

Corundum of the Claw

The Urth list — 60 messages, 16 voices, 22 Jun 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5639>

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Son of Witz — 22 Jun 2010, 17:31

One of the unanswered questions about The Claw of the Conciliator is "How did the thorn become encapsulated in corundum?"

Nothing I've found in the books gives us a clue to a plot based answer, but I think I've come to understand the symbolism and why it is there.

The corundum represents the accumulated body of Myth and Legend that has grown around this artifact of the Conciliator. It's reality is only dimly apprehended through this crystal, as even the Pelerines thought that this was "only a flaw at the heart of the jewel", and our man of science, Baldanders thought the claw was "Nothing. a fragment of corundum." All either really see is the myth, not the reality. Baldanders is closer to the truth perhaps, because his act destroys the crystal enclosure and exposes the naked thorn, just as he know Severian will be the New Sun, and not just it's herald. The moment Severian holds the thorn is the moment that he is truly on his path to becoming the New Sun. Severian doesn't know it yet. Of course, but he has broken all of his false allegiances at this point.

after the Crystal is broken, Severian understands it's (now missing) light as "the only light we had." He finds the shards, and gives them to the see, literally burying the myth. After the myth is disposed of, he finds the real Claw, the thorn, and he waxes philosophical:

"Whenever I looked at it, it seemed to erase thought. Not as wine and certain drugs do, by rendering the mind unfit for it, but by replacing it with a higher state for which I know no name. Again and again I felt myself enter this state, rising always higher until I feared I should never return to the mode of consciousness I call normality; and again and again I tore myself from it. Each time I emerged, I felt I had gained some inexpressible insight into immense realities. At last, after a long series of these bold advances and fearful retreats, I came to understand that I should never reach any real knowledge of the tiny thing I held, and with that thought (for it was a thought) came a third state, one of happy obedience to I knew not what, an obedience without reflection because there was no longer anything to reflect upon, and without the least tincture of rebellion."

There, at the end you have it. He has a happy obedience without the least tincture of rebellion. He has been put through his tests, and now he is taking up the mantle.

Somewhere it dawned on me that what Wolfe does, at least as far as I've read is to write the memoirs of exceptional, legendary characters who don't know that they are exceptional. Having only read the Suns, the Soldiers and the Wizard Knight, this seems to hold up.

Adam Thornton IO — 22 Jun 2010, 20:06 · in reply to Son of Witz

Here's my theory. There's probably a better reason it's wrong than my Oz theory.

The "claw" is just a flaw at the heart of the jewel. The thorn Severian finds on the shore is just a

thorn. The thorns on the rosebush near the end of _Citadel_ are just thorns. It is Severian that makes them holy. On their own, they are just things.

Adam

Son of Witz — 22 Jun 2010, 21:38 · in reply to Adam Thornton IO

On Tue, June 22, 2010 4:06 pm, Adam Thornton (IO) wrote:

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If you're saying that the thorn he found was not in in the corundum, I don't agree. The text is pretty clear that the thorn was in the crystal, and even more so, if it's "just a thorn" why is it shining?.

from the end of Sword:

"I cannot say how it is possible for an object in itself black to give light, but this did. It might have been carved in jet, sodark it was and so highly polished; yet it shone, a claw as long as the last joint of my smallest finger, cruelly hooked and needle-pointed, the reality of that dark core at the heart of the gem, which must have been no more than a container for it, a lipsanotheca or pyx."

I agree that Severian is what has made these things special. That he has this (ug, whatever you want to call it) Christ-Like semi-deity role as the Conciliator has imbued this thorn with some resonance of him is pretty clear. I the theological intent of Wolfe comes through pretty clearly to me. Severian has just defeated various symbolic "Foes of God" and broken all false allegiances to worldly institutions, and is now obedient to the role God has for him. This moment is a real clarification of this. Most of what happens in Sword is the defeat of these Foes of God. He "ascends" into the mountains, a vertical metaphor of transcendence, where he defeats the Zooanthropes (men who've surrendered God's gift of consciousness), he defeats the Circle of Sorcerers (men who would work to obstruct the coming of the New Sun), he defeats Typhon, (a man who would be a false god of a corrupt kingdom), and The Man of Science who would storm the gates of heaven. At this point, he really only has to go against the Ascians (Godless / Soulless Men) in this unwitting quest against the Foes of God. When he gives the claw back to the Pelerines and brings Master Ash back, he has literally saved the future from the ice, already.

I just think it's really clear that at this point, when he has proven himself against all these traps and foes in his path, he has truly taken on his task, or taken up his cross. He's cleared the field and his shell has been broken away.

