

Monkey business

The Urth list — 25 messages, 11 voices, 09 Jul 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5654>

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Roy C. Lackey — 09 Jul 2010, 04:07

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That some characters in the Urth Cycle are compared, in some way, with monkeys is beyond dispute. Since Wolfe wrote it, I think almost everyone will agree that the simian markers signify *something*. What seems to be at issue is what that something is.

There are also some appearances of monkey-like creatures, including the dog-ape hybrid figure who looked in on Severian in the lazaret. Inire, Rudesind and Fechin are each likened (by Sev or report of another character) to a monkey, but in different ways.

Inire is rumored to look like a monkey and said to be the oldest man in the world, so he must look like a very old man. He is said to be a little man, with a wry neck and bow legs.

Rudesind has a wrinkled neck, long arms and legs, long feet, crooked fingers and moves up and down his ladder like an aged monkey. His height is undetermined, but when he led Sev to the Old Autarch in the House Absolute (in CLAW) he was leaning on Sev's arm and had to cock his head up to look Sev in the face. That implies that he is not very tall. He has brown eyes that are "rheumy" and the hairs on his face are white with age.

Fechin is said by the old man at Casdow's cabin (hereafter I will call him "Old Man", since his name is not given**) to be tall and have red hair on his hands and arms. His arms, but for their size, are said to have looked like a monkey's. His face, however, was unlike a monkey's; it was handsome.

(** That his name is not given may or may not be important.)

Old Man and Rudesind both knew or met Fechin when they were boys, and the old men were thought by Sev to be about the same age. Each had their picture drawn or painted by Fechin when they were boys.

I don't think there is much to argue about in the above. Maybe having all these basic facts in one place will suggest a theory other than Inire somehow being some or all of these characters.

It should also be remembered that Sev's first manuscript was written ten years after he became autarch, and that he had full access to the Old Autarch's memories. The significance of that is that he had decades of familiarity with Inire, which means most of the normal human lifespans of the above men except, of course, Inire. If Rudesind, an acknowledged agent of the Old Autarch (and of Inire), had not aged like a normal human being during the Old Autarch's tenure, then Sev should have and would have known it.

-Roy

Mr Thalassocrat — 09 Jul 2010, 04:31 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

On Fri, Jul 9, 2010 at 1:37 PM, Roy C. Lackey <rclackey at stic.net> wrote:
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* *

brunians at brunians.org — 09 Jul 2010, 04:35 · in reply to Mr Thalassocrat

Ook ook?

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Jeff Wilson — 09 Jul 2010, 05:09 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

On 7/8/2010 11:07 PM, Roy C. Lackey wrote:
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Old Man and Rudesind both knew or met Fechin when they were boys, and the old men were thought by Sev to be about the same age. Each had their picture drawn or painted by Fechin when they were boys.

Sev may be poor at judging the ages of the very old, given his infrequent contact with them other than Master Malrubius. Casdoe's father Old Man seems to have been close to Fechin's age (though not a classmate, or he could have given him the paper much sooner), while Rudesind was a boy of 13 or so when Fechin was already an established artist. But Rudesind was also a

boy artist, so maybe Old Man is telling a story about his boyhood friend _Rudesind_, but mis-calling him Fechin due to old age, like he calls Severian "Becan".

And like you said, Old Man is is not given a personal name, and the children duplicate the narrator's name, so *some* kind of onomastic slight of hand is at work there.

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

Jeff Wilson — 09 Jul 2010, 05:11 · in reply to Mr Thalassocrat

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Yes, but the translator says that animal names are given by role rather than by taxonomy.

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Ryan Dunn — 09 Jul 2010, 05:19 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Adding some passages to this centralization of monkeydom...

RUDESIND:

"When I admitted I did not, he scrambled down from the ladder like an aged monkey, seeming all arms and legs and wrinkled neck; his hands were as long as my feet, the crooked fingers laced with blue veins."

THE CYNOCEPHALUS:

"An ape with the head of a dog ran down the aisle, paused at my bed to look at me, then ran on. That seemed no stranger to me than the light that, passing through a window I could not see, fell upon my blanket."

This guy, but with a dog head:

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fe/Dschelada_cynocephalus-gelada.png

RED MONKEY:

"Birds unknown to me called overhead, and once a monkey who might, save for his four hands, have been a wizened, red-bearded man in fur, spied on me from a fork as high as a spire."

