

travelling north

The Urth list — 35 messages, 12 voices, 03 Jun 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5620>

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Gerry Quinn — 03 Jun 2010, 19:03

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

From: Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com>

"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."

The Book of the Long Sun is set in the same universe, and in it Silk has a vision of a hero riding into a city, greeted by supporters waving fan-shaped leaves. (I can't remember the page offhand.) Surely this represents Palm Sunday, suggesting that Jesus existed in this universe?

- Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn — 03 Jun 2010, 19:04 · follows Gerry Quinn

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

From: Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com>

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James Wynn — 03 Jun 2010, 19:49 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

On 6/3/2010 2:04 PM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

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and in it Silk has a vision of a hero riding into a city,
greeted by supporters waving fan-shaped leaves.
(I can't remember the page offhand.)

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suggesting that Jesus existed in this universe?

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He had this vision during his enlightenment by the Outsider (presumably the Increate). Surely the Outsider is the Lord of all the Universes, and could offer a vision from any of them. Still, I've never been able to piece together any narrative value from saying that Jesus never came in Severian's universe. As was recently pointed out, the world would be quite different if there had never been a Christianity, and Severian's past is very much like our own.

IMO Too much is made of Wolfe's personal Christian beliefs in his most of his fiction. I don't think he tries to make his fiction conform to correct theology. I recall that in an interview he obliquely used Orson Scott Card as an example of a writer that puts his faith into all of his writings and said that he himself did not do that.

"The Conciliator" is more of a Gnostic concept and a Gnostic Christian concept. I don't believe Wolfe is Gnostic even though it is reasonable to assert that what _The Chronicles of Narnia_ were to Orthodox Christianity, the entire Sun Cycle is to Gnostic Christianity. Wolfe has said that Severian is a "Christ-figure". Well, Mithras is a Christ-figure. Hercules was, in some 1st or 2nd century paen, called "The Savior of the World".

J.

PS Before anyone objects, I realize that Paul used the term "mediator" in Galatians and 1 Timothy, but in Galatians he says that with Christ there was no mediator between God and Mankind, and in 1 Timothy he seems to be using the term ironically to dispense with complicated concepts of mediators in ala angels, the Law of Moses, and (I think) early Gnosticism (in 1 Tim. he also refers to "profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called" and "myths and endless genealogies [aeons]").

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 03 Jun 2010, 19:54 · in reply to James Wynn

On Thu, Jun 3, 2010 at 12:49 PM, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:
Wolfe has said that
Severian is a "Christ-figure".

Actually, Wolfe has specifically _denied_ that any of his heroes are Christ-figures, and prefers the term "Christian figure."

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

James Wynn — 03 Jun 2010, 19:56 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On 6/3/2010 2:54 PM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:
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Well, even more so then.

John Watkins — 03 Jun 2010, 20:07 · in reply to James Wynn

Re: conciliation

I think that sort of says it all, right? "Reconciliation." Orthodox (little-o) Christians certainly believe that Christ "reconciled" God and man which is more or less the way Severian describes his role.

Incidentally, this is how the word "reconciled" pops up in the Easter Vigil liturgy:

"How blessed is this night, when earth and heaven are joined and man is reconciled to God.

Holy Father, accept our evening sacrifice, the offering of this candle in your honor. May it shine continually to drive away all darkness. *May Christ, the Morning Star who knows no setting*, find it ever burning--he who gives his light to all creation, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen."

It does not go on, "You, the hero who slays the black worm that devours the Sun"...but it might.

On Thu, Jun 3, 2010 at 3:56 PM, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:

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Jerry Friedman — 03 Jun 2010, 22:15 · in reply to James Wynn

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"And as you've said in your letters, I don't think of Severian as being a Christ figure; I think of Severian as being a Christian figure. He is a man who has been born into a very perverse background, who is gradually trying to become better. I think that all of us have somewhere in us an instinct to try and become better. Some of us defeat it thoroughly. We kill that part of ourselves, just as we kill the child in ourselves. It is very closely related to the child in us."

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Wolfe also points out a parallel to someone who was presumably not a savior at all, the carpenter who made the cross.

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John Watkins — 03 Jun 2010, 22:19 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

I think this has been covered, right?

- 1) Obviously there are intentional parallels between Severian and Jesus.
- 2) Obviously Severian is not a literal stand-in for or equivalent to Jesus.

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 03 Jun 2010, 22:21 · in reply to John Watkins

I think it's #2 that gives some people heartburn.