Yes, he is what makes the claw a shiny, special thing. But this thorn, which, in the age of Ymar was not encased in crystal, has, over the thousands of years where Severian was not alive, become quite literally a crystalized Myth. That myth, carried young Severian to this point, and now he does not really need the myth, he is the essence of it, not that he knows it.

Jordon Flato — 22 Jun 2010, 21:51 · in reply to Son of Witz

Yeah Mike, this was great. I really think this nails it, and encapsulates the holographic majesty of Wolfe's work here. Adam, I think there was a claw in the stone, and I think it's the same claw that Severian finds on the rosebush near the end of Citadel, and winds up taking back with him to the past, in UotNS, so it is yet another closed loop.

If there is *any* power to the thorn at all, it comes directly from sev. His blood does get on it, so perhaps a portion of the power he gains from the white fountain is passed on to it, but I'm more inclined to think it has no real power in itself, other than to serve as a focus for Severian and his manifestations.

But as a symbol, it is priceless, and what Wolfe does with it is magnificent. I think Witz clearly draws out where it stands in the narrative.

On Tue, Jun 22, 2010 at 2:38 PM, Son of Witz <sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org> wrote:

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David Stockhoff — 22 Jun 2010, 22:19 · in reply to Son of Witz

That's a great quote. Very suggestive. One wonders if Wolfe felt anything like this during his conversion to Catholicism.

Son of Witz wrote:

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Ryan Dunn — 23 Jun 2010, 00:52 · in reply to Son of Witz

I just wanted to recall what Severian and Dorcas talk about just after they see the floating building over Nessus...

He tells Dorcas that within the brown book are all the keys of the universe used in the past. One of them is that everything has three meanings: 1) Its practical meaning, 2) the reflection of the world around it, and 3) its transsubstantial meaning (that all objects originate in the Pancreator, and so all must express his will).

Dorcas asks if he means the floating building was a sign, to which he replies everything is a sign.

They walk in silence for some time. As Dorcas posits that the brown book means people have it all backward (that the third is the easiest to find, the first the hardest).

I think this is true especially of the claw, which is what caused the building vision (pelerine's tent?), I think.

...ryan

On Jun 22, 2010, at 5:38 PM, Son of Witz wrote:

If you're saying that the thorn he found was not in in the corundum, I don't agree. The text is pretty clear that the thorn was in the crystal, and even more so, if it's "just a thorn" why is it shining?.

Lee Berman — 23 Jun 2010, 11:38 · follows Ryan Dunn

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Very nice post Son O'Witz! I think Baldanders also calls it a "monument of superstition" or something like that.

While the symbolism is poignant, I (too?) think the sapphire enclosure is significant enough through 2.5 books to deserve a narrative explanation for how it came to surround the thorn.

There has been some debate in the past whether Severian is a "Christian figure" or a "Christ figure". A recent article in Ultan's Library reminds us Severian was marked by stigmata on the forehead after viewing Tzadkiel in the book. Now we are reminded that Severian was also pierced by a thorn. There is the desert garden and some other stuff that would seem to relate

directly to Jesus and not just Christianity in general.

Mr Thalassocrat — 23 Jun 2010, 12:53 · in reply to Son of Witz

On Wed, Jun 23, 2010 at 3:01 AM, Son of Witz <sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org> wrote:

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There, at the end you have it. He has a happy obedience without the least tincture of rebellion. He has been put through his tests, and now he is taking up the mantle.

The most interesting question for me is whether this unquestioning acceptance is supposed to be a **good** thing.

The Claw is only special because it has been soaked in Sev's blood, while he was on the Ship (or at least that's what giant-moth-woman-Morlock-bureaucrat Apheta tells him in UOTNS). The religion of the New Sun only exists because of Sev's actions in "the past". When he prays at the altar of the Pelerines in the lazarette, he finds that he is praying to himself.

If you can import a notion from Long Sun/Short Sun, Sev's strivings lead only back to himself, not outside, to the "Outsider".

And contrast Silk and SilkHorn's enlightenment and experience of the presence of God, with the thoughtless, formless, fundamentally non-intellectual nature of Sev's experience in this quote. Personally, I don't think Wolfe has any time for this kind of mystical experience, separated from the intellect. I read *Pirate Freedom* as a critique of it - the worthlessness of feeling all holy when it's separated from the conscious will to actually do good stuff.

Sev, the avatar of **his** religion, of course ends up responsible for the death of most of the people of Urth, without really thinking about what he's actually doing or having clear sense of why.