FATHER INIRE:

"More fantastic still were the tales of his vizier, the famous Father Inire, who looked like a monkey and was the oldest man in the world."

FECHIN:

"He was the worst of us all, that Fechin. A tall, wild boy with red hair on his hands, on his arms. Like a monkey's arms, so that if you saw them reaching around the corner to take something, you'd think, except for the size, that it was a monkey taking it."

SHAMAN IN JUNGLE (INIRE):

"The old man had a staff as crooked as himself, topped with the dried head of a monkey."

...ryan

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James Wynn — 09 Jul 2010, 14:41 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

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Yes, but the translator says that animal names are given by role rather than by taxonomy.

There are smilodons and giant sloths. I presume these are generally indistinguishable for the ancient extinct varieties. I really did assume when I first read this that we were talking about a mandrill or baboon.

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Lee Berman — 09 Jul 2010, 15:55 · follows James Wynn

Roy I appreciate your efforts to ground all discussion in direct references from the text. I certainly welcome the generation of a theory which explains all these monkey references better than mine, which struggles and strains to hold together.

I must add that it isn't only the monkey aspect that I see as marking the appearances of Father Inire, it is a constellation of traits. The best illustration of that is the old boatman. It is from him that we hear the confirming description that Inire is small and bent. But we are told, without acknowledgement by Severian, that the boatman himself fits that very description. If we are looking for a mysterious Inire and we find a guy who looks like him and spends large amounts of time in a place built by Inire and frequented by Inire and his brethren, a red flag goes up for me. Severian is always comparing things to other things and people to other people so I am suspicious when he doesn't make an obvious comparison like this.

Another suspicious scene occurs in regard to the old person in Casdow's house. The red flag goes up for me because, over a long sequence of events, nobody

(except Severian's narration) acknowledges this person. Nobody says, "hey Little Severian, tell grandpa its time to eat" or "hey, grandpa, a monster just ate two of our family, we have to leave". Only Severian interacts with that old person.

My guess is that was done to avoid the use of any revealing pronouns. My guess is that Severian has misjudged the gender of this person. I think this person's description of Fechin is so adoring and admiring that it must come from a woman, not a man. And thus perhaps we have two unreliable narrators. I suspect Fechin is not really tall nor handsome but just perceived that way through loving eyes. I detect some jealousy as the old person discusses how she(?) has to wait for Fechin while he has his liaison with a beautiful girl (Dorcas?). Wait for her turn, I think.

All this is the sort of speculation piled upon speculation that Roy hopes to avoid. And I apologize. The only reason I indulge in it is because it provides (for me) answers to one of the deepest mysteries of the story Who are Severian's family members?

If I am right about the boatman, then Inire is Severian's grandfather. If I am right about the old person in Casdow's house then Little Severian is Severian's cousin. If I am right about Rudesind, his dead wife and two daughters, then Dorcas is his grandmother, Catherine is his mother and Cyriaca (who has a suspiciously knowledgeable "uncle") is his aunt. I see other clues which suggest Agia and Agilus are cousins and Jolenta is his sister. The source of all the incestuous desires in the family is from the patriarch, Father Inire, a benign but corrupting alien influence on humanity (and Severian's cursed family) which must be cleansed.

Naturally there are text citations I can make to support each of the possibilities I suggest above. If somebody wants to hear them that's fine. Finding mistakes and inconsistencies is also welcome. Otherwise that's my nutshell theory on Father Inire which, for the most part, works for me.

(I'll mention that I think the positive model for this ubiquitous, chimeric being is the non-fallen Tzadkiel, who can simultaneously be as big as an island, small as tinkerbell, exist as a hairy blob, a caveman, an adonis and a female. How all this relates to Severian's mating with Apheta is an interesting question)

Ryan Dunn — 09 Jul 2010, 17:12 · in reply to Lee Berman

On Jul 9, 2010, at 11:55 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

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Could the elderly person in Casdow's house be an aquastor?

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James Wynn — 09 Jul 2010, 17:35 · in reply to Ryan Dunn

On 7/9/2010 12:12 PM, Ryan Dunn wrote:

Could the elderly person in Casdow's house be an aquastor?

Sure. But anyone...probably any living thing...could be an aquastor. Why would being an aquastor help things along?