On Thu, Jun 3, 2010 at 3:19 PM, John Watkins <john.watkins04 at gmail.com> wrote:
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Jerry Friedman

James Wynn — 03 Jun 2010, 23:12 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

I think the contention (for me) is that although #1 is true I do not think...

3) Wolfe necessarily sees Severian as a *figurative* stand-in for the Jesus he believes in.

The figurative worlds of Severian and Silk are Gnostic ones not Judeo-Apostolic ones. Those protagonists act, and achieve, within their worlds as the Gnostic Christ does. Not as the Johanne Christ acts.

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Jerry Friedman

David Stockhoff — 04 Jun 2010, 00:43 · follows James Wynn

Interesting. Can you elaborate on the distinction?

(I'm not familiar with the Gnostic Christ's achievements.)

Message: 5
Date: Thu, 03 Jun 2010 18:12:11 -0500
From: James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com>
To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
Subject: Re: (urth) travelling north
Message-ID: <4C0836CB.3070100 at gmail.com>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=ISO-8859-1; format=flowed

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James Wynn — 04 Jun 2010, 04:47 · in reply to David Stockhoff

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David Stockhoff wrote:

Interesting. Can you elaborate on the distinction?
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Well, for starters, the Gnostic Christ does not save anyone individually. He saves mankind as a whole through the example of his enlightenment. This is closer to the salvation of Silk and Severian than Jesus. Additionally "the Christ" is merely the male half of God (although even that term has a somewhat different meaning). With the female half they form the syzygy of their particular Aeon. This is Severian and Thecla. Silk and Hyacinth are a retelling of the gnostic story of Simon Magus and Helena. Helena was the Ennoia who had fallen into the lower aeons and become trapped in matter. "The Father", manifesting himself as Simon Magus, "The Son", finds her in a brothel suffering abuse, and rescues her. There's also Ophis, the serpent, mixed up in the story. It would difficult, but take fewer words, to detail the ways that New Sun and Long Son are inconsistent with what we know of the teachings of guys like Tatian and Valentinus or the group founded on their teachings known as the Severians.

J

Jane Delawney — 06 Jun 2010, 03:03 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

On 03/06/10 23:21, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:
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while commenting upon:

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Heartburn being an understatement no doubt! Regarding this, I feel that one of the most interesting passages of all occurs toward the end of 'The Urth of the New Sun'. [I know there are those who do not care for the sequel, but Wolfe wrote it also, to continue Severian's story, and so I feel it should at least be mentioned.]

Severian has traveled via the Corridors of Time to the ancient past of the Stone Town, where he has been taken by its people for (what appears to approximate to) a solar deity. To the extent that when he attempts seriously to leave, they kill him in order to keep him with them for ever. The whole referring back of course to the episode in *Conciliator* where we first get a heads up that Severian and the vivimancer Apu-Punchau are in some sense the same person (or Copenhagen-interpretation iterations of the same entity).

Severian wakes up in Apu-Punchau's tomb, with the dead body of his 'other self' alongside him; he is baffled (as usual!) and frightened, but fortunately the white-clad figures of the Hierodules are there to explain things to him, or to help him construct his own explanation. During the course of this Ossipago offers to take all of them back to a 'better time'; an offer that is refused.

Over the page Famulimus tells Severian that if they had allowed Ossipago to do this, he would have taken them back to an earlier time and 'That would not have been a better place for you, I think.' All this after the two non-machine Hierodules have prostrated themselves before the 'resurrected' Severian, 'the head of his race and its savior'.

One is left with supposition. Are we to gather that if so allowed, Ossipago would have transported the party 'back' in time (using Severian's perspective) to another tomb, and another Resurrection? Famulimus forbids it, thus preventing this final merging of timelines. On this interpretation, while Severian grows and evolves to become a kind of savior, the Powers do not allow that final identification of Severian with Christ himself. On the other hand, since Severian/the Sleeper is now a practised wanderer of the Corridors of Time, nowhere is it excluded that somewhere along the line, with his further internal spiritual evolution perhaps, this identification could happen. Maybe Famulimus is saying 'Not right now' (that is, Severian's 'now'), rather than 'No way that's wrong and always will be.'

