

Content-Type: text/plain; charset="windows-1252"

What!?!?!?

I'm not reading a book and demanding that the author makes it "easier" for me; I'm asking for a straight answer from someone that accuses me (and others) of being insane in an internet forum. But thanks for nothing. I'm not going to waste more time with this.

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 16:28 · in reply to John Watkins

We are not talking about rationality.

We are talking about sanity.

You are behaving as if the two terms were identical.

They are not.

What does the term 'sane' mean?

Will no one attempt to answer this simple question?

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Where would I be if I shared the perspective but acted as though I understood that there were those who didn't and that those people remain rational?

I guess I'd have ironclad faith and yet be an accepted and polite member of civil society. Doesn't sound too bad.

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You may assume whatever you choose to assume.

It has nothing to do with me.

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Just out of curiosity: are you implying that we should assume that your emails have the same subtlety, depth, and layers as Wolfe's fiction?

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Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

All atheists are insane.

Thanks for that pearl of wisdom. Thanks to you I'll apply tomorrow for a place at the local sanatorium.

Hotmail: Powerful Free email with security by Microsoft.
<https://signup.live.com/signup.aspx?id`969>

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 16:30 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

I am actually criticizing your use of terms, which I maintain is insane.

The fact that just about everybody else, not only atheists, uses terms in a similar fashion to you is totally nuncupatory.

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Fair enough. Guess I missed the memo on Brunians' views and I misinterpreted him. However it is in my opinion pointless to argue such views (or at least I have no interest in arguing those and for that I apologise to Brunians) when one takes "the natural world (as he defines it) and the entire universe to be an argument for his beliefs and in short, his observations are beliefs and his beliefs are observations".

Over and out.

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 10:05:12 -0400
From: dstockhoff at verizon.net
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Pedro

Brunians is not being evasive. Rather, as far as I can tell, he considers the existence of the natural world (as he defines it) and the entire universe to be an argument for his beliefs; in short, his observations are beliefs and his beliefs are observations. There is no light between them and therefore no need to construct an argument for

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Message: 3

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 16:41:17 +0300

From: Pedro Pereira <domus_artemis at hotmail.com>

To: <urth at lists.urth.net>

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Message-ID: <COL105-W362F28CE7274F1620D236285D40 at phx.gbl>

Content-Type: text/plain; charset="windows-1252"

What!?!?!?

I'm not reading a book and demanding that the author makes it "easier" for me; I'm asking for a straight answer from someone that accuses me (and others) of being insane in an internet forum. But thanks for nothing. I'm not going to waste more time with this.

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 16:31 · in reply to John Watkins

I've got a pretty good billet.

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Where would I be if I shared the perspective but acted as though I understood that there were those who didn't and that those people remain rational?

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(and

others) of being insane in an internet forum. But thanks for nothing.

I'm

not going to waste more time with this.

Pedro Pereira — 06 Jun 2010, 16:59 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

I didn't use any terms, you did. So I don't understand what is insane about my usage of terms that I didn't use in the first place. I just asked a straight question that you answered with another question in true "master to apprentice" fashion. Your friends must be proud.

As I said before this discussion for me ends here. We can just save ourselves (and others in this list) from more wasted time.

I am actually criticizing your use of terms, which I maintain is insane.

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brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 17:15 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

You say you don't use terms?

The discussion ends when it ends.

I didn't use any terms, you did. So I don't understand what is insane about my usage of terms that I didn't use in the first place. I just asked a straight question that you answered with another question in true "master to apprentice" fashion. Your friends must be proud.

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David Stockhoff — 06 Jun 2010, 17:20 · follows brunians at brunians.org

I'll take a stab and guess that the sane person sees the world as it is.

Of course, the sane person actually sees the world as it best serves (or suits) him or her, but that's another question.

Message: 4
Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 12:28:32 -0400
From: brunians at brunians.org
To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences
Message-ID: <f2912df6bac804589869eb20d794853f.squirrel at brunians.org>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=iso-8859-1

We are not talking about rationality.

We are talking about sanity.

You are behaving as if the two terms were identical.

They are not.

What does the term 'sane' mean?

Will no one attempt to answer this simple question?

.

David Stockhoff — 06 Jun 2010, 17:27 · follows David Stockhoff

Yes, it is.

And in a sense I agree with Brunians, because I too see the natural universe as screaming evidence of something---in my case the absolute unnecessariness of a anthropomorphized deity---and see no point in forming an argument connecting them. It just is.

However, I don't see people who disagree with that as insane.

Message: 2
Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 18:02:58 +0300
From: Pedro Pereira <domus_artemis at hotmail.com>
To: <urth at lists.urth.net>
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences
Message-ID: <COL105-W33547DB7D831FD0BAFD37585D40 at phx.gbl>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="iso-8859-1"

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Over and out.

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 17:29 · in reply to David Stockhoff
No one sees the World.

Everyone sees an image of the World which they build internally, willingly or no.

The sane person's version of the World more or less (note well) conforms with the World.

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Of course, the sane person actually sees the world as it best serves (or suits) him or her, but that's another question.

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brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 17:35 · in reply to David Stockhoff

I don't see people who disagree with me as insane.

Once again you play fast and loose with terms.

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Yes, it is.

And in a sense I agree with Brunians, because I too see the natural universe as screaming evidence of something---in my case the absolute unnecessariness of a anthropomorphized deity---and see no point in forming an argument connecting them. It just is.

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Over and out.

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 17:37 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Atheism is just another religion.

You are required, if you adhere to this religion, to insist that it is not a religion.

Now.

What does the term sane mean?

What is the radical meaning of the term sane?

don't see people who disagree with me as insane.

Once again you play fast and loose with terms.

Yes, it is.

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Over and out.

David Stockhoff — 06 Jun 2010, 17:39 · follows brunians at brunians.org

Well put.

Message: 7

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 13:29:35 -0400

From: brunians at brunians.org

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

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

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Of course, the sane person actually sees the world as it best serves (or suits) him or her, but that's another question.

Pedro Pereira — 06 Jun 2010, 17:44 · in reply to David Stockhoff

I agree with everything you say, even though I don't share your world/religious views. Thanks for sharing.

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However, I don't see people who disagree with that as insane.

Message: 2
Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 18:02:58 +0300
From: Pedro Pereira <domus_artemis at hotmail.com>
To: <urth at lists.urth.net>
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences
Message-ID: <COL105-W33547DB7D831FD0BAFD37585D40 at phx.gbl>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="iso-8859-1"

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Over and out.

John Watkins — 06 Jun 2010, 17:46 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

The Latin root is "sanus." I suspect that it and "salus" derive from a common P.I.E. root, as they were practically synonyms in ancient Rome. "Sanus," in ancient Latin, had roughly the meaning of our phrase "sound in mind and body."

Atheism is a "religion" is what is meant by "religion" is a keystone or foundational belief or set of beliefs, not subject to falsification, enabling the mind to order and interpret the universe. Some people like this definition of religion; to me it seems jury-rigged to incorporate secular metaphysical positions in order to artificially class them as the same sort of thing as mystic or traditionally religious metaphysical positions. I think the nature of the thing the believer believes about the universe is different enough in kind from the nature of the thing the unbeliever believes about the universe to warrant separate categories. But I also think it's a little misleading to suggest that the religious believer and only the religious believer has, as it were, ultra vires views about the nature of the universe.

On Sun, Jun 6, 2010 at 1:37 PM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:
Atheism is just another religion.

You are required, if you adhere to this religion, to insist that it is not a religion.

Now.

What does the term sane mean?

What is the radical meaning of the term sane?

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don't see people who disagree with me as insane.

Once again you play fast and loose with terms.

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Yes, it is.

And in a sense I agree with Brunians, because I too see the natural universe as screaming evidence of something---in my case the absolute unnecessariness of a anthropomorphized deity---and see no point in forming an argument connecting them. It just is.

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Message: 2

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 18:02:58 +0300

From: Pedro Pereira <domus_artemis at hotmail.com>

To: <urth at lists.urth.net>

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Message-ID: <COL105-W33547DB7D831FD0BAFD37585D40 at phx.gbl>

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

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Over and out.

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 17:47 · in reply to David Stockhoff

Thank you.

.

Well put.

Message: 7

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 13:29:35 -0400

From: brunians at brunians.org

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

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Message-ID: <783f2b629e952fe53af7d165d802b54e.squirrel at brunians.org>

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

No one sees the World.

Everyone sees an image of the World which they build internally, willingly or no.

The sane person's version of the World more or less (note well) conforms with the World.

.

I'll take a stab and guess that the sane person sees the world as it is.

Of course, the sane person actually sees the world as it best serves (or suits) him or her, but that's another question.

Pedro Pereira — 06 Jun 2010, 17:48 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 13:29:35 -0400

From: brunians at brunians.org

To: urth at lists.urth.net

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

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I agree.

The sane person's version of the World more or less (note well) conforms with the World.

And on who's authority do you know who is "sane" (that is, who's version of the World more or less conforms with the World) and who isn't? Your own? The Bible? It's right here where it becomes pointless to discuss this issue.

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 17:53 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

Me or him?

I agree with everything you say, even though I don't share your world/religious views. Thanks for sharing.

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 13:27:26 -0400
From: dstockhoff at verizon.net
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Yes, it is.

And in a sense I agree with Brunians, because I too see the natural universe as screaming evidence of something---in my case the absolute unnecessariness of a anthropomorphized deity---and see no point in forming an argument connecting them. It just is.

However, I don't see people who disagree with that as insane.

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From: Pedro Pereira <domus_artemis at hotmail.com>
To: <urth at lists.urth.net>
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences
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Over and out.

Pedro Pereira — 06 Jun 2010, 17:55 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Dstockhoff.

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 13:53:31 -0400
From: brunians at brunians.org
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

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Over and out.

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 17:56 · in reply to John Watkins

What does that SA- SAN- root mean?