When you first read *New Sun*, and see the strange parallels between the life of Christ and Sev's life, it's natural to wonder if it isn't all a little blasphemous, coming from a Christian writer.

I think the answer is that Sev's career is indeed a kind of blasphemy. He says to Aphata that he is worried that the Hieros are like the magicians, promising wonders & delivering evil.

I think Sev for them serves much the same purpose as the mutilated cock he & little Sev find, before they encounter the magicians. The cock is a piece of apotropaic magic to ward off the coming of the New Sun. I think the Hieros have moulded Sev as a tool to ward off the coming of Christ, in some sense.

Ryan Dunn — 23 Jun 2010, 13:37 · in reply to Mr Thalassocrat

Hello,

I have been trying to define for myself how Malrubius and Triskele (and other aquastors) are portrayed in the "real world" of Urth. Without sparking an entire dissertation, could someone confirm if this is about right? In its basest terms:

An aquastor is a physically substantial vision meant for a specific person(s) to see. They are not real in terms of "reality", but nor are they insubstantial specters in "ghostly" sense.

Is this correct? And from where are they borne? The mind of the recipient of the vision? Or do they exist outside of the recipient's psyche?

Taking Severian at his word, when Triskele and Malrubius visit him at the campfire after the play, Dr. Talos does not see them but Severian describes his side feeling warm after the aquastors disappeared.

Thanks.

...ryan

Jeff Wilson — 23 Jun 2010, 16:35 · in reply to Ryan Dunn

Hello,

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They are like the tactile holograms in various media, particularly the doctor from Star Trek Voyager. They can appear just to one person mentally, or they can be objectively visible, and they can have temporary substance, leaving footprints, breathing in and out, and giving off body heat or even fighting and wounding real people. Aquastors can appear and disappear pretty much at any time, and they might or might not remember from appearance to appearance as the controller of their projecting machinery dictates.

An eidolon is an aquastor made with access to a living or once living original. It can thus have the original person's memories and free will. If one lasts long enough, it can assimilate enough real matter through eating and drinking to sustain itself without the hidden machinery. (This happens to Severian more than once.)

Ryan Dunn — 23 Jun 2010, 17:23 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On Jun 23, 2010, at 12:35 PM, Jeff Wilson wrote:
the controller of their projecting machinery

Is the controller, in the case of Severian, in fact, Severian? Or someone else (Father Inire? The Autarch?).

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Jeff Wilson — 23 Jun 2010, 17:46 · in reply to Ryan Dunn

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The only controllers we can confirm are FB&O. Inire is almost certainly one, and some of the squatty, long-armed characters suspected to be him in disguise might be his aquastor proxies instead.

Ryan Dunn — 23 Jun 2010, 18:06 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

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Ah yes, I always assumed Ossipago was Father Inire (same with the picture cleaner, and Palaemon).

But can the projectors send the aquastor visions from anywhere, or do they have to be within proximity?

...ryan

Jeff Wilson — 23 Jun 2010, 21:10 · in reply to Ryan Dunn

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Ah yes, I always assumed Ossipago was Father Inire (same with the picture cleaner, and Palaemon).

I think they are of a race and in league, but not the same person. Ossipago's quite gruff, while Inire's kindly; Ossipago goes where he is needed, Inire holds down the fort.

But can the projectors send the aquastor visions from anywhere, or do they have to be within proximity?

The LEXICON URTHUS author also wrote a role-playing supplement on the setting, and IIRC in it he speculates they have planetary range. There seem to be more powerful ones at work in

Yesod and/or on the Ship that maintain the newly eidoloned Severian during his leap between universes and can reach across a century of time.

Gerry Quinn — 23 Jun 2010, 22:34 · in reply to Mr Thalassocrat

I think you are reading for too negative a meaning into certain things. For a start, the New Sun is welcome despite the destruction, which is predicted in advance by various people; it means continuing life on Urth, rather than a slow dying over a few thousand years (Master Ash's future). He brings not Peace, but a Sword, you might say.

What coming of Christ does Sev ward off? No Christ is coming to the moribund Urth we meet at the beginning of the story.

- Gerry Quinn

From: Mr Thalassocrat

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brunians at brunians.org — 23 Jun 2010, 23:08 · in reply to Ryan Dunn

I suppose an aquastor lacks quastor.

What is quastor?

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Son of Witz — 23 Jun 2010, 23:38 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

I've got issues with that reading too.