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Hmm. To veer off topic a little - there is another writer - a devout Orthodox (big 'O') Christian - who has (to the best of my recollection) used exactly this last notion in writing of Christ himself. Nikos Kazantzakis in 'The Last Temptation of Christ' has Christ as an apprentice carpenter building crosses, instruments of torture and death, for the Occupying Power. (I will not comment on this; I'm just relaying the information.) Does the Guild of Seekers for Truth and Penitence have their apprentices help to build their 'apparatus'?

It *is* off topic of course; but still, since it is many years since I read that book please correct me if I have remembered LTOC wrong.

I don't think I have though - It's so unlikely I'd have invented this idea myself back then.

regards

JD

brunians at brunians.org — 06 Jun 2010, 03:15 · in reply to Jane Delawney

Severian is a Descent of Christ.

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Roy C. Lackey — 06 Jun 2010, 05:01 · in reply to Jane Delawney

Jane Delawney wrote:

[snip]

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[snip]

I think not. There is a much simpler explanation. When Sev fled Ushas and went backwards in time, he went only as far as he *could* go. That is, he went back in time only to just before

the creation of the White Fountain. More properly, to the point just before the first light from the Fountain reached Urth (p-353). He was unable to use the Corridors to escape the tomb until the first light of it reached him (p-358). In other words, Sev's personal travels in time were bound by the light of the New Sun.

-Roy

Jerry Friedman — 07 Jun 2010, 17:09 · in reply to Jane Delawney

From: Jane Delawney <jane_delawney at sky.com>

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I'm one of those people, as I mentioned recently, but please disregard my feeling completely. I wouldn't want my dislike of a certain Wolfe book to discourage anyone from saying anything on a list about Wolfe (or anywhere).

Jerry Friedman

Lee Berman — 07 Jun 2010, 17:28 · follows James Wynn

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

Hmph, then he shouldn't have had created all those bad guys as dark-skinned guys from south and east riding elephants. Nor should he have allowed "eagles" to save the day at the end of his two big (hobbit-involved) wars.

Jerry Friedman — 07 Jun 2010, 18:03 · in reply to Lee Berman

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Only the guys from the south ride elephants. The humans from the east aren't described as dark-skinned, as I recall. Maybe you're talking about the orcs, though.

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he have allowed "eagles" to save the day at the end of his two big
(hobbit-involved) wars.

If people have suggested that the eagles represent the United States, that's just horrible. I'm not going to dispute that the eagles might have led people into such interpretations, though.

Jerry Friedman

John Watkins — 07 Jun 2010, 18:07 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

Maybe they represented Romans! Or Germans!

It makes perfect sense for Tolkien to equate American military might with the servants of

Manwe. I mean, he completely approved of all actions taken by the Allies during the wars.

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Hmph, then he shouldn't have had created all those bad guys as
dark-skinned guys from south and east riding elephants.

Only the guys from the south ride elephants. The humans from the east
aren't described as dark-skinned, as I recall. Maybe you're talking about
the orcs, though.

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he have allowed "eagles" to save the day at the end of his two big
(hobbit-involved) wars.

If people have suggested that the eagles represent the United States,
that's just horrible. I'm not going to dispute that the eagles might have
led people into such interpretations, though.

Jerry Friedman

Lee Berman — 07 Jun 2010, 18:28 · follows John Watkins

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such interpretations, though.

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Well, I am a Tolkein lover and was only being tongue-in-cheek critical. Still, he couldn't help
being a man shaped by his time and his culture. Why couldn't his southern elephant riders be
blondes or red haired with freckles? Why were his "Easterlings":

...Men who lived in the east of Middle-earth, who mostly fought under Morgoth
and Sauron. The Easterlings were short and muscular; they were dark of skin, eye,
and hair. They are armed with long halberds, scimitars and rectangular metal
shields. Their armour is inscribed with a script which resembles Tengwar mixed
with Persian...In early design concepts, the Easterlings wore turbans and their
helmets bore crescent moons, but director Peter Jackson requested that references
to real-world cultures be avoided. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Easterlings>

And I would think a British author writing during and just after WWII would use hawks or harriers
or falcons or any bird of prey other than eagles if he was hoping to avoid all hint of allegory.

James Wynn — 07 Jun 2010, 21:02 · in reply to Lee Berman

Well, I am a Tolkein lover and was only being tongue-in-cheek critical. Still, he couldn't help being a man shaped by his time and his culture. Why couldn't his southern elephant riders be blondes or red haired with freckles? Why were his "Easterlings":

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And I would think a British author writing during and just after WWII would use hawks or harriers or falcons or any bird of prey other than eagles if he was hoping to avoid all hint of allegory.