.

The Latin root is "sanus." I suspect that it and "salus" derive from a common P.I.E. root, as they were practically synonyms in ancient Rome. "Sanus," in ancient Latin, had roughly the meaning of our phrase "sound in mind and body."

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Some

people like this definition of religion; to me it seems jury-rigged to incorporate secular metaphysical positions in order to artificially class them as the same sort of thing as mystic or traditionally religious metaphysical positions. I think the nature of the thing the believer believes about the universe is different enough in kind from the nature of the thing the unbeliever believes about the universe to warrant separate categories. But I also think it's a little misleading to suggest that the religious believer and only the religious believer has, as it were, ultra vires views about the nature of the universe.

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Over and out.

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 17:56 · in reply to Pedro Pereira
Good.

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 13:29:35 -0400
From: brunians at brunians.org
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

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Everyone sees an image of the World which they build internally, willingly or no.

I agree.

The sane person's version of the World more or less (note well) conforms with the World.

And on who's authority do you know who is "sane" (that is, who's version of the World more or less conforms with the World) and who isn't? Your own? The Bible? It's right here where it becomes pointless to discuss this issue.

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<https://signup.live.com/signup.aspx?id=60969>

David Stockhoff — 06 Jun 2010, 17:57 · follows brunians at brunians.org

You're playing fast and loose with accusations of playing fast and loose.

You said atheists are insane. Obviously, since I'm an atheist it means we disagree on that point.

So we disagree on God, and as a result you think I'm insane. You said this.

Message: 2
Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 13:35:17 -0400
From: brunians at brunians.org

David Stockhoff — 06 Jun 2010, 17:58 · follows David Stockhoff

Probably "clean."

Message: 3
Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 13:37:33 -0400
From: brunians at brunians.org
To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences
Message-ID: <0445da3957caf84797db7f414628417b.squirrel at brunians.org>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=iso-8859-1

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Now.

What does the term sane mean?

What is the radical meaning of the term sane?

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Pedro Pereira — 06 Jun 2010, 18:03 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Glad we can agree on something.

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 13:56:38 -0400
From: brunians at brunians.org
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Good.

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Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 13:29:35 -0400
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To: urth at lists.urth.net
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

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Craig Brewer — 06 Jun 2010, 18:03 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

If by "radical," you mean to look at the term's etymology, it comes from Latin's sanus, or something like "healthy." So when you say that atheists are insane, you *really* mean that they are not healthy or do not have a world view that allows them to have a healthy intellectual/emotional/spiritual (or some combination thereof) life.

Fine (although using the word "sane" doesn't clarify anything about what you think is "unhealthy" about atheism). And you've said you use the radical meaning primarily when you choose your terms. Again, fine. But it strikes me as lacking civility or even a simple willingness to be clearly understood when you use a term in a way that likely isn't shared by others. Insane, of course, to most people means "crazy" rather than "not healthy." But it appears manipulative to put that out there when it seems designed to provoke a response and an argument. It's especially manipulative if you then act like a guru-on-the-mountain who asks patronizing questions about the meaning of words.

Words have meanings, but they also have effects. The way you constantly address the meaning of words is fine, but you seem to either ignore the way they will be received by people who don't share your sense of "radical" words...or you do it to provoke people. I have no idea what your actual intention is, and I'm not making any guesses. But this does seem to be a pattern.

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

From: "brunians at brunians.org" <brunians at brunians.org> To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net> Sent: Sun, June 6, 2010 12:37:33 PM Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

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Now.

What does the term sane mean?

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don't see people who disagree with me as insane.

Once again you play fast and loose with terms.

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Yes, it is.

And in a sense I agree with Brunians, because I too see the natural universe as screaming evidence of something---in my case the absolute unnecessariness of a anthropomorphized deity---and see no point in forming an argument connecting them. It just is.

However, I don't see people who disagree with that as insane.

Message: 2

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 18:02:58 +0300

From: Pedro Pereira <domus_artemis at hotmail.com>

To: <urth at lists.urth.net>

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Message-ID: <COL105-W33547DB7D831FD0BAFD37585D40 at phx.gbl>

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

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Over and out.

Urth Mailing List

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

Urth Mailing List

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

Pedro Pereira — 06 Jun 2010, 18:10 · in reply to Craig Brewer

Precisely.

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 11:03:52 -0700

From: cnbrewer at yahoo.com

To: urth at lists.urth.net

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

But it strikes me as lacking civility or even a simple willingness to be clearly understood when you use a term in a way that likely isn't shared by others. Insane, of course, to most people means "crazy" rather than "not healthy." But it appears manipulative to put that out there when it seems designed to provoke a response and an argument. It's especially manipulative if you then act like a guru-on-the-mountain who asks patronizing questions about the meaning of words.

Words have meanings, but they also have effects. The way you constantly address the meaning of words is fine, but you seem to either ignore the way they will be received by people who don't share your sense of "radical" words...or you do it to provoke people. I have no idea what your actual intention is, and I'm not making any guesses. But this does seem to be a pattern.

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Sent: Sun, June 6, 2010 12:37:33 PM

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Over and out.

David Stockhoff — 06 Jun 2010, 18:23 · follows Pedro Pereira

John

I'm curious about those "ultra vires views." Do you have an example in mind?

Message: 6

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 13:46:05 -0400

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

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

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Message-ID:

<AANLkTin8lgX9p2e9e81RxgWOAZcFauw1EHeAxOLavgeO at mail.gmail.com>

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

The Latin root is "sanus." I suspect that it and "salus" derive from a common P.I.E. root, as they were practically synonyms in ancient Rome. "Sanus," in ancient Latin, had roughly the meaning of our phrase "sound in mind and body."

Atheism is a "religion" is what is meant by "religion" is a keystone or foundational belief or set of beliefs, not subject to falsification, enabling the mind to order and interpret the universe. Some people like this definition of religion; to me it seems jury-rigged to incorporate secular metaphysical positions in order to artificially class them as the same sort of thing as mystic or traditionally religious metaphysical positions. I think the nature of the thing the believer believes about the universe is different enough in kind from the nature of the thing the unbeliever believes about the universe to warrant separate categories. But I also think it's a little misleading to suggest that the religious believer and only the religious believer has, as it were, ultra vires views about the nature of the universe.

On Sun, Jun 6, 2010 at 1:37 PM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

John Watkins — 06 Jun 2010, 18:30 · in reply to David Stockhoff

Well, just the one. Atheists by definition reject the existence of a deity. Pure reason cannot lead to the conclusion that no such being exists--at the very best it leads to the conclusion that we can't be sure whether such a being exists or not. Any opinion beyond that is, in a sense, beyond the purview of pure reason.

There are probably many atheists with other views that I might consider "ultra vires," but you guys don't exactly have a creed, so I'd rather not lump you together. And to tell the truth I don't really want to be embroiled in a religious controversy here--my point is that I think the rhetorical strategy of some theists to class "atheism" as a "religion" itself is of limited value, but that I find the rhetorical strategy of some atheists to class "religion" as a special kind of unwarranted belief about the universe is a question-begging exercise. Theists don't believe that the views of atheists are warranted; if they did, they'd be atheists.

On Sun, Jun 6, 2010 at 2:23 PM, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:
John

I'm curious about those "ultra vires views." Do you have an example in mind?

Message: 6
Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 13:46:05 -0400
From: John Watkins <john.watkins04 at gmail.com>

To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences
Message-ID:
<AANLkTin8lgX9p2e9e81RxgWOAZcFauw1EHeAxOLavgeO at mail.gmail.com>

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

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On Sun, Jun 6, 2010 at 1:37 PM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 18:51 · in reply to David Stockhoff

But what do I mean by insane and what do you mean by accusation?

.

You're playing fast and loose with accusations of playing fast and loose.

You said atheists are insane. Obviously, since I'm an atheist it means we disagree on that point.

So we disagree on God, and as a result you think I'm insane. You said this.

Message: 2

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 13:35:17 -0400

From: brunians at brunians.org

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 18:51 · in reply to David Stockhoff

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Message: 2

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 13:35:17 -0400

From: brunians at brunians.org

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 18:54 · in reply to David Stockhoff

I think that's part of it.

I think it relates to the Sun.

.

Probably "clean."

Message: 3

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 13:37:33 -0400

From: brunians at brunians.org

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

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Message-ID: <0445da3957caf84797db7f414628417b.squirrel at brunians.org>

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

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Now.

What does the term sane mean?

What is the radical meaning of the term sane?

.

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 18:55 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

We'd agree on a lot more if you'd get out of your own way.

There is no God where I are.

.

Glad we can agree on something.

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 13:56:38 -0400

From: brunians at brunians.org

To: urth at lists.urth.net

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

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To: urth at lists.urth.net

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Hotmail: Trusted email with powerful SPAM protection.

<https://signup.live.com/signup.aspx?id=60969>

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 18:55 · in reply to Craig Brewer

This is off to the side.

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

Sent: Sun, June 6, 2010 12:37:33 PM

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

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Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 18:02:58 +0300

From: Pedro Pereira <domus_artemis at hotmail.com>

To: <urth at lists.urth.net>

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Message-ID: <COL105-W33547DB7D831FD0BAFD37585D40 at phx.gbl>

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

Fair enough. Guess I missed the memo on Brunians' views and I misinterpreted him. However it is in my opinion pointless to argue such views (or at least I have no interest in arguing those and for that I appologise to Brunians) when one takes "the natural world (as he defines it) and the entire universe to be an argument for his beliefs and in short, his observations are beliefs and his beliefs are observations".

Over and out.

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 18:56 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

I lack civility?

I can live with that.

I'm not really a civilian.

.

Precisely.