I've posted here before how I see Severian as a QuasiChrist, as an actual avatar of the Logos. I'm NOT trying to crack that argument open again though. Severian actually embodies The Outsider, rather than being some solipsistic self referential loop. But boy, I've laid that out on URTH here to many people's dismay, so I'm going to hold back from offering more of the same. But as a simple answer to "is obedience to God a good thing", well, if you have to ask, you'll never know.

not that I'm all devout and pious....

~witz

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Jane Delawney — 24 Jun 2010, 00:53 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 23/06/10 12:38, Lee Berman wrote:

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garden and some other stuff that would seem to relate directly to Jesus and not just Christianity in general.

By the end of BOTNS / UOTNS Sev has acquired at least two of the orthodox Wounds of Christ and also a couple more long-term injuries which have Christian or semi-Christian mythic associations.

First there is the chest injury from an avern-leaf (I haven't the book in front of me at the moment but I think I remember this wound being described as 'the size and shape of a willow leaf' or something like, rather like the wound that would be made by the blade of a Roman spear); this injury is later reopened and presumably made more obvious in the throne-room scene at the end of Citadel where the resurrected assassin kills Valeria and injures Severian. Sev tells us that the knife reopens the avern-wound.

Then there is the 'crown of thorns' stigma which appears when he looks into the face of Tzadkiel in the Mirror-book. It's actually described as a kind of 'sweating of blood' (there are no tears in the skin or later scars), though clearly in one specific area ie. the forehead, thus combining suggestions of the crown of thorns with the Garden of Gethsemane episode.

The lameness, the thigh injury from an energy weapon which Sev acquires in battle and which is later first healed and then reopened, seems to relate to the Judean kingship ritual Robert Graves postulates in his novel King Jesus (Graves proposes that the accession ritual for the Kings of Judea included a ritual combat recapitulating Jacob's contention with an angel, during which he was lamed; the whole idea of this ritual is, as far as I know, Graves's own invention, and is not supported by biblical scholarship, but it seems to be echoed in Severian's thigh-wound).

There's also much emphasis on Severian's facial scarring from Agia's weapon. It's clear that before this happened he was a good-looking young man, yet after this injury his face is for quite some time a horror to look upon; one might say 'there is no form or comeliness in him', as in the Isiac prophecy. Perhaps this one is a bit of a stretch! But I'm hard pressed to imagine why else so much space is given to this injury and its after-effects.

I can't remember any hand or foot injuries, nor any scarring from a whipping (though given Severian's background, it would not be surprising if he had a few such scars); but that's perhaps as well. The whole subject is spooky enough already.

regards

JD

Son of Witz — 24 Jun 2010, 05:09 · in reply to Jane Delawney

On Wed, June 23, 2010 8:53 pm, Jane Delawney wrote:

On 23/06/10 12:38, Lee Berman wrote:

There has been some debate in the past whether Severian is a "Christian figure"

or a "Christ figure". A recent article in Ultan's Library reminds us Severian

was marked by stigmata on the forehead after viewing Tzadkiel in the book. Now

we are reminded that Severian was also pierced by a thorn. There is the desert

garden and some other stuff that would seem to relate directly to Jesus

and not
just Christianity in general.

By the end of BOTNS / UOTNS Sev has acquired at least two of the orthodox Wounds of Christ and also a couple more long-term injuries which have Christian or semi-Christian mythic associations.

First there is the chest injury from an avern-leaf (I haven't the book in front of me at the moment but I think I remember this wound being described as 'the size and shape of a willow leaf' or something like, rather like the wound that would be made by the blade of a Roman spear); this injury is later reopened and presumably made more obvious in the throne-room scene at the end of Citadel where the resurrected assassin kills Valeria and injures Severian. Sev tells us that the knife reopens the avern-wound.

Then there is the 'crown of thorns' stigma which appears when he looks into the face of Tzadkiel in the Mirror-book.

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There's also much emphasis on Severian's facial scarring from Agia's weapon. The whole subject is spooky enough already.

regards

JD

Good post. I can chew on that for a while.

brunians at brunians.org — 24 Jun 2010, 05:25 · in reply to Son of Witz
Saints bearing stigmata are commonplace.

Some object that Severian is no saint: he is as saintly as many a saint.

Like, for instance, St Olaf: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olaf_II_of_Norway

.

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JD

Good post. I can chew on that for a while.

brunians at brunians.org — 24 Jun 2010, 05:28 · in reply to Son of Witz

Just in case anyone doubts lupine relevance.