The Eagles were a motif of Tolkien's Valinor from the beginning. It is hardly likely that when the Eagles rescued Bilbo and the Dwarves in *The Hobbit*, Tolkien intended that as some sort of patriotic statement.

Tolkien's stated purpose in creating his world was to create an English mythology. So he was drawing from the myths of the people who settled England... Scandinavian and Germanic people (with some Finland mythology thrown in for good measure). Avoiding terminology such as "Fair Folk" (pale people) for elves along with their pronounced physical height and strength was really unavoidable. Tolkien compared the overall geography and breadth of western Middle Earth to being essentially that of Western Europe (the Shire being Cambridge and Gondor being Rome). So, the people East and South of that kingdom are described along the lines of the people in our world. England in the first half of the 20th century was simply far less multi-ethnic than it is today.

Let me try this from another angle. Tolkien and Lewis definitely harbored politically incorrect attitudes about non-Western Europeans. But in their world, it was unnecessary to have any other attitude. It's not that dark-skinned characters are portrayed as evil. They simply don't exist except as fodder. The ultimate allies of Sauron are not Easterlings or elephant riding-Southerners. They are Western Kings... the Ring Wraiths. The default "race" are English-type people (the novel's original audience). Everyone else is from somewhere else, naturally, and so they look different. Unless he chose to make those other people green, he has a limited palette to choose from. That's not racism. It's simply not multi-ethnic. They viewed non-western Europeans as "those out there". It might be racially exclusive "in-effect" but not true Racism per se.

Wolfe does the same thing in *tBotNS*. There are very tall people. There's a green man. But I can't recall any black men, good or bad, in the story. They don't exist for the story, right? But because Wolfe's geography is generally racially homogeneous, the charge of racism doesn't come up. If Disney had done *Song of the South* entirely with white people the NAACP it would not have denounced it and it would not be controversial today. The Harry Potter stories have a "Dark Lord", but all the non-white characters are relegated to bit roles. And of those there is nothing especially distinguished about them beyond their racial features. They are fodder in a multi-cultural war. In a culture of aggrieved advocacy groups, we've become thin-skinned about presenting racial differences at all in literature. I'm not sure that's better.

Lee Berman — 08 Jun 2010, 15:53 · follows James Wynn

I think Wolfe has confirmed that his geographic model for the Commonwealth was South America and I think Nessus as Buenos Aires. But I think he also has said that his inspiration for the governmental forms were Byzantine.

Buenos Aires is not known for a complete surrounding wall but Byzantium was. An elaborate double wall formed from the earlier Severin Wall surrounded by the later Constantinian Wall. Plus it had many formally named gates such as Xerolophus, Prodromos and Melantius, etc.

I consider it possible that we are not meant to strain too hard to discern the practical purpose of the wall but rather to recognize the historical reference.

Jane Delawney — 11 Jun 2010, 23:15 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

On 06/06/10 06:01, Roy C. Lackey wrote:

Jane Delawney wrote:

[snip]

(further snippage)

One is left with supposition. Are we to gather that if so allowed, Ossipago would have transported the party 'back' in time (using Severian's perspective) to another tomb, and another Resurrection?

[snip]

I think not. There is a much simpler explanation. When Sev fled Ushas and went backwards in time, he went only as far as he *could* go. That is, he went back in time only to just before the creation of the White Fountain. More properly, to the point just before the first light from the Fountain reached Urth (p-353). He was unable to use the Corridors to escape the tomb until the first light of it reached him (p-358). In other words, Sev's personal travels in time were bound by the light of the New Sun.

Ok and many thanks Roy, that's certainly a plausible reading, probably a great deal more plausible than my initial assumption!

However I'd be very interested indeed if, given this (I seen now) well supported viewpoint ie. that Sev's time travels are restricted by the New Sun itself, you or anyone else has any view on what exactly Ossipago is talking about! Evidently he intended (until forbidden by his former charge, now 'boss' I guess) to take the whole party **somewhere** else in time, which 'would not be a better place' for Severian in particular.

Wolfe doesn't include this kind of stuff by accident. Where/when was Ossipago proposing to lead them? Is there any evidence? I'm sure I must have overlooked something.