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 11:03:52 -0700

From: cnbrewer at yahoo.com

To: urth at lists.urth.net

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

But it strikes me as lacking civility or even a simple willingness to be clearly understood when you use a term in a way that likely isn't shared by others. Insane, of course, to most people means "crazy" rather than "not healthy." But it appears manipulative to put that out there when it seems designed to provoke a response and an argument. It's especially manipulative if you then act like a guru-on-the-mountain who asks patronizing questions about the meaning of words.

Words have meanings, but they also have effects. The way you constantly address the meaning of words is fine, but you seem to either ignore the way they will be received by people who don't share your sense of "radical" words...or you do it to provoke people. I have no idea what your actual intention is, and I'm not making any guesses. But this does seem to be a pattern.

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

From: "brunians at brunians.org" <brunians at brunians.org>
To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
Sent: Sun, June 6, 2010 12:37:33 PM
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Atheism is just another religion.

You are required, if you adhere to this religion, to insist that it is not a religion.

Now.

What does the term sane mean?

What is the radical meaning of the term sane?

.

don't see people who disagree with me as insane.

Once again you play fast and loose with terms.

.

Yes, it is.

And in a sense I agree with Brunians, because I too see the natural universe as screaming evidence of something---in my case the absolute unnecessariness of a anthropomorphized deity---and see no point in forming an argument connecting them. It just is.

However, I don't see people who disagree with that as insane.

Message: 2

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 18:02:58 +0300

From: Pedro Pereira <domus_artemis at hotmail.com>

To: <urth at lists.urth.net>

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Message-ID: <COL105-W33547DB7D831FD0BAFD37585D40 at phx.gbl>

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it) and the entire universe to be an argument for his beliefs and in short, his observations are beliefs and his beliefs are observations".

Over and out.

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 18:56 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

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Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

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Over and out.

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 18:58 · in reply to David Stockhoff

John, I am seriously well impressed.

.

John

I'm curious about those "ultra vires views." Do you have an example in mind?

Message: 6

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 13:46:05 -0400

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

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

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Message-ID:

<AANLkTin8lgX9p2e9e81RxgWOAZcFauw1EHeAxOLavgeO at mail.gmail.com>

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

The Latin root is "sanus." I suspect that it and "salus" derive from a common P.I.E. root, as they were practically synonyms in ancient Rome. "Sanus," in ancient Latin, had roughly the meaning of our phrase "sound in mind and body."

Atheism is a "religion" is what is meant by "religion" is a keystone or foundational belief or set of beliefs, not subject to falsification, enabling the mind to order and interpret the universe.

Some

people like this definition of religion; to me it seems jury-rigged to incorporate secular metaphysical positions in order to artificially class them as the same sort of thing as mystic or traditionally religious metaphysical positions. I think the nature of the thing the believer believes about the universe is different enough in kind from the nature of the thing the unbeliever believes about the universe to warrant separate categories. But I also think it's a little misleading to suggest that the religious believer and only the religious believer has, as it were, ultra vires views about the nature of the universe.

On Sun, Jun 6, 2010 at 1:37 PM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

David Stockhoff — 06 Jun 2010, 19:17 · follows brunians at brunians.org

I completely agree. Sometimes I think one could separate "principled" or organized atheism from unthinking atheism, but then there is probably too little of either to bother with. To me, anyone who insists on atheism is indulging in belief, not reason. Unfortunately, such people tend to represent us to the world at large.

At any rate, there is also deism, which, in proving that atheism and religion can coexist, also indicates that they are different domains. There is simply no point in trying to settle either question; we see the world as it serves us.

Message: 2

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 14:30:36 -0400

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

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

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Message-ID:

<AANLkTimlEXmSxsEFcxvvrRooDTw-lqtdlQIMukxLVAZE at mail.gmail.com>

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

Well, just the one. Atheists by definition reject the existence of a deity. Pure reason cannot lead to the conclusion that no such being exists--at the very best it leads to the conclusion that we can't be sure whether such a being exists or not. Any opinion beyond that is, in a sense, beyond the purview of pure reason.

There are probably many atheists with other views that I might consider "ultra vires," but you guys don't exactly have a creed, so I'd rather not lump you together. And to tell the truth I don't really want to be embroiled in a religious controversy here--my point is that I think the rhetorical strategy of some theists to class "atheism" as a "religion" itself is of limited value, but that I find the rhetorical strategy of some atheists to class "religion" as a special kind of unwarranted belief about the universe is a question-begging exercise. Theists don't believe that the views of atheists are warranted; if they did, they'd be atheists.

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 19:20 · in reply to David Stockhoff

This is a pretty interesting discussion.

And it would never have happened if I had not unfairly ACCUSED all atheists of being insane.

.

I completely agree. Sometimes I think one could separate "principled" or organized atheism from unthinking atheism, but then there is probably too little of either to bother with. To me, anyone who insists on atheism is indulging in belief, not reason. Unfortunately, such people tend to represent us to the world at large.

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Tony Ellis — 06 Jun 2010, 20:07 · follows brunians at brunians.org

John Watkins wrote:
Atheists by definition reject the existence of a deity.

Well, no. Atheists by definition reject **belief** in the existence of a deity. Not the same thing.

John Watkins — 06 Jun 2010, 20:09 · in reply to Tony Ellis

I don't know that I accept that...there's a word for the position of rejecting belief in a divinity but accepting the possibility that a divinity exists, and that word is "agnosticism."

On Sun, Jun 6, 2010 at 4:07 PM, Tony Ellis <tonyellis69 at btopenworld.com> wrote:
John Watkins wrote:

Atheists by definition reject the existence of a deity.

Well, no. Atheists by definition reject **belief** in the existence of a deity. Not the same thing.

Jerry Friedman — 06 Jun 2010, 20:12 · in reply to John Watkins

I'm one who felt betrayed by /TLtW&tW/, and as David Stockhoff said, timing was important. I read all the Narnia books eagerly when I was seven. When I was maybe 10 or 12, I learned the story of Jesus' redemptive sacrifice, and at some point I connected that with Aslan (and the end of /TVotDT/). So Lewis had tried to trick me! These books I was attached to were a covert attempt to advertise that religion that besieged me and my family, that continually tried to blandish and harangue and peer-press and maybe, under the surface, even threaten me into submission. It was an unpleasant moment.

(This was in the early or mid '70s, by the way, a time when American Christians may have felt equally besieged.)

It was just a moment, though. I soon learned to see Christianity in fiction as an appealing fantasy, and I could enjoy it in the Narnia books and the Space Trilogy and many other books. In /Crime and Punishment/ and /War and Peace/ I may have sighed "This again" when I got to the Christian message, but no more than that. Otherwise it was in the same category as the Greek and Norse myths that I read when I was little, or Robertson Davies's Jungianism and Ursula Le Guin's attempt at an indigenous belief system in /Always Coming Home/.

I went through a Rand phase around my last year or two of high school. I don't mind preaching if it's done in a way I can enjoy.

Jerry Friedman

David Stockhoff — 06 Jun 2010, 20:23 · follows Jerry Friedman

That thought occurred to me but I sidestepped it.

Tony's understanding is closer to mine. Agnosticism has always struck me as atheism within a theistic context, as one might refer to a disease within a clinical context. If a priest turns atheist, he doesn't join a Unitarian church---he just nurses his doubts. Within that context it is ideologically impossible to conceive of true atheism, or even to use the word politely. In a word, it is a euphemism.

But that's just a hunch. I suppose what I do is more like "rejecting belief in a divinity but accepting the possibility that a divinity exists, and continuing as though the possibility does not in fact exist."

Message: 6

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 16:09:17 -0400

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

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

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Message-ID:

<AANLkTinhKvnRVDKsz-TC_ht0B0g0SjEoTOo3yXc_Y06r at mail.gmail.com>

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

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John Watkins wrote:

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David Stockhoff — 06 Jun 2010, 20:26 · follows David Stockhoff

I'm going to try calling people insane and seeing what interesting things shake out.

Message: 4

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 15:20:11 -0400

From: brunians at brunians.org

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

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Message-ID: <f6182d27247859d336e32ff072cfd6ff.squirrel at brunians.org>

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

This is a pretty interesting discussion.

And it would never have happened if I had not unfairly ACCUSED all atheists of being insane.

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 20:30 · in reply to Tony Ellis

What is the meaning of the term 'belief'?

What is the radical meaning of the term 'belief'?

John Watkins wrote:

Atheists by definition reject the existence of a deity.

Well, no. Atheists by definition reject *belief* in the existence of a deity. Not the same thing.

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 20:32 · in reply to John Watkins

Agnostic means you don't know.

It's not necessary to break it down further.

It is, in fact, confusing.

I don't know that I accept that...there's a word for the position of rejecting belief in a divinity but accepting the possibility that a divinity exists, and that word is "agnosticism."

On Sun, Jun 6, 2010 at 4:07 PM, Tony Ellis <tonyellis69 at btopenworld.com> wrote:

John Watkins wrote:

Atheists by definition reject the existence of a deity.

Well, no. Atheists by definition reject *belief* in the existence of a deity. Not the same thing.

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 20:33 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

Shver tzan a yid, bubbeleh.

I'm one who felt betrayed by /TLtW&tW/, and as David Stockhoff said, timing was important. I read all the Narnia books eagerly when I was seven. When I was maybe 10 or 12, I learned the story of Jesus' redemptive sacrifice, and at some point I connected that with Aslan (and the end of /TVotDT/). So Lewis had tried to trick me! These books I was attached to were a covert attempt to advertise that religion that besieged me and my family, that continually tried to blandish and harangue and peer-press and maybe, under the surface, even threaten me into submission.

It was an unpleasant moment.

(This was in the early or mid '70s, by the way, a time when American Christians may have felt equally besieged.)

It was just a moment, though. I soon learned to see Christianity in fiction as an appealing fantasy, and I could enjoy it in the Narnia books and the Space Trilogy and many other books. In /Crime and Punishment/ and /War and Peace/ I may have sighed "This again" when I got to the Christian message, but no more than that. Otherwise it was in the same category as the Greek and Norse myths that I read when I was little, or Robertson Davies's Jungianism and Ursula Le Guin's attempt at an indigenous belief system in /Always Coming Home/.