Olaf was the subject of several biographies, both hagiographies and sagas, in the Middle Ages, and many of the historical facts concerning his reign are disputed. The best known description is the one in Snorri Sturluson's Heimskringla, from c. 1230. That saga cannot be taken as an accurate source for Olaf's life, but most of the following description is based on the narrative there (from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olaf_II_of_Norway).

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JD

Good post. I can chew on that for a while.

brunians at brunians.org — 24 Jun 2010, 05:32 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

So high did Olaf's legal arrangements for the Church of Norway come to stand in the eyes of the Norwegian people and clergy, that when Pope Gregory VII attempted to make clerical celibacy binding on the priests of Western Europe in 1074-5, the Norwegians largely ignored this, since there was no mention of clerical celibacy in Olaf's legal code for their Church.

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David Stockhoff — 24 Jun 2010, 12:05 · in reply to Mr Thalassocrat

There's a bit in John that says (I paraphrase): Jesus does not come to put the world on trial or to condemn it, but to rescue it.

Severian comes to carry out a death sentence.

Mr Thalassocrat wrote:

On Wed, Jun 23, 2010 at 3:01 AM, Son of Witz

<sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org <mailto:sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org>> wrote:

after the Crystal is broken, Severian understands it's (now missing)
light as "the only light we had." He finds the shards, and gives
them to
the see, literally burying the myth. After the myth is disposed
of, he
finds the real Claw, the thorn, and he waxes philosophical:

"Whenever I looked at it, it seemed to erase thought. Not as wine and
certain drugs do, by rendering the mind unfit for it, but by
replacing it
with a higher state for which I know no name. Again and again I felt
myself enter this state, rising always higher until I feared I should
never return to the mode of consciousness I call normality; and
again and
again I tore myself from it. Each time I emerged, I felt I had
gained some
inexpressible insight into immense realities. At last, after a
long series
of these bold advances and fearful retreats, I came to understand
that I
should never reach any real knowledge of the tiny thing I held,
and with
that thought (for it was a thought) came a third state, one of happy
obedience to I knew not what, an obedience without reflection because
there was no longer anything to reflect upon, and without the least
tincture of rebellion."

There, at the end you have it. He has a happy obedience without
the least
tincture of rebellion. He has been put through his tests, and now
he is
taking up the mantle.

The most interesting question for me is whether this unquestioning
acceptance is supposed to be a *good* thing.

The Claw is only special because it has been soaked in Sev's blood,
while he was on the Ship (or at least that's what
giant-moth-woman-Morlock-bureaucrat Apheta tells him in UOTNS). The

religion of the New Sun only exists because of Sev's actions in "the past". When he prays at the altar of the Pelerines in the lazarette, he finds that he is praying to himself.

If you can import a notion from Long Sun/Short Sun, Sev's strivings lead only back to himself, not outside, to the "Outsider".

And contrast Silk and SilkHorn's enlightenment and experience of the presence of God, with the thoughtless, formless, fundamentally non-intellectual nature of Sev's experience in this quote. Personally, I don't think Wolfe has any time for this kind of mystical experience, separated from the intellect. I read Pirate Freedom as a critique of it - the worthlessness of feeling all holy when it's separated from the conscious will to actually do good stuff.

Sev, the avatar of *his* religion, of course ends up responsible for the death of most of the people of Urth, without really thinking about what he's actually doing or having clear sense of why.

When you first read New Sun, and see the strange parallels between the life of Christ and Sev's life, it's natural to wonder if it isn't all a little blasphemous, coming from a Christian writer.

I think the answer is that Sev's career is indeed a kind of blasphemy. He says to Aphata that he is worried that the Hieros are like the magicians, promising wonders & delivering evil.

I think Sev for them serves much the same purpose as the mutilated cock he & little Sev find, before they encounter the magicians. The cock is a piece of apotropaic magic to ward off the coming of the New Sun. I think the Hieros have moulded Sev as a tool to ward off the coming of Christ, in some sense.

Mr Thalassocrat — 24 Jun 2010, 14:04 · in reply to David Stockhoff

On Thu, Jun 24, 2010 at 9:35 PM, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:
There's a bit in John that says (I paraphrase): Jesus does not come to put the world on trial or to condemn it, but to rescue it.

Severian comes to carry out a death sentence.

Yes. By flooding. My memory of Genesis is pretty hazy, but isn't there a bit in it where God says he won't do that again?

Anyway, I read BOTNS/UOTNS as containing zero evidence that Sev is acting for God, and only comprehensible as a tragedy - but appreciate that I'm in a minority with that!

John Watkins — 24 Jun 2010, 14:53 · in reply to Mr Thalassocrat

I sort of can't believe we're having this discussion again, so I will simply restate my point.