Would be most grateful if anyone has any information on this.

kind regards

JD

Allan Anderson — 11 Jun 2010, 23:55 · in reply to Jane Delawney

It's a wonderful, evocative place, "off topic a little." Your bringing up The Last Temptation of Christ has reminded me of Judee Sill's often-covered "Jesus Was A Cross-Maker":

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZFQcfiPv6wg&NR=1>

On Sat, Jun 5, 2010 at 8:03 PM, Jane Delawney <jane_delawney at sky.com> wrote:
On 03/06/10 23:21, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

I think it's #2 that gives some people heartburn.

while commenting upon:

On Thu, Jun 3, 2010 at 3:19 PM, John Watkins<john.watkins04 at gmail.com>
"wrote:

?I think this has been covered, right"

?1) ?Obviously there are intentional parallels between Severian and Jesus.

?2) ?Obviously Severian is not a literal stand-in for or equivalent to Jesus.

Heartburn being an understatement no doubt! Regarding this, I feel that one of the most interesting passages of all occurs toward the end of 'The Urth of the New Sun'. [I know there are those who do not care for the sequel, but Wolfe wrote it also, to continue Severian's story, and so I feel it should at least be mentioned.]

Severian has ?traveled via the Corridors of Time to the ancient past of the Stone Town, where he has been taken by its people for (what appears to approximate to) a solar deity. To the extent that when he attempts seriously to leave, they kill him in order to keep him with them for ever. The whole referring back of course to the episode in *Conciliator* where we first get a heads up that Severian and the vivimancer Apu-Punchau are in some sense the same person (or Copenhagen-interpretation iterations of the same entity).

Severian wakes up in Apu-Punchau's tomb, with the dead body of his 'other self' alongside him; he is baffled (as usual!) and frightened, but fortunately the white-clad figures of the Hierodules are there to explain things to him, or to help him construct his own explanation. During the course of this Ossipago offers to take all of them back to a 'better time'; an offer that is refused. Over the page Famulimus tells Severian that if they had allowed Ossipago to do this, he would have taken them back to an earlier time and 'That would not have been a better place for you, I think.' All this after the two non-machine Hierodules have prostrated themselves before the 'resurrected' Severian, 'the head of his "race and its savior'.

One is left with supposition. Are we to gather that if so allowed, Ossipago would have transported the party 'back' in time (using Severian's perspective) to another tomb, and another Resurrection" Famulimus forbids it, thus preventing this final merging of timelines. On this interpretation, while Severian grows and evolves to become a kind of savior, the Powers do not allow that final identification of Severian with Christ himself. On the other hand, since Severian/the Sleeper is now ?a practised wanderer of the Corridors of Time, nowhere is it excluded that somewhere along the line, with his further internal spiritual evolution perhaps, this identification could happen. Maybe Famulimus is saying 'Not right now' (that is, Severian's 'now'), rather than 'No way that's wrong and always will be.'

On the other hand, the intended parallels do pile up. To once again quote Castle of the Otter/Castle of Days:

"Many of us have read so often that he was a "humble carpenter"...The man who built the built the cross was as much a carpenter too...The only object we

are specifically told he made was not a table or a chair, but a whip...Christ knew not only the pain of torture but the pain of being a torturer..."

That's a good one, which I'd forgotten. ?But it doesn't mean Severian is like Christ or that he did for his universe what Wolfe believes Jesus did for ours. ?Severian is far from perfect.

Wolfe also points out a parallel to someone who was presumably not a savior at all, the carpenter who made the cross.

Hmm. To veer off topic a little - ?there is another writer - a devout Orthodox (big 'O') Christian - who has (to the best of my recollection) used exactly this last notion in writing of Christ himself. Nikos Kazantzakis in 'The Last Temptation of Christ' has Christ as an apprentice carpenter building crosses, instruments of torture and death, for the Occupying Power. (I will not comment on this; I'm just relaying the information.) Does the Guild of Seekers for Truth and Penitence have their apprentices help to build their 'apparatus'?

It *is* off topic of course; but still, since it is many years since I read that book please correct me if I have remembered LTOC wrong.

I don't think I have though - It's so unlikely I'd have invented this idea myself back then.

regards

JD

Roy C. Lackey — 12 Jun 2010, 06:29 · in reply to Jane Delawney

Jane Delawney wrote:

However I'd be very interested indeed if, given this (I seen now) well supported viewpoint ie. that Sev's time travels are restricted by the New Sun itself, you or anyone else has any view on what exactly Ossipago is talking about! Evidently he intended (until forbidden by his former charge, now 'boss' I guess) to take the whole party *somewhere* else in time, which 'would not be a better place' for Severian in particular.