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Lee Berman — 09 Jul 2010, 17:53 · follows James Wynn

Oh, some further thoughts on monkeys and Inire- I agree that "dog-faced baboon" is the likely reference for the cynocephalus. I think it might tie in with the Egyptian god Thoth who had an ibis head while in heaven but a baboon head while in the underworld. Snips from Wikipedia say:

The ancient Egyptians regarded Thoth as One, self-begotten, and self-produced. They credited him as the author of all works of science, religion, philosophy, and magic. The Greeks further declared him the inventor of astronomy, astrology, the science of numbers, mathematics, geometry, land surveying, medicine, botany, theology, civilized government, the alphabet, reading, writing, and oratory. Further, the Greeks related Thoth to their god Hermes due to his similar attributes and functions.

Displaying his role as arbitrator, he had overseen the three epic battles between good and evil. All three battles are fundamentally the same and belong to different periods. The first battle took place between Ra and Apep, the second between Heru-Bekhutet and Set, and the third between Horus, the son of Osiris, and Set. In each instance, the former god represented order while the latter represented chaos. If one god was seriously injured, Thoth would heal them to prevent either from overtaking the other. Thoth was also prominent in the Osiris myth, being of great aid to Isis. After Isis gathered together the pieces of Osiris' dismembered body, he gave her the words to resurrect him so she could be impregnated and bring forth Horus. When Horus was slain, Thoth gave the magic to resurrect him as well

In the underworld, Duat, he appeared as a dog-faced baboon or an ape, A'an, the god of equilibrium, who reported when the scales weighing the deceased's heart against a feather, was exactly even.

With the arts and sciences, resurrections and advocacy for the dead references, I see possible whiffs of Father Inire, Severian and Rudesind.

António Pedro Marques — 09 Jul 2010, 17:59 · in reply to James Wynn

James Wynn wrote (09-07-2010 18:35):

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James Wynn — 09 Jul 2010, 18:26 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

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On 7/9/2010 12:59 PM, António Pedro Marques wrote:

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Bait the hook, then reel them in. You still haven't delineated the relevant differences between "Inire is Rudesind" and "Dorcas is Severian's grandmother". So this gives me a chance to show the value of wild speculation.

There's no reason to get Talmudic on the difference between your proposed standard and my question. I am only asking "How does viewing the old man as an aquastor resolve the apparent connection between him and Rudesind?" Also, "How does the old man being an aquastor resolve the issue posed by Mr Berman that the old man might be female?"

What I am not asking is "What difference would it make if the old man and Rudesind were connected?" or "If the old man is an aquastor, then what?" Because in these instances the question is the answer: "The old man and Rudesind might be connected" and "The old man might be an aquastor".

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António Pedro Marques — 09 Jul 2010, 19:27 · in reply to James Wynn

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Self-congratulation is unseemly, Antonio.

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António Pedro Marques — 09 Jul 2010, 20:03 · in reply to James Wynn

James Wynn wrote (09-07-2010 20:35):

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1. Why your first question made no sense at all:

On 7/7/2010 4:18 PM, Ant?nio Pedro Marques wrote: I'm not talking about narrative advantage. I'm talking about speculative advantage. And as a side note I'm against the idea of narrative advantage. I don't see that real life employs it, why should fiction?

2. Once you had corrected it, the information you ask for is in the archives and I have better things to do than reenact the whole discussion: On 7/7/2010 6:05 PM, Ant?nio Pedro Marques wrote: That has been discussed to death.

3. If you're really interested to know what's different instead of simply trying to sound clever, you can start with this: On 7/9/2010 5:56 AM, Ant?nio Pedro Marques wrote: One key difference is that Dorcas being Severian's grandmother tells us something about a character we knew nothing about (Dorcas as Severian's grandmother) and Severian's family tree, i.e. the level of data increases. Whereas Rudesind being Inire actually decreases the amount of data by dropping one character. And again, the identity of Dorcas is all but spelled out. When discussing whether or not she was Severian's grandmother, it's more of a debate between 'she obviously is' and 'it's so obvious maybe it's wrong'.

It would be quite nice if you'd keep track of what people say and didn't mangle the quotation system. It's not hard, you know. On the top of every quotation, there is a line saying who said what when. Then the text is indented by a greater-than sign. This can be nested. If people don't mess with it, as you do by trimming, then it's easy to follow the conversation. Plus, if you actually take the time to read what the other person says, you won't have to keep asking when did they say what.

You want me to replay the discussions from the archives? How stupid would I have to be to do your bidding? You don't get any rhetorical edge by making preposterous challenges.