I went through a Rand phase around my last year or two of high school. I don't mind preaching if it's done in a way I can enjoy.

Jerry Friedman

From: John Watkins <john.watkins04 at gmail.com>
To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
Sent: Sat, June 5, 2010 6:01:27 PM
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Do people feel similarly betrayed by Doestoevsky?

Again, I find it bizarre. I can't imagine thinking to myself "How dare Author X have different views than me!" I can imagine thinking "Well, I don't choose to spend time on this," but not a sense of betrayal per se.

On Sat, Jun 5, 2010 at 7:58 PM, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:

The comparison is a personally interesting one. Perhaps the difference is largely one of timing. I too felt somewhat betrayed by Lewis; I encountered Narnia not long after Middle-Earth, around second and third grade.

Wolfe I discovered much later, and while I'm still waiting for the Great Atheist Novel, I don't feel betrayed at all. And Rand was clearly insane from the beginning.

Message: 4
Date: Sat, 5 Jun 2010 16:53:02 -0400

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

An agnostic reserves his opinion.

He does not know.

This is a rational position.

Knowledge is based upon experience.

If a person has not had experience to convince him of the existence of God, it is not rational for him to believe in God.

This is true.

Neither is it rational for him to not believe.

This is the point in the discussion at which atheists prove, to their own satisfaction, that they have no nose.

.

That thought occurred to me but I sidestepped it.

Tony's understanding is closer to mine. Agnosticism has always struck me as atheism within a theistic context, as one might refer to a disease within a clinical context. If a priest turns atheist, he doesn't join a Unitarian church---he just nurses his doubts. Within that context it is ideologically impossible to conceive of true atheism, or even to use the word politely. In a word, it is a euphemism.

But that's just a hunch. I suppose what I do is more like "rejecting belief in a divinity but accepting the possibility that a divinity exists, and continuing as though the possibility does not in fact exist."

Message: 6

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 16:09:17 -0400

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

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 20:37 · in reply to David Stockhoff

I get away with this in person too.

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I'm going to try calling people insane and seeing what interesting things shake out.

Message: 4

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 15:20:11 -0400

From: brunians at brunians.org

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

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Message-ID: <f6182d27247859d336e32ff072cfd6ff.squirrel at brunians.org>

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

This is a pretty interesting discussion.

And it would never have happened if I had not unfairly ACCUSED all
atheists of being insane.

.

John Watkins — 06 Jun 2010, 20:41 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

I have lots of experience in internet disputes. And I've met some of my interlocutors in person.

My guess is that in person, you, brunians, come across as very friendly and maybe a little
eccentric.

Some of this can be lost electronically.

On Sun, Jun 6, 2010 at 4:37 PM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:
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atheists of being insane.

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David Stockhoff — 06 Jun 2010, 20:46 · follows John Watkins

By this definition, then, I'm an agnostic. Though a hard-NOSED one.

I could say, I don't know, YET, and ...

I BELIEVE I never will.

Message: 6

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 16:36:38 -0400

From: brunians at brunians.org
To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences
Message-ID: <9ad66087a3d8374e7b83bdb6f7869d53.squirrel at brunians.org>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=iso-8859-1

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This is true.

Neither is it rational for him to not believe.

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David Stockhoff — 06 Jun 2010, 20:47 · follows David Stockhoff

I'll bet you do.

Is this called a Brunian dialectic?

Message: 7
Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 16:37:16 -0400
From: brunians at brunians.org
To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences
Message-ID: <a1fdf799cbaded2bcd4dae7862f1cfba.squirrel at brunians.org>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=iso-8859-1

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Tony Ellis — 06 Jun 2010, 21:14 · follows David Stockhoff

John Watkins wrote:

I don't know that I accept that...there's a word for the position of

rejecting belief in a divinity but accepting the possibility that a divinity exists, and that word is "agnosticism."

Agnosticism is the word for being without *knowledge* of divinity. It is not a rejection of belief.

I am agnostic about whether ancient civilisations were contacted by aliens. I have to be: I wasn't there. But, separately to that, I don't believe that it happened, because the alternative arguments are more convincing to me.

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 22:23 · in reply to John Watkins

I am friendly and somewhat eccentric.

I am also built like a neanderthal man.

Picture attached.

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My guess is that in person, you, brunians, come across as very friendly and maybe a little eccentric.

Some of this can be lost electronically.

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Message: 4

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 15:20:11 -0400

From: brunians at brunians.org

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 22:24 · in reply to David Stockhoff

Belief is error.

.

By this definition, then, I'm an agnostic. Though a hard-NOSED one.

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

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Message-ID: <a1fdf799cbaded2bcd4dae7862f1cfba.squirrel at brunians.org>

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

I get away with this in person too.

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I'm going to try calling people insane and seeing what interesting things shake out.

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 22:29 · in reply to Tony Ellis

Indeed.

.

John Watkins wrote:

I don't know that I accept that...there's a word for the position of rejecting belief in a divinity but accepting the possibility that a divinity exists, and that word is "agnosticism."

Agnosticism is the word for being without *knowledge* of divinity. It is not a rejection of belief.

I am agnostic about whether ancient civilisations were contacted by aliens. I have to be: I wasn't there. But, separately to that, I don't believe that it happened, because the alternative arguments are more convincing to me.

David Duffy — 06 Jun 2010, 23:15 · in reply to John Watkins

On Sat, 5 Jun 2010, John Watkins wrote:

Personally I find the "betrayal" narrative bizarre whenever I hear it.

Re LWW, my opinion of it did fall when rereading when older, and seeing "through" the plot. By contrast, I was able to read The Pilgrim's Progress ignoring any allegorical content ;)

I know countless people, many of liberal predispositions, who have read and allegedly enjoyed The Fountainhead--and Rand is far preachier than Lewis, Wolfe, or even Card. And Neil Gaiman has written about his feelings of betrayal as to Lewis's religiosity, but never expressed similar feelings toward, for example, Kipling's imperialism.

I quite like the concept that great art needs to have some kind of underlying complex system of ideas, but that those ideas don't have to be right to make the artwork successful. I am quite willing to suspend disbelief (in every sense of the word), if the story works qua story. So I put up with FTL travel, even though it clashes with my religious beliefs.

I think my problem (and that of Gaiman, Pullman etc) with LWW is the feeling that the setup is too setup: it feels clumsy/arbitrary and so can't carry all the emotional weight. The ending of The Last Battle is more successful, I think.

Just another 2c, David Duffy.

Jane Delawney — 07 Jun 2010, 00:30 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Thanks Roy, however I'm still wondering a little, because of the frequently stressed similarity in terms of materials between the City Wall and the Citadel wall. While the City Wall is obviously a great deal more sophisticated than that of the Citadel (the City Wall is large enough to contain barracks for both human and alien soldiers, weapons emplacements, and presumably much more besides - it seems to be a 'city' of sorts in itself) the *materials* of which these walls are composed are very similar and must have been constructed using similar levels of technology.

And the City Wall of Nessus is incontestably far far to the North (Severian's north :)) of the Citadel, at Severian's time - yet the technology to build such a structure has not existed for millennia, indeed given the (apparent?) comparative levels of technology displayed, the City Wall could as well have been built *before* the wall of the Citadel as after.

I guess the question is whether you believe the curtain wall of the Citadel represents an earlier version of the extreme high tech that build the Wall of Nessus, or whether the Citadel wall is a decadent version of the City Wall, built in the same unsmeltable metal but with a lower level of sophistication.

regards

JD

On 06/06/10 06:02, Roy C. Lackey wrote:

Jane Delawney wrote:

[snip]

Anyway - I finally remembered the other place (well actually one of the others, but this is the most immediate one) where my vague recollection of a sense of north/south 'wrongness' came from.

Nessus started out on the Gyll on or near the southwest coast of the continent. As the river became polluted, the city kept growing upstream, in a generally northern direction. At some point, the rulers built the Citadel to the north of the city as it then existed. Over many years, the living city grew and caught up with the Citadel, then grew beyond it, so that by the time Sev was born the Citadel was near the southern edge of the inhabited portion of the city.

-Roy

Jeff Wilson — 07 Jun 2010, 00:56 · in reply to Jane Delawney

On 6/6/2010 7:30 PM, Jane Delawney wrote:

Thanks Roy, however I'm still wondering a little, because of the frequently stressed similarity in terms of materials between the City Wall and the Citadel wall. While the City Wall is obviously a great deal more sophisticated than that of the Citadel (the City Wall is large enough to contain barracks for both human and alien soldiers, weapons emplacements, and presumably much more besides - it seems to be a 'city' of sorts in itself) the *materials* of which these walls are composed are very similar and must have been constructed using similar levels of technology.

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I guess the question is whether you believe the curtain wall of the Citadel represents an earlier version of the extreme high tech that

build the Wall of Nessus, or whether the Citadel wall is a decadent version of the City Wall, built in the same unsmeltable metal but with a lower level of sophistication.

I don't think it's the technology so much as the shrunken labor and talent pool. There are gobs of still operable technology sitting around, but it's been at least millenia since there were enough people to supervise it all. Doubtless all the "secrets" are somewhere in the library, but nowhere near enough librarians to sort out the bits to parley or bootstrap the useful bits into making more useful again.

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

Jeff Wilson — 07 Jun 2010, 00:59 · in reply to David Duffy

On 6/6/2010 6:15 PM, David Duffy wrote:

On Sat, 5 Jun 2010, John Watkins wrote:

Personally I find the "betrayal" narrative bizarre whenever I hear it.