1) Gene Wolfe tells us he's an orthodox Catholic, and we have no reason to disbelieve him.

2) Severian is pretty clearly not literally the Jesus guy orthodox Catholics say they believe in. He is a killer, likely a rapist, interested in worldly power, et cetera.

3) Severian is also pretty clearly surrounded by Christlike imagery. Some of this seems almost parodic, some of it seems almost reverent.

There are many hypotheses consistent with these facts. The hypotheses that aren't consistent are

a) Severian is a literal stand-in for Jesus Christ as understood by the author,

b) The author just screwed up and put in a lot of Jesus stuff for no reason.

Lane Haygood — 24 Jun 2010, 15:16 · in reply to John Watkins

Here's a hypothesis I have:

(x) Wolfe found gnostic, kabbalistic and other (quasi)heretical notions interesting and plundered them for story material, eventually coming up with a story about a young man's journey from outsider to king to flawed savior of the world (which is itself a common enough storyline).

This theory has the benefit of explaining the major themes and plot points of the BOTNS, while explaining away neatly any conflict between the theological grounding of Briah and that of the author, spatiotemporally situated so near to us as he is.

yvt,
Lane

On Thu, Jun 24, 2010 at 9:53 AM, John Watkins <john.watkins04 at gmail.com> wrote:
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Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org — 24 Jun 2010, 17:20 · in reply to David Stockhoff

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Severian comes to carry out a death sentence.

I definitely feel that "the Sev is not divine" arguments are fine and appropriate, and I don't care to try to convince anyone, but I think it's a shame that people get hung up on this idea that Severian did a bad thing, that he "carried out a death sentence".

This view is not, er, holistic to the themes. The most boiled down theme in this book, holographically repeated, is Death and Resurrection. We must not forget that.

Severian brought renewed life to the planet. the death of Urth was the birth of Ushas, and the resurection of the dying planet. To miss this is to fundamentally misunderstand the books, I think. To view this as a death sentence, one is basically taking the short sighted selfish side that Severian's foes had. They would deny the future for a few more years for themselves. Fuck that. This is a cycle that we see in nature. The forest has to burn for it's own good, periodically.

I'm sorry, just about any reading goes, but to just see Severian's act as a just tradgedy seems to completely miss the point.

It had to be a torturer to deliver the death stroke that brought new life. No one else would obey. Everyone else prefers to save themselves and cling to their attachments like children. Severian did a difficult, necessary, and beautiful thing.

~witz

Jordon Flato — 24 Jun 2010, 18:54 · in reply to Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org

And Wolfe is on record as saying that the only thing we're ever told that Jesus the Carpenter's son made was a Whip.

Witz and I have always been in agreeance on this, and because of that, I'm more likely to find textual support for the idea than for the idea of him as some sort of anti-christ.

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John Watkins — 24 Jun 2010, 18:58 · in reply to Jordon Flato

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Jordon Flato — 24 Jun 2010, 19:03 · in reply to John Watkins

Well, I'm certainly not making the case that he is literally Jesus. But he is far from the literal anti-christ.

On Thu, Jun 24, 2010 at 11:58 AM, John Watkins <john.watkins04 at gmail.com> wrote:
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John Watkins — 24 Jun 2010, 19:05 · in reply to Jordon Flato

I don't think he's the literal anti-christ either. He's maybe a take on what a heretical version of Christ would've been like in a science-fiction world?

Of course, I think that the New Sun coming was ultimately a good thing...I'm just not sure why.

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Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org — 24 Jun 2010, 19:21 · in reply to John Watkins

I've never used the name Jesus. Severian is not Jesus.

I know it's hard or 'wrong' for catholics to understand the historical Jesus as an instance of The Logos in history, but that's how I see it. All I've been saying in regards to Severian's 'divinity' has to do with this level of abstraction. I see him as A Christ for Urth, and, NOT Jesus of Earth. I'm also not trying to work ts into the Trinity. I don't see Severian as sharing some tripartite nature with The Father. I liken it to PKD's notion of VALIS as the Logos, as the healing ray from The Outsider into the Black Iron Prison; something that is sent in from outside time to heal us. I use Logos based on my understanding of the original greek notion of Ratio. That which reconciles God and Man. I see Jesus as one story about this reconciliation, and Severian's as another. I'm not, have never, and wouldn't claim they are the same story.

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Fuck that. This is a cycle that we see in nature. The forest has to burn for it's own good, periodically.

I'm sorry, just about any reading goes, but to just see Severian's act as a just tradgedy seems to completely miss the point.