Wolfe doesn't include this kind of stuff by accident. Where/when was Ossipago proposing to lead them? Is there any evidence? I'm sure I must have overlooked something.

Ossipago was afraid that the first light from the White Fountain would penetrate a chink in the tomb and revive the strangled corpse -- which is exactly what happened after BF&O left. If the two versions of Sev in the tomb had touched or come too close, one would have been cancelled out. The one who would have been cancelled out was the newly-created eidolon of Sev.

(The rule is: whenever two versions of the same person come too close, the one with the deeper roots in the time period in which they meet dominates, and the other ceases to exist. That is why Sev lived and the summoned apparition [or whatever word people prefer; I don't want to get distracted on another tangent] of Apu went out with a bang when they grappled in the ruins of the stone town when Sev was on the way to Thrax. The strangled corpse in the tomb had

lived in Apu's era for years; the eidolon BF&O had created had been there for only hours.)

Where or When Ossipago lead them is secondary, but BF&O were on a journey backwards in time, from after the arrival of the New Sun to their first (from their perspective) meeting with Sev on The Ship to (so they thought at the time) their last at Baldander's castle. I suppose that is why Barbatus said that Ossipago would have taken Sev to an earlier time that would not have been a better place for Sev. Time before the creation/arrival of light from the White Fountain would have been bad for Sev because he would be stuck there, powerless to travel the Corridors of Time. Plus, in any time period before Typhon, there would have been nothing wrong with the Old Sun. A New Sun would at best have been superfluous and might even have been dangerous to the New Sun, because the Old Sun had the deeper roots. See above.

-Roy

Jeff Wilson — 12 Jun 2010, 16:13 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

On 6/12/2010 1:29 AM, Roy C. Lackey wrote:

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Why would that be bad? Does the trio have some influence over the eidolon of a resurrected Severian that they would not have over the all-meat resurrected Severian?

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

Roy C. Lackey — 12 Jun 2010, 18:22 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Jeff Wilson quoted and wrote:

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one who would have been cancelled out was the newly-created eidolon of Sev.

Why would that be bad?

Obviously it would be bad for the newly-created eidolon, because he would cease to exist. That eidolon walked the Corridors to get back to Ushas, where he eventually penned his second manuscript, the account we are reading of how he came to be in that tomb.

Does the trio have some influence over the eidolon of a resurrected Severian that they would not have over the all-meat resurrected Severian?

I can't answer that. But the all-meat Sev, resurrected by the light of the White Fountain, must eventually become the Apu that young Sev grappled with in the stone town in the first manuscript. That's why Famulimus warned the eidolon Sev not to destroy the corpse; it would change future history, so to speak, and the two Sevs in that tomb could not live in the same place at the same time. I suspect that after the eidolon went to Ushas and became solid flesh, he went on to travel in time to perform various feats attributed to the Conciliator that our Sev

had not yet personally experienced. He may also have tinkered in the life of his younger self. (Someone caused that necropolis mausoleum to be built and messed with the coffins in it.)

-Roy

Jeff Wilson — 12 Jun 2010, 19:10 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

On 6/12/2010 1:22 PM, Roy C. Lackey wrote:

Jeff Wilson quoted and wrote:

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Why couldn't the eidolon stay at the stone town and the strangled meat go back to the future?

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Roy C. Lackey — 13 Jun 2010, 21:48 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Jeff Wilson quoted and wrote:

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The strangled meat didn't know what the eidolon knew; all that had just been learned from BF&O in the tomb. The eidolon had to get away from him or die.

-Roy

Jeff Wilson — 14 Jun 2010, 00:00 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

On 6/13/2010 4:48 PM, Roy C. Lackey wrote:

Jeff Wilson quoted and wrote:

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The strangled meat didn't know what the eidolon knew; all that had just been learned from BF&O in the tomb. The eidolon had to get away from him or die.

okay - so there seems to be a fairly short distance limit on BFO's method of branching off an eidolon, so normally they are only made of dead people for practical and safety reasons (poor badger!). Severian has a habit of coming back from the dead, so they want to make the eidolon and send him on his way before the light of the White Fountain revives the strangled body and causes a merger hazard. Sound right so far?