Re LWW, my opinion of it did fall when rereading when older, and seeing "through" the plot. By contrast, I was able to read *The Pilgrim's Progress* ignoring any allegorical content ;)

I know countless people, many of liberal predispositions, who have read and allegedly enjoyed *The Fountainhead*--and Rand is far preachier than Lewis, Wolfe, or even Card. And Neil Gaiman has written about his feelings of betrayal as to Lewis's religiosity, but never expressed similar feelings toward, for example, Kipling's imperialism.

I quite like the concept that great art needs to have some kind of underlying complex system of ideas, but that those ideas don't have to be right to make the artwork successful. I am quite willing to suspend disbelief (in every sense of the word), if the story works qua story. So I put up with FTL travel, even though it clashes with my religious beliefs.

I think my problem (and that of Gaiman, Pullman etc) with LWW is the feeling that the setup is too setup: it feels clumsy/arbitrary and so can't carry all the emotional weight. The ending of *The Last Battle* is more successful, I think.

How do you feel about VeggieTales?

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

David Stockhoff — 07 Jun 2010, 01:09 · follows Jeff Wilson

Fair enough. LIFE is error.

Message: 1
Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 18:24:01 -0400
From: brunians at brunians.org
To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences
Message-ID: <26b37e881aa34ddc988f037809db3812.squirrel at brunians.org>

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

Belief is error.

.

By this definition, then, I'm an agnostic. Though a hard-NOSED one.

I could say, I don't know, YET, and ...

I BELIEVE I never will.

brunians at brunians.org — 07 Jun 2010, 01:36 · in reply to David Stockhoff

I think that the basic difference between atheists and most other people is that atheists think that things happen all random like.

The default point of view seems to be that the World is planned and directed in some way.

It's not always God who plans and directs it.

It's not always planned and directed in some kind of benign way.

It's not always planned and directed by the same agents.

There's two possible points of view: that the World is random, like, and things happen for no particular reason, or that things are in some way planned and directed.

I would like an atheist to explain to me why atheism is not found in nature.

Where is the ancient or traditional society that did not believe in something, whether the ghosts of their grandparents, or the spirits of the trees, or the fairies, or the planets or the mountains or the ocean or angels or gods or God or the Devil or something else.

Is everyone except you and your buddies deluded?

Everybody else?

Only you know the truth?

This sounds really a lot like a religion, and not a gentle one.

.

.

Fair enough. LIFE is error.

Message: 1

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 18:24:01 -0400

From: brunians at brunians.org

David Duffy — 07 Jun 2010, 02:02 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On Sun, 6 Jun 2010, Jeff Wilson wrote:
How do you feel about VeggieTales?

Too abstruse for me....

Googles...I couldn't possibly comment ;)

Cheers, David.

Roy C. Lackey — 07 Jun 2010, 05:57 · in reply to Jane Delawney

Jane Delawney wrote:

Thanks Roy, however I'm still wondering a little, because of the frequently stressed similarity in terms of materials between the City Wall and the Citadel wall. While the City Wall is obviously a great deal more sophisticated than that of the Citadel (the City Wall is large enough to contain barracks for both human and alien soldiers, weapons emplacements, and presumably much more besides - it seems to be a 'city' of sorts in itself) the *materials* of which these walls are composed are very similar and must have been constructed using similar levels of technology.

I agree.

And the City Wall of Nessus is incontestably far far to the North (Severian's north :)) of the Citadel, at Severian's time - yet the technology to build such a structure has not existed for millennia, indeed given the (apparent?) comparative levels of technology displayed, the City Wall could as well have been built *before* the wall of the Citadel as after.

The City Wall seems to be circular and there are at least two southern gates, Sorrowing and Praise (SHADOW, chap. XXXV). The Citadel is at or near the center of the city (ibid.) as circumscribed by the City Wall. The area inside the City Wall includes large undeveloped tracts of land in the northern section, as well as vast uninhabited ruins in the southern sections.

I guess the question is whether you believe the curtain wall of the Citadel represents an earlier version of the extreme high tech that build the Wall of Nessus, or whether the Citadel wall is a decadent version of the City Wall, built in the same unsmeltable metal but with a lower level of sophistication.

The Curtain Wall around the Citadel didn't need to be as big or sophisticated as the City Wall. The purpose of the Curtain Wall (according to Cyriaca's tale) was to safeguard the writings that became Ultan's Library. Her tale also implies that the City Wall and the curtain wall date from the same period. That is, "Their spoil was gathered into a great heap in the city of Nessus, which was then newly built, to be burned." She goes on to say that the cache of books was enclosed by a curtain wall when the ruler changed his mind about burning the books. That ruler had planned to retire behind the curtain wall if his dreams of a "new empire" (as distinct from the "first empire") should fail (SWORD, chap. VI).

The implication, of course, is that Typhon was that ruler, though he died alone on his mountain. So, yes, if Cyriaca is to be believed, the walls are the same age.

-Roy

David Stockhoff — 07 Jun 2010, 12:44 · follows David Duffy

There are a number of weak assumptions there. First, that randomness does not itself lead to order; second, that there are always only two choices; third, that nature and "naturalness" are simple, when they are demonstrably not.

Fourth, that atheism is not in fact found everywhere in nature. The thrushes in the woods behind my house did not take a day of rest yesterday (unless of course their calls are to be considered prayers and not communications regarding territory and mating; but no one has proposed or proven that).

Finally, no one has mentioned delusions; perhaps they appear as part of your worldview, but not mine.

Message: 1

Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 21:36:23 -0400

From: brunians at brunians.org

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

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Message-ID: <c096727b5256b82de13b1305c6404fee.squirrel at brunians.org>

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

I think that the basic difference between atheists and most other people is that atheists think that things happen all random like.

The default point of view seems to be that the World is planned and directed in some way.

It's not always God who plans and directs it.

It's not always planned and directed in some kind of benign way.

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Is everyone except you and your buddies deluded?

Everybody else?

Only you know the truth?

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.

Gerry Quinn — 07 Jun 2010, 12:48 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

I had a similar experience in Ireland at a similar age. I had enjoyed the Narnia books until I got to the The Last Battle where the Christian allegory was hammered home. I felt betrayed, not just by the message, but by its totalitarian import - the expected future lives of the children on Earth were not just aborted but rendered insignificant by the religious context.

Maybe it was especially unsettling as I was a child myself.

I don't think I've had the same feeling about any other novel/series - but then again I probably wouldn't have it about the Narnia books if I encountered them now.

- Gerry Quinn

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

From: Jerry Friedman

I'm one who felt betrayed by */TLtW&tW/*, and as David Stockhoff said, timing was important. I read all the Narnia books eagerly when I was seven. When I was maybe 10 or 12, I learned the story of Jesus' redemptive sacrifice, and at some point I connected that with Aslan (and the end of */TVotDT/*). So Lewis had tried to trick me! These books I was attached to were a covert attempt to advertise that religion that besieged me and my family, that continually tried to blandish and harangue and peer-press and maybe, under the surface, even threaten me into submission. It was an unpleasant moment.

Gerry Quinn — 07 Jun 2010, 12:52 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

From: <brunians at brunians.org>

An agnostic reserves his opinion.

He does not know.

This is a rational position.

Knowledge is based upon experience.

If a person has not had experience to convince him of the existence of God, it is not rational for him to believe in God.

This is true.

Neither is it rational for him to not believe.

I have never been to Australia, or to Brobdingnag. Nevertheless I have opinions about whether they exist. Strangely enough, these opinions are different. Do you think I am being inconsistent?

- Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn — 07 Jun 2010, 13:01 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

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

From: <brunians at brunians.org>

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Where is the ancient or traditional society that did not believe in something, whether the ghosts of their grandparents, or the spirits of the

trees, or the fairies, or the planets or the mountains or the ocean or angels or gods or God or the Devil or something else.

Is everyone except you and your buddies deluded?

Is everyone who doesn't believe in the fairies deluded? Or everyone who doesn't believe in the mountains?

- Gerry Quinn

Mr Thalassocrat — 07 Jun 2010, 13:02 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

On Mon, Jun 7, 2010 at 3:27 PM, Roy C. Lackey <rclackey at stic.net> wrote:

The Curtain Wall around the Citadel didn't need to be as big or sophisticated as the City Wall. The purpose of the Curtain Wall (according to Cyriaca's tale) was to safeguard the writings that became Ultan's Library. Her tale also implies that the City Wall and the curtain wall date from the same period. That is, "Their spoil was gathered into a great heap in the city of Nessus, which was then newly built, to be burned." She goes on to say that the cache of books was enclosed by a curtain wall when the ruler changed his mind about burning the books. That ruler had planned to retire behind the curtain wall if his dreams of a "new empire" (as distinct from the "first empire") should fail (SWORD, chap. VI).

The implication, of course, is that Typhon was that ruler, though he died alone on his mountain. So, yes, if Cyriaca is to be believed, the walls are the same age.

Don't you think "newly built" here may not be not reliable? From the point of view of a future fable, events in the past can easily be seen as happening in the same "long ago", even if separated by many years. I certainly get the sense from Short Sun that Nessus was an established city at the time of Typhon - unless we are to think of Roger as a recent immigrant to the place. Typhon himself calls the place Nessus in BotNS, but we are told elsewhere (can't remember where) that it had an earlier name.

But whatever, has anybody ever come up with a good story about why he or somebody else built such an extensive wall, enclosing so much undeveloped land? Even for a megalomaniac

brunians at brunians.org — 07 Jun 2010, 13:02 · in reply to David Stockhoff

If randomness leads to order, then randomness is what you call what most people call God.

There are always only two and only two choices: the one you choose and all the other ones.

If you look at the World analytically, it is complicated.

If you look at the World synthetically, it is reasonably straightforward.

.

There are a number of weak assumptions there. First, that randomness does not itself lead to order; second, that there are always only two choices; third, that nature and "naturalness" are simple, when they are demonstrably not.