It had to be a torturer to deliver the death stroke that brought new life. No one else would obey. Everyone else prefers to save themselves and cling to their attachments like children. Severian did a difficult, necessary, and beautiful thing.

~witz

On 6/24/2010 1:58 PM, John Watkins wrote:

That's is an awfully thin reed for "Severian is supposed to literally be Jesus" rather than "Severian is supposed to parallel Jesus in important ways". Perhaps the distinction is irrelevant for a non-believer, but the author is not a non-believer.

Wolfe has said that he's not inclined to express his faith in everything he's writes. He used OS Card as a counter-analogy. Figuratively, Severian is Christ....the gnostic Christ. Not the orthodox or Catholic Christ.

U+16B9

Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org — 24 Jun 2010, 19:24 · in reply to James Wynn

On Jun 24, 2010, at 12:22 PM, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:

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Exactly

brunians at brunians.org — 24 Jun 2010, 19:47 · in reply to Jordon Flato

Christ comes not to bring peace, but a sword.

He comes to judge the World, or that is what is said.

It is further said that most will be unhappy with his judgements.

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And Wolfe is on record as saying that the only thing we're ever told that Jesus the Carpenter's son made was a Whip.

Witz and I have always been in agreeance on this, and because of that, I'm more likely to find textual support for the idea than for the idea of him as some sort of anti-christ.

On Thu, Jun 24, 2010 at 10:20 AM, Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org <Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org> wrote:

On Jun 24, 2010, at 5:05 AM, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:

There's a bit in John that says (I paraphrase): Jesus does not come to put the world on trial or to condemn it, but to rescue it.

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brunians at brunians.org — 24 Jun 2010, 19:48 · in reply to John Watkins

Severian is a member of the mystical Body of Christ.

From the horse's mouth.

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On Thu, Jun 24, 2010 at 2:54 PM, Jordon Flato <jordonflato at gmail.com>
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Jordon Flato — 24 Jun 2010, 19:49 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

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On Thu, Jun 24, 2010 at 12:48 PM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:
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~witz

Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org — 24 Jun 2010, 20:57 · in reply to Jordon Flato

Ha!

Allright, but all this Sev/Christ biz aside, you've got to appreciate how badass this scene is. At the moment he is fully his own man, he has to dispose of the fragments of this Myth and take up the Reality that the Myth has indicated. It's one of the most profound moments for the Conciliator, and as usual, Severian is clueless of it's significance. Wolfe has given us such a tasty symbol in this crystalized myth.

~witz

On Jun 24, 2010, at 12:49 PM, Jordon Flato <jordonflato at gmail.com> wrote:
If that horse is a wolf, then I think the case is closed! :)

On Thu, Jun 24, 2010 at 12:48 PM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:
Severian is a member of the mystical Body of Christ.

From the horse's mouth.

Jane Delawney — 25 Jun 2010, 00:28 · in reply to Son of Witz

On 24/06/10 06:09, Son of Witz wrote

Good post. I can chew on that for a while.

Tx.

jd

Jane Delawney — 25 Jun 2010, 00:32 · in reply to Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org

On 24/06/10 18:20, Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org wrote:

It had to be a torturer to deliver the death stroke that brought new life. No one else would obey. Everyone else prefers to save themselves and cling to their attachments like children. Severian did a difficult, necessary, and beautiful thing.

~witz

to me that little tag, 'torturers obey', is the key to the entire BOTNS 'mythos'.

there are other 'mythic' structures in which obedience is perceived as the prime virtue. It's even an oath for some.

jd

David Stockhoff — 25 Jun 2010, 00:46 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Well, but that's at the end. And all that stuff was made up later.

brunians at brunians.org wrote:

Christ comes not to bring peace, but a sword.

He comes to judge the World, or that is what is said.

It is further said that most will be unhappy with his judgements.

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And Wolfe is on record as saying that the only thing we're ever told that Jesus the Carpenter's son made was a Whip.

Witz and I have always been in agreeance on this, and because of that, I'm more likely to find textual support for the idea than for the idea of him as some sort of anti-christ.

On Thu, Jun 24, 2010 at 10:20 AM, Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org <Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org> wrote:

John Watkins — 25 Jun 2010, 01:33 · in reply to David Stockhoff

Unless it was all made up. Or none of it was.

In other words, there isn't really a lot of hard evidence to go by.

On Thu, Jun 24, 2010 at 8:46 PM, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:
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On Thu, Jun 24, 2010 at 10:20 AM, Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org <Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org> wrote:

brunians at brunians.org — 25 Jun 2010, 02:02 · in reply to David Stockhoff
So?