So...why do they wait until the White Fountain's light is almost there, instead of showing up a week early? Perhaps because the new eidolon still needs the White Fountain's light to enter the Corridors of Time again? And they don't know for sure that the WF will revive the strangled meat, and they can't spare a week farting around the Stone Town keeping Sev from getting strangled again, so they cut it close, hoping the anxiety at escaping horrid death and being faced with it again almost immediately will motivate Severian to head back uptime right away?

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
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Roy C. Lackey — 14 Jun 2010, 05:00 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Jeff Wilson wrote, quoted, wrote:

Why couldn't the eidolon stay at the stone town and the strangled meat go back to the future?

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Close enough, except that eidolons are always of the dead.

So...why do they wait until the White Fountain's light is almost there, instead of showing up a week early? Perhaps because the new eidolon still needs the White Fountain's light to enter the Corridors of Time again?

Yes, the eidolon must have the WF's light to use the Corridors.

And they don't know for sure that the WF will revive the strangled meat, and they can't spare a week farting around the Stone Town keeping Sev from getting strangled again, so they cut it close, hoping the anxiety at escaping horrid death and being faced with it again almost immediately will motivate Severian to head back uptime right away?

They weren't interested in keeping Sev (as Apu, Head of Day) from being strangled by the townspeople, if that's what you mean. That tomb had to be built and a body put in it for future history to pan out as it had panned out. The strangled meat, a sun god, had to rise again to make the myth (358-59). And he did rise again and leave the tomb (365-66). He also had a

future (the revived strangled meat's personal future) date with young Sev and Hildegrin in the stone town.

Eidolon Sev didn't need much more motivation to head back uptime. Besides, his new eidolon body looked exactly like that of the guy on the funeral bronze in his boyhood mausoleum, and Sev (from his personal perspective) had not yet been laid to rest there. He had places to go, things to do.

-Roy

Jeff Wilson — 14 Jun 2010, 05:27 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

On 6/14/2010 12:00 AM, Roy C. Lackey wrote:

Jeff Wilson wrote, quoted, wrote:

Why couldn't the eidolon stay at the stone town and the strangled meat go back to the future?

The strangled meat didn't know what the eidolon knew; all that had just been learned from BF&O in the tomb. The eidolon had to get away from him or die.

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Are they? Aren't some made from a living person's impression of the subject, rather than from the subject's corpse?

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How did Severian merge with the meat? I thought it was only a problem eidolons - the two Gunnies are both meat and they don't merge. Or did the Cumaeen make an eidolon of the meat, that eidolon merged with Severian, killing Hildegrin, and then everyone went home leaving the old meat still there?

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
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Roy C. Lackey — 14 Jun 2010, 17:38 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Jeff Wilson quoted and wrote"

Close enough, except that eidolons are always of the dead.

Are they?

Yes. "While I stared in disbelief, Famulimus sang, 'You came too near your double once, you know; that was here, in this poor town of stones. Then he was gone, and only you remained.

Our idolons are always of the dead. Have you not wondered why? Be warned!" (p-361)

Aren't some made from a living person's impression of the subject, rather than from the subject's corpse?

I assume you are talking about the mind of the idolon, not the body. Some idolons get their imprint from living people, others from "remembrance" or "reflected thought" in a subject's dead mind (359).

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I'm not sure I understand the question. When young Sev encountered Apu in the ruins of the stone town, Apu disappeared in a flash like lightning. So did Hildegrin, but Hildegrin was just collateral damage. Apu left no corpse behind. He had been summoned by the Cumaeen, but she made no idolon.

Neither of the two Gunnies were idolons. They were two iterations of the same person at different ages, possible only because of time travel. As Ginnie said on The Ship, "Here it's not one nor the other. We're between the suns and the years too, so there can be two Gunnies with no danger to anybody. Or a dozen." (185)

In that section, Sev also gave some half-ass conjectures about that encounter with Apu and Hildegrin, but that was before his talk with BF&O in the tomb.

-Roy

Gerry Quinn — 14 Jun 2010, 20:03 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

From: "Roy C. Lackey" <rclackey at stic.net>
Jeff Wilson quoted and wrote"

Close enough, except that idolons are always of the dead.

Are they?

Yes. "While I stared in disbelief, Famulimus sang, 'You came too near your double once, you know; that was here, in this poor town of stones. Then he was gone, and only you remained. Our idolons are always of the dead. Have you not wondered why? Be warned!" (p-361)

This suggests that they *can* make idolons of whoever they want, but they avoid making idolons of the living to reduce the probability of such unfortunate encounters.

- Gerry Quinn