Fourth, that atheism is not in fact found everywhere in nature. The thrushes in the woods behind my house did not take a day of rest yesterday (unless of course their calls are to be considered prayers and not communications regarding territory and mating; but no one has proposed or proven that).

Finally, no one has mentioned delusions; perhaps they appear as part of your worldview, but not mine.

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Date: Sun, 6 Jun 2010 21:36:23 -0400
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Message-ID: <c096727b5256b82de13b1305c6404fee.squirrel at brunians.org>
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Is everyone except you and your buddies deluded?

Everybody else?

Only you know the truth?

This sounds really a lot like a religion, and not a gentle one.

.

This is not a debate, Gerry.

Accept, don't accept, say what you like.

I was finished before and I'm still done.

.

From: <brunians at brunians.org>

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He does not know.

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If a person has not had experience to convince him of the existence of God, it is not rational for him to believe in God.

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Neither is it rational for him to not believe.

I have never been to Australia, or to Brobdingnag. Nevertheless I have opinions about whether they exist. Strangely enough, these opinions are different. Do you think I am being inconsistent?

- Gerry Quinn

brunians at brunians.org — 07 Jun 2010, 13:07 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Why are you not addressing my points, Gerry?

.

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

From: <brunians at brunians.org>

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Is everyone except you and your buddies deluded?

Is everyone who doesn't believe in the fairies deluded? Or everyone who doesn't believe in the mountains?

- Gerry Quinn

Jeff Wilson — 07 Jun 2010, 13:10 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

On 6/7/2010 8:01 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

----- Original Message ----- From: <brunians at brunians.org>

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Dude - we've got to quit feeding the energy creature or it will never stop.

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

brunians at brunians.org — 07 Jun 2010, 13:13 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

The first instance of the word 'only' below is superfluous.

.

If randomness leads to order, then randomness is what you call what most people call God.

There are always only two and only two choices: the one you choose and all the other ones.

If you look at the World analytically, it is complicated.

If you look at the World synthetically, it is reasonably straightforward.

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Everybody else?

Only you know the truth?

This sounds really a lot like a religion, and not a gentle one.

.

brunians at brunians.org — 07 Jun 2010, 13:19 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

An Irishman who doesn't believe in fairies?

Wait until they come to call, Gerry.

On 6/7/2010 8:01 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

----- Original Message ----- From: <brunians at brunians.org>

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Is everyone who doesn't believe in the fairies deluded? Or everyone who doesn't believe in the mountains?

Dude - we've got to quit feeding the energy creature or it will never stop.

--

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
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Lee Berman — 07 Jun 2010, 17:21 · follows Mr Thalassocrat

I don't know if this is who Borski fingered, but I had presumed that they were the Scottish missionaries Robert and Mary Moffat. Robert's vision was to plant a "Garden for God" in Africa. The problem is that the Moffats served in the late 18th-early 19th century, and of course Sev sees a plane just before encountering the hut. Of course he could have been moving back in time.

Or forward, in universal time, heh heh. Actually I think the Jungle Hut works as does its counterpart, The Lost House, a labyrinthine path leading to a vertical, time spanning structure. Going higher in the structure means moving forward in time.

And yeah, I think it was the Moffats that Borski identifies.

Roy C. Lackey — 07 Jun 2010, 17:55 · in reply to Mr Thalassocrat

Andrew quoted and wrote:

The Curtain Wall around the Citadel didn't need to be as big or sophisticated as the City Wall. The purpose of the Curtain Wall (according to Cyriaca's tale) was to safeguard the writings that became Ultan's Library. Her tale also implies that the City Wall and the curtain wall date from the same period. That is, "Their spoil was gathered into a great heap in the city of Nessus, which was then newly built, to be burned." She goes on to say that the cache of books was enclosed by a curtain wall when

the ruler changed his mind about burning the books. That ruler had planned to retire behind the curtain wall if his dreams of a "new empire" (as distinct from the "first empire") should fail (SWORD, chap. VI).

The implication, of course, is that Typhon was that ruler, though he died alone on his mountain. So, yes, if Cyriaca is to be believed, the walls are the same age.

Don't you think "newly built" here may not be not reliable?

Definitely not reliable, which is why I qualified the statement. Cyriaca may have conflated separate events, just as we get an American Civil War naval battle mixed up with Greek myth in a story from the "brown book".

From the point of view of a future fable, events in the past can easily be seen as happening in the same "long ago", even if separated by many years. I certainly get the sense from Short Sun that Nessus was an established city at the time of Typhon - unless we are to think of Roger as a recent immigrant to the place. Typhon himself calls the place Nessus in BotNS, but we are told elsewhere (can't remember where) that it had an earlier name.

Oh yes, Nessus was well established in Typhon's time. The spaceport on Citadel Hill was known as the "old port" even when he was still alive (URTH, 251). (Which in turn implies a new spaceport somewhere, but we are never told where.)

But whatever, has anybody ever come up with a good story about why he or somebody else built such an extensive wall, enclosing so much undeveloped land? Even for a megalomaniac

No good story that I know of. Since both walls were made of the same unsmeltable metal, they had to have been constructed when the technology was still available, and we know for sure that the curtain wall was there when Typhon was alive. Technology declined after Typhon, but not right away. (The early autarchs could still carve mountains.)

It is hard for me to imagine that the City Wall could have failed to keep out an invading military force, but the Old Autarch said that the Ascians had once "laid waste to Nessus" (CITADEL, chap. XXIV). It is also hard for me to believe that such a thing happened during the First Empire. It is equally hard to believe that it happened during Typhon's era; he had to have ruled the whole planet, not just the Commonwealth, and the Ascians could hardly have been a real threat to him.

Mantis theorized that the invasion "occurred early in the Age of the Autarch" (LU2, 253). Could be. If so, the Wall may have been built early in the autarchy to prevent such an invasion happening again. Still, it seems like overkill. In any event, the Wall has to date back at least that far.

The city existed in some form long before Typhon came around. If it was ever sacked, then it must have been rebuilt. Cyriaca's story may have conflated the rebuilding with "newly built", and mixed up the time of the Monarch(s?) with that of the Autarchs.

No matter what, the Wall of Nessus is an enigma.

-Roy

Jeff Wilson — 07 Jun 2010, 18:23 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

On 6/7/2010 12:55 PM, Roy C. Lackey wrote:

Andrew quoted and wrote:

From the point

of view of a future fable, events in the past can easily be seen as happening in the same "long ago", even if separated by many years. I certainly get the sense from Short Sun that Nessus was an established city at the time of Typhon - unless we are to think of Roger as a recent immigrant to the place. Typhon himself calls the place Nessus in BotNS, but

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"old port" could also mean there have been no landings at all in some time.

But whatever, has anybody ever come up with a good story about why he or somebody else built such an extensive wall, enclosing so much undeveloped land? Even for a megalomaniac

No good story that I know of. Since both walls were made of the same unsmeltable metal, they had to have been constructed when the technology was still available, and we know for sure that the curtain wall was there when Typhon was alive. Technology declined after Typhon, but not right away. (The early autarchs could still carve mountains.)

I believe that unsmeltables date from a much earlier time, similar to that from which the artifacts at Saltus come, otherwise there's be no need to start the mine. The wouldn't stop Ymar from using the existing constructobots to carve himself into a mountain, as they remain slightly animated even in Severian's time.

Mantis theorized that the invasion "occurred early in the Age of the Autarch" (LU2, 253). Could be. If so, the Wall may have been built early in the autarchy to prevent such an invasion happening again. Still, it seems like overkill. In any event, the Wall has to date back at least that far.

Obviously the Wall doesn't stop aerial assault, the Ascians could have used some flyers that were subsequently destroyed by the Commonwealth forces.

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

Gerry Quinn — 07 Jun 2010, 18:42 · in reply to Mr Thalassocrat

Maybe there was a fear that the undersea giants would control the human populace, and some ruler built a security wall to prevent infiltration.

- Gerry Quinn

From: Mr Thalassocrat

But whatever, has anybody ever come up with a good story about why he or somebody else

built such an extensive wall, enclosing so much undeveloped land? Even for a megalomaniac

Gerry Quinn — 07 Jun 2010, 18:49 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

I thought I was. In another post you just claimed you were not involved in a debate, and you were done.

- Gerry Quinn

Why are you not addressing my points, Gerry?

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

From: <brunians at brunians.org>

I would like an atheist to explain to me why atheism is not found in nature.

Where is the ancient or traditional society that did not believe in something, whether the ghosts of their grandparents, or the spirits of the trees, or the fairies, or the planets or the mountains or the ocean or angels or gods or God or the Devil or something else.

Is everyone except you and your buddies deluded?

Is everyone who doesn't believe in the fairies deluded? Or everyone who doesn't believe in the mountains?

- Gerry Quinn

James Wynn — 07 Jun 2010, 20:06 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On 6/7/2010 1:23 PM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

Obviously the Wall doesn't stop aerial assault, the Ascians could have used some flyers that were subsequently destroyed by the Commonwealth forces.

Is that really obvious? The thickness of the wall suggests that it's purpose is not merely a physical barrier against ground-based assaults. Otherwise, if an invading force over-topped it, the wall would become a high-ground from which to launch a more successful assaults on the rest of the territory.

The wall might be constructed *primarily* to prevent aerial and space-based assaults through some sort of protective dome (which is unnecessary in Severian's time). The Ascians might have been far more technologically advanced in Typhon's time. Anyway, protecting a city with a "mere" wall in Typhon's time strikes me as a bizarre anachronism.

brunians at brunians.org — 07 Jun 2010, 23:02 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Two posts, one a debate, the other not.

I thought I was. In another post you just claimed you were not involved in a debate, and you were done.

- Gerry Quinn

Why are you not addressing my points, Gerry?

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

From: <brunians at brunians.org>

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- Gerry Quinn

David Stockhoff — 08 Jun 2010, 00:11 · follows brunians at brunians.org

This is sheer Brunianism.