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brunians at brunians.org — 25 Jun 2010, 02:02 · in reply to John Watkins
Yup.

We got these stories.

That's all we got.

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Unless it was all made up. Or none of it was.

In other words, there isn't really a lot of hard evidence to go by.

On Thu, Jun 24, 2010 at 8:46 PM, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:

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Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org> wrote:

David Stockhoff — 25 Jun 2010, 02:04 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

I just quoted the Book of John to say the precise opposite. That's all.

brunians at brunians.org wrote:
So?

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Well, but that's at the end. And all that stuff was made up later.

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On Thu, Jun 24, 2010 at 10:20 AM, Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org <Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org> wrote:

Ryan Dunn — 25 Jun 2010, 19:10 · in reply to Jordon Flato

On Jun 24, 2010, at 3:03 PM, Jordon Flato wrote:
Well, I'm certainly not making the case that he is literally Jesus. But he is far from the literal anti-christ.

Correct me if I'm wrong, but hasn't Gene outwardly denied Severian being christ-like?

...ryan

brunians at brunians.org — 25 Jun 2010, 19:22 · in reply to Ryan Dunn

He has denied him being Christ.

He has stated that he is a member of the mystical Body.

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On Jun 24, 2010, at 3:03 PM, Jordon Flato wrote:
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John Watkins — 25 Jun 2010, 19:39 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Again, me too. The mystic body of Christ is a pretty broad concept. The statement is perhaps identical to the statement that Severian is a member of the Order for Seekers of Truth and Penitence.

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10663a.htm>

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Matthew Weber — 25 Jun 2010, 19:46 · in reply to John Watkins

I don't think so. "The mystical Body of Christ" is another way of saying "the Church"--but not the human institution, or any particular human institution. It's what the Book of Common Prayer calls "the blessed company of all faithful people".

I don't see any reason to disbelieve Wolfe when he tells us that Severian is intended to be Christian, not Christ. Like most Christians (including me), he makes disastrous mistakes, and the few things he gets right are more or less by accident.

Or Grace--but that's another sermon, innit?

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brunians at brunians.org — 25 Jun 2010, 20:30 · in reply to John Watkins

Possibly so.

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Again, me too. The mystic body of Christ is a pretty broad concept.
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brunians at brunians.org — 25 Jun 2010, 20:31 · in reply to Matthew Weber

Indeed.

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Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org — 25 Jun 2010, 20:47 · in reply to Matthew Weber

Yeah yeah yeah guys.

I wasn't even trying to go there. WTF?

you fuckers jacked my topic.

It's called Corundum of the Claw

Not Conundrum of the Christ

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On Jun 25, 2010, at 12:46 PM, Matthew Weber <palaeologos at gmail.com> wrote:

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 25 Jun 2010, 20:49 · in reply to Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org

On Fri, Jun 25, 2010 at 1:47 PM, Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org
<Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org> wrote:

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:P

At this point perhaps a reading of the medieval poem "The Pearl" would be in order.

Or perhaps not.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

brunians at brunians.org — 25 Jun 2010, 20:52 · in reply to Sonofwitz at
butcherbaker.org

Life's that way.

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brunians at brunians.org — 25 Jun 2010, 20:54 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

The reading of the Victorian magazine "privately published for gentlemen" of the same name, definitely not.

Though there are some interesting parts involving whips.

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org — 25 Jun 2010, 20:59 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Snap!

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--

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

David Stockhoff — 26 Jun 2010, 17:25 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Indeed.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:
On Fri, Jun 25, 2010 at 1:47 PM, Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org
<Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org> wrote:

Yeah yeah yeah guys.
I wasn't even trying to go there. WTF?
you fuckers jacked my topic.
It's called Corundum of the Claw
Not Conundrum of the Christ
:P

At this point perhaps a reading of the medieval poem "The Pearl" would
be in order.

Or perhaps not.

David Stockhoff — 26 Jun 2010, 17:26 · in reply to Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org

No doubt there's an article in it about how the Carpenter never made anything BUT a whip.

Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org wrote:
Snap!

On Jun 25, 2010, at 1:54 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

The reading of the Victorian magazine "privately published for gentlemen"
of the same name, definitely not.

Though there are some interesting parts involving whips.

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

brunians at brunians.org — 26 Jun 2010, 17:40 · in reply to David Stockhoff

Nah, it's mostly little girls and schoolmistresses and shit.

Stimulating reading for a twelve year old, let me tell you.

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anything BUT a whip.

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