Message: 8

Date: Mon, 7 Jun 2010 09:02:23 -0400

From: brunians at brunians.org

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

Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences

Message-ID: <f8a1a3a83a19942ad6ac27da057a93e8.squirrel at brunians.org>

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

If randomness leads to order, then randomness is what you call what most people call God.

There are always only two and only two choices: the one you choose and all the other ones.

If you look at the World analytically, it is complicated.

If you look at the World synthetically, it is reasonably straightforward.

.

brunians at brunians.org — 08 Jun 2010, 00:12 · in reply to David Stockhoff

But that's a good thing.

.

This is sheer Brunianism.

Message: 8

Date: Mon, 7 Jun 2010 09:02:23 -0400

From: brunians at brunians.org

To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>
Subject: Re: (urth) Religious writers and audiences
Message-ID: <f8a1a3a83a19942ad6ac27da057a93e8.squirrel at brunians.org>
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If you look at the World synthetically, it is reasonably straightforward.

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David Stockhoff — 08 Jun 2010, 01:11 · follows James Wynn

Has anyone suggested that the Wall was built to keep people in? Of course you still have the overkill problem.

But there are any number of reasons why a ruler might keep the main strength of his armies near home, especially when assaults might come from land, air, or sea as well as from within. I've wondered about a dome too. But would a space invader really land within the walls when the city still has functioning energy weapons that could destroy the incoming fleet? I'd land some distance away---less far than Ascia---assemble my forces, and then move on the city's defenses. This wall would forestall that. And since it's unsmeltable, presumably it would resist energy weapons.

A large wall also puts its troops well away from the city proper.

Message: 4
Date: Mon, 07 Jun 2010 15:06:20 -0500
From: James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com>
To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
Subject: Re: (urth) traveling north
Message-ID: <4C0D513C.1090705 at gmail.com>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=ISO-8859-1; format=flowed

On 6/7/2010 1:23 PM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

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The wall might be constructed *primarily* to prevent aerial and space-based assaults through some sort of protective dome (which is

unnecessary in Severian's time). The Ascians might have been far more technologically advanced in Typhon's time. Anyway, protecting a city with a "mere" wall in Typhon's time strikes me as a bizarre anachronism.

carrlaw at swbell.net — 08 Jun 2010, 01:50 · in reply to David Stockhoff

Given the scale of the wall I have difficulty in conceptualizing it being built post typhon-the thing is enormous, several thousand feet high, thick enough that that the characters can have significant conversational interaction in hiking through it, and at least 25 miles in diameter. I think its a cast off piece of extra-solar technolgy that happened to fit the purpose of a curtain wall. Recall Baldanders refuting Dr Talos comment about the foresight involved in making the wall encompass so much area.

Sent via BlackBerry by AT&T

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

From: David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net>

Date: Mon, 07 Jun 2010 21:11:22

To: <urth at lists.urth.net>

Subject: Re: (urth) traveling north

Has anyone suggested that the Wall was built to keep people in? Of course you still have the overkill problem.

But there are any number of reasons why a ruler might keep the main strength of his armies near home, especially when assaults might come from land, air, or sea as well as from within.

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Message: 4

Date: Mon, 07 Jun 2010 15:06:20 -0500

From: James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com>

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

Subject: Re: (urth) traveling north

Message-ID: <4C0D513C.1090705 at gmail.com>

Content-Type: text/plain; charset=ISO-8859-1; format=flowed

On 6/7/2010 1:23 PM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

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Jeff Wilson — 08 Jun 2010, 05:17 · in reply to James Wynn

On 6/7/2010 1:55 PM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

I don't think so. To travel to Yesod it is necessary to break the laws of physics in Briah by travelling faster than light (though the mechanism proposed, tacking across the light from the stars, is cute but unfeasible).

Accelerating up to lightspeed then doing some trick to go FTL is a time-honored SF tradition including STAR WARS and going back at least to _STARMAN JONES_.

On 6/7/2010 3:06 PM, James Wynn wrote:

On 6/7/2010 1:23 PM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

Obviously the Wall doesn't stop aerial assault, the Ascians could have used some flyers that were subsequently destroyed by the Commonwealth forces.

Is that really obvious? The thickness of the wall suggests that it's purpose is not merely a physical barrier against ground-based assaults. Otherwise, if an invading force over-topped it, the wall would become a high-ground from which to launch a more successful assaults on the rest of the territory.

Okay, a wall obviously doesn't stop aerial assault. If The Wall's sophisticated defenses had failed in centuries past along with numerous other high technologies, The Wall's sheer bulk wouldn't prevent Ascian flyers from flying over and raking the city with fusils and such from above, burning most of it down, and this may have happened as late as a few decades before Severian. The Wall's bulk and unsmeltability would still protect the infantry inside from the flyers, allowing them to get very close to any grounded flyers before being exposed to enemy fire, making the top of the unconquered Wall unusable as a high-ground for any length of time.

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

Roy C. Lackey — 08 Jun 2010, 08:03 · in reply to James Wynn

James Wynn wrote:

The wall might be constructed *primarily* to prevent aerial and space-based assaults through some sort of protective dome (which is unnecessary in Severian's time). The Ascians might have been far more technologically advanced in Typhon's time. Anyway, protecting a city with a "mere" wall in Typhon's time strikes me as a bizarre anachronism.

I don't think the Ascians were a factor in Typhon's time. He ruled the whole planet. (Remember all the ethnic factions from all over Urth that were forcibly put aboard the _Whorl_.)

I really doubt that the Wall had anything to do with the Ascians, who were far to the north of the Commonwealth. The Wall circumscribes too much territory. The Gyoll passed through the Wall, north and south. Several days before the _Samru_ reached the Citadel from the coast, the ship passed through the Wall (CITADEL, chap. XXXII). The banks were marshy with silt, and it took a couple days before Sev even realized that the moss-covered mounds he was looking at were the crumbled ruins of buildings.

That implies a long period of decay. There is no point in building a huge wall around ruined buildings, so the Wall must have been built when it was still a vibrant part of the city, and the area was far south of Ascia.

It is also hard to believe that the southern sections of the Wall were filled with Commonwealth troops. What good would they be out in the southern boondocks when the only known enemy is far to the north?

-Roy

Jane Delawney — 11 Jun 2010, 22:30 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

On 07/06/10 06:57, Roy C. Lackey wrote:

The Curtain Wall around the Citadel didn't need to be as big or sophisticated as the City Wall. The purpose of the Curtain Wall (according to Cyriaca's tale) was to safeguard the writings that became Ultan's Library. Her tale also implies that the City Wall and the curtain wall date from the same period. That is, "Their spoil was gathered into a great heap in the city of Nessus, which was then newly built, to be burned." She goes on to say that the cache of books was enclosed by a curtain wall when the ruler changed his mind about burning the books. That ruler had planned to retire behind the curtain wall if his dreams of a "new empire" (as distinct from the "first empire") should fail (SWORD, chap. VI).

The implication, of course, is that Typhon was that ruler, though he died alone on his mountain. So, yes, if Cyriaca is to be believed, the walls are the same age.

-Roy

Indeed that perhaps the Citadel wall might even be a trifle *earlier* than the City Wall itself. Yet according to Jonas, the Citadel was built to the *north* of the city (presumably including its curtain wall if these two walls are indeed of an age) ... there is a question here that it still unanswered I think, in terms of the the geography of Sev's Urth.

Unless of course Jonas is simply telling fairy stories! However I'm inclined to think Wolfe does not include this kind of information just for 'decoration' as it were.

Have remembered a couple of other points which gave me pause regarding compass directions back when I last read this work. The first was the description of Sev's journey to the Last House and back. He is clearly described as travelling with his shadow before him, a phenomenon which can only be observed in the southern hemisphere when travelling southward. I now realise that at the time I first read this, I assumed that when this happened he had to have been travelling northward ... but in fact this is not the case, since Mannea's map is not compass-direction specific as in fact it could not be since the Last House does not quite exist in normal space. He could have been travelling in any direction at all when he made note of his

shadow, since to find the Last House he has to follow the map's instructions (which do not include points of the compass) exactly, and may have been travelling in that direction he had not previously noticed :)

Also there is the (probably quite small) point of the identity - if any!

- in our world of *The Eight*, a constellation which Sev notes consists only of three stars (so the reason for its name is a mystery to him) and which is circumpolar about whichever pole :) he may have observed in his hemisphere throughout his life. Any views on this?

thanks very much for responses and am very sorry I am only able to get replies out about every 3 - 4 days. I really enjoy reading most of this list and it is way more than just 'interesting' to me to rediscover the fandom after so many years. Thanks to all!

regards

JD

PS I have not yet re-read UOTNS this time round (actually have been trying to spin out *Citadel* for as long as possible :)); if there is more information in there about the Walls, I have not yet caught up with it.

Adam Thornton — 11 Jun 2010, 23:07 · in reply to Jane Delawney

On Jun 11, 2010, at 5:30 PM, Jane Delawney wrote:

Have remembered a couple of other points which gave me pause regarding compass directions back when I last read this work. The first was the description of Sev's journey to the Last House and back. He is clearly described as travelling with his shadow before him, a phenomenon which can only be observed in the southern hemisphere when travelling southward. I now realise that at the time I first read this, I assumed that when this happened he had to have been travelling northward ... but in fact this is not the case, since Mannea's map is not compass-direction specific as in fact it could not be since the Last House does not quite exist in normal space. He could have been travelling in any direction at all when he made note of his shadow, since to find the Last House he has to follow the map's instructions (which do not include points of the compass) exactly, and may have been travelling in that direction he had not previously noticed :)

Given the earlier confusion about the sun and the shoulder, I want to go out on a limb here and invoke something else Wolfe is known to have read and liked, and say that it is clear that Severian is travelling in the Land of Oz.

Also there is the (probably quite small) point of the identity - if any! - in our world of *The Eight*, a constellation which Sev notes consists only of three stars (so the reason for its name is a mystery to him) and which is circumpolar about whichever pole :) he may have observed in his hemisphere throughout his life. Any views on this?

Perhaps they are the stars of the sky of the Tenth Elegy. Which then, well, I'd hardly be the first to point out that crossing the Deadly Desert might be exactly what it sounds like.

Adam

David Duffy — 11 Jun 2010, 23:23 · in reply to Jane Delawney

On Fri, 11 Jun 2010, Jane Delawney wrote:

Also there is the (probably quite small) point of the identity - if any! - in our world of *The Eight*, a constellation which Sev notes consists only of three stars (so the reason for its name is a mystery to him) and which is

circumpolar about whichever pole :) he may have observed in his hemisphere throughout his life. Any views on this?

Through the magic of Google, I think this might refer to the constellation of Octans, which sits near the South Celestial Pole, and has three bright stars forming a triangle (see image at below):

<http://www.rasnz.org.nz/Stars/Octans.htm>

Just 2c, David Duffy.

Jeff Wilson — 12 Jun 2010, 00:48 · in reply to Jane Delawney

On 6/11/2010 5:30 PM, Jane Delawney wrote:

Have remembered a couple of other points which gave me pause regarding compass directions back when I last read this work. The first was the description of Sev's journey to the Last House and back. He is clearly described as travelling with his shadow before him, a phenomenon which can only be observed in the southern hemisphere when travelling southward.

? A pedestrian's shadow can lay to the westward in the morning and to the eastward in the evening.

Also there is the (probably quite small) point of the identity - if any!
- in our world of *The Eight*, a constellation which Sev notes consists only of three stars (so the reason for its name is a mystery to him) and which is circumpolar about whichever pole :) he may have observed in his hemisphere throughout his life. Any views on this?

Octans, the octant. It doesn't actually form a 45 deg angle now (1/8 of a circle), and apparently not in Severian's time either or the name wouldn't puzzle him.

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

Jane Delawney — 20 Jun 2010, 00:10 · in reply to David Duffy

If I may crave your collective indulgence a little longer ... please forgive me if you're all heartily sick of this, but in my re-reading I have just come across another of those moments which, now I have reminded myself, has also featured in my doubt about north-south consistency (or consistency with the present at least) in the New Sun 'canon'.

Toward the end of TUOTNS Severian, having been 'rescued' from a suicidal funk by Juturna of all beings (and this scene is debate-worthy in itself, since she was earlier his enemy - though since he has succeeded in his destined role as the New Sun she and her kind no longer have a reason to oppose him), and incidentally proving that even though he's fulfilled his primary role he *still* can not die (earlier, he assumes that the reason for this characteristic is that he's yet to bring the New Sun, which he has been foreordained to do) wanders up the Brook Madregot and emerges from the Corridors in the age of Apu-Punchau.

Although by then many readers are saying, 'Well, we all knew that was going to happen' and maybe even 'Well, get on with it!', he then spends a page or two wandering over the pampas. No mention of shadows here (good, given previous responses they are far too confusing and ambiguous); instead, when he first meets the native people of that era, he notes that they are busy watering their fields and generally acting as though it is spring or summer, even though "

... among the constellations of the previous night had been the crotali, the winter stars that bring the rattle of ice-sheathed branches".

We know already that in the time of the Conciliator temperate-climate crops extend some way 'south' (or whatever:)) of where they are found in Severian's day (he remarks on the occurrence of apple-orchards way 'south' of where he remembers), and of course the time of Apu-Punchau is millennia earlier. But postulating a longer summer and growing season is surely not enough to bring the stars of deepest winter (the name crotali, 'the rattles' according to Andre-Driussi, though I confess to ignorance as the language involved, seems to be related directly to the rattling together of icicles in the wind, I have no idea which if any of our present constellations may be involved) into summer. The implication seems to be clear that what Severian knew as winter is now summer. The only explanation that I can see here is that the poles, the hemispheres themselves, are not arranged as Sev knew them in his original place and time.

Would be glad of any comments / illuminations, am quite prepared to accept that I may have made an egregious mistake (again :)!) here. But I really am not convinced (pace Adam :)) that this is in fact the land of Oz.

regards

JD

Mr Thalassocrat — 20 Jun 2010, 01:02 · in reply to Jane Delawney

On Sun, Jun 20, 2010 at 9:40 AM, Jane Delawney <jane_delawney at sky.com> wrote:

We know already that in the time of the Conciliator temperate-climate crops extend some way 'south' (or whatever:)) of where they are found in Severian's day (he remarks on the occurrence of apple-orchards way 'south' of where he remembers), and of course the time of Apu-Punchau is millennia earlier. But postulating a longer summer and growing season is surely not enough to bring the stars of deepest winter (the name crotali, 'the rattles' according to Andre-Driussi, though I confess to ignorance as the language involved, seems to be related directly to the rattling together of icicles in the wind, I have no idea which if any of our present constellations may be involved) into summer. The implication seems to be clear that what Severian knew as winter is now summer. The only explanation that I can see here is that the poles, the hemispheres themselves, are not arranged as Sev knew them in his original place and time.

I just assumed that he has travelled so far back in time that the proper motions of the stars had carried them far away from their positions in his own day.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proper_motion

Jeff Wilson — 20 Jun 2010, 03:17 · in reply to Mr Thalassocrat

On 6/19/2010 8:02 PM, Mr Thalassocrat wrote:

On Sun, Jun 20, 2010 at 9:40 AM, Jane Delawney <jane_delawney at sky.com
<mailto:jane_delawney at sky.com>> wrote:

We know already that in the time of the Conciliator temperate-climate crops extend some way 'south' (or whatever:)) of where they are found in Severian's day (he remarks on the occurrence

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I just assumed that he has travelled so far back in time that the proper motions of the stars had carried them far away from their positions in his own day.

Most constellations' component stars have no physical association among them and only appear to lie closely together as seen from Earth. This lack of unity means proper motion will make them unrecognizable and/or disperse them entirely.

Precession of the equinoxes however takes place on a shorter scale, currently a bit under about 26,000 years per full circuit of pole stars. This implies that Apu Punchau is about 13,000 years before Severian, or 39,000, or 65,000 or 91,000...

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

Mr Thalassocrat — 20 Jun 2010, 05:20 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On Sun, Jun 20, 2010 at 12:47 PM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:

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You're right, of course.

Jeff Wilson — 20 Jun 2010, 08:14 · in reply to Mr Thalassocrat

On 6/20/2010 12:20 AM, Mr Thalassocrat wrote:

On Sun, Jun 20, 2010 at 12:47 PM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com
<<mailto:jwilson at io.com>>> wrote:

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You're right, of course.

That's not to say that proper motion has no part to play in the Book. it puts a fuzzy upper limit on how many 26,000 year cycles can pass. Starting about 03:30, this episode of Cosmos shows a few changing over +/- a million years.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYobCdq9BEA&feature=fvsvr>

They are unrecognizable IMO after a million years, so that's about 40 precession cycles. Also, the displacement seems to be only 1/4 of the retrograde precession, spring planting under winter stars, so the split could be as little as 6500 years before adding multiples.

Hmp - reading Urth's appendix in this light seems to confirm not just the Ship's intervention in the eclipse, but the truly continental size of the mirror-sails: not just the 1/2 degree width of the moon is covered, as if by a Yesodi peephole, but several constellations worth of arc of mirror would be required to allow Severian to see his familiar constellations out of their season.

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

Jane Delawney — 23 Jun 2010, 01:34 · in reply to Mr Thalassocrat

On 20/06/10 02:02, Mr Thalassocrat wrote:

On Sun, Jun 20, 2010 at 9:40 AM, Jane Delawney<[jane_delawney at sky.com](mailto:jane_delawney@sky.com)>wrote:

The only explanation that I can see here is that the poles, the hemispheres themselves, are not arranged as Sev knew them in his original place and time.

I just assumed that he has travelled so far back in time that the proper motions of the stars had carried them far away from their positions in his own day.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proper_motion

Since I haven't been re-reading Wolfe's appendices until after I have finished the books themselves, I hadn't until after I posted my query about the Crotali read the comment right at the end of TUOTNS:

"... it should be noted that the stars seen in the skies of the Commonwealth in winter rise in spring over the Stone Town (presumably due to the precession of the equinoxes) ... "

This comment occurs in the discussion of the apparent 'miracle' of the prolongation of night by Apu-Punchau; GW goes on to state that Severian's seeing of his accustomed spring stars in the delayed dawn supports the theory that the prolongation of the night is no 'miracle' but rather is

caused by an eclipse of the sun - eclipsed by Tzadkiel's vast ship, we are led to assume. Sev's childhood spring stars are still there, but they rise a great deal later than they should for the time of year.

This would appear to make sense astronomically and there's no need to invoke a polar flip. However it does beg the question of exactly how far the equinoxes would need to precess to produce this effect. I believe a full Great Year of equinoctial precession lasts some 26000 solar years (is this right?) and this would imply that Apu-Punchau's time is some 13500 years before Severian's present at the very least (could be several multiples of 26000 plus 13500 of course).

This doesn't have very much to do with proper motion of the stars as such of course; however, one might note that there's a hidden implication here that Apu-Punchau's era may be on the nearer end of that timescale, since proper motion of the stars would definitely affect the shape of constellations, and Sev has no hesitation in recognising the Crotali and other patterns.

JD

John Watkins — 23 Jun 2010, 01:38 · in reply to Jane Delawney

Apu Punchau:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apu_Punchau

On Tue, Jun 22, 2010 at 9:34 PM, Jane Delawney <jane_delawney at sky.com> wrote:
On 20/06/10 02:02, Mr Thalassocrat wrote:

On Sun, Jun 20, 2010 at 9:40 AM, Jane Delawney<jane_delawney at sky.com> wrote:

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