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No. This does not explain why the first question made no sense or was beside the point. It only shows that you preferred another term. You could have opted to answer the question in those

terms instead. You chose not to. Which is why I followed up your response by rephrasing the same question. Only a fool would think what you wrote here explains how the following is true:

-----"Is Dorcas Severian's grandmother" = useful question
------(i.e. advantageous speculation)

-----"Is Rudesind Inire in disguise?" = pointless question
------(i.e. unadvantageous speculation)

If you are saying "Well, one is true and we don't know if the other is true" then your logic is entirely circular. The purpose of speculation in this instance to attempt to ascertain whether something is true. I hate to use the word "obvious" but....

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Note that less than 1.5 hours had passed between your last post and this one. Do you really think that merely declaring your preference for 'speculative advantage' over 'narrative advantage' has Drained the Well on this question? Really? Really???? I laughed when you posted this, but my sense of humor is wearing thin.

Secondly, all I've done here is rephrase the question in terms you say you prefer. In this instance, I gave you another chance at showing how the question of Sev's lineage is superior to questions of the identity of other characters. But you didn't take it. For some reason, you though you had *proven* something at this point. I don't understand why.

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Whereas Rudesind being Inire actually decreases the amount of data by dropping one character.

So today, you attempt to prove you case. Sort of.

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Irrelevant question in this case. No speculated advantage. See what I did above? I used specific instances and showed how they were different. Try that.

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You showed no such thing.

Now I understand. You're an idiot.

u+16b9

David Duffy — 09 Jul 2010, 23:13 · in reply to Lee Berman

On Fri, 9 Jul 2010, Lee Berman wrote:

Oh, some further thoughts on monkeys and Inire- I agree that "dog-faced baboon" is the likely reference for the cynocephalus. I think it might tie in with the Egyptian god Thoth who had an ibis head while in heaven but a

baboon head while in the underworld. Snips from Wikipedia say:

[SNIP]

Only slightly off topic, I was pleased with my keen insight honed from reading Wolfe :), when I saw this driving the plot of Evelyn Waugh's Decline and Fall.

A Google search has just pointed out to me that Waugh's birthday of October 28 is the start of the Isia (the holiday of Isis).

Actually, does anyone think Severian could be Pennyfeather? Sent down in disgrace... The Autarch is then Margot Beste-Chetwynde, Philbrick is Inire...

Cheers, David Duffy,

aaron — 09 Jul 2010, 23:34 · in reply to James Wynn

This mutually masturbatory argument is fun and all, but I think perhaps private emails would be even more fun for those of us scrolling through this nonsense..

On Fri, Jul 9, 2010 at 5:09 PM, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:

On 7/9/2010 12:12 PM, Ryan Dunn wrote:

Could the elderly person in Casdow's house be an aquastor?

James Wynn wrote (09-07-2010 18:35):

Sure. But anyone...probably any living thing...could be an aquastor. Why would being an aquastor help things along?

On 7/9/2010 12:59 PM, Ant?nio Pedro Marques wrote:
Hey!

James Wynn wrote (09-07-2010 19:26):

Bait the hook, then reel them in. You still haven't delineated the relevant differences between "Inire is Rudesind" and "Dorcas is Severian's grandmother".

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It's not my fault if you can't read.

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Read what? Still no citation? Tsk tsk.
Five dodges now.

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Citation of what, James? I've said which two things are wrong with your question and given a further explanation. Since your attention span seems not to be having the best of days, I'll repeat them, which is something I abhor.

1. Why your first question made no sense at all:

On 7/7/2010 4:18 PM, Ant?nio Pedro Marques wrote: I'm not talking about narrative advantage. I'm talking about speculative advantage. And as a side note I'm against the idea of narrative advantage. I don't see that real life employs it, why should fiction?

No. This does not explain why the first question made no sense or was beside the point. It only shows that you preferred another term. You could have opted to answer the question in those terms instead. You chose not to.

Which is why I followed up your response by rephrasing the same question. Only a fool would think what you wrote here explains how the following is true:

-----"Is Dorcas Severian's grandmother" = useful question
----- (i.e. advantageous speculation)

-----"Is Rudesind Inire in disguise?" = pointless question
----- (i.e. unadvantageous speculation)

If you are saying "Well, one is true and we don't know if the other is true" then your logic is entirely circular. The purpose of speculation in this instance to attempt to ascertain whether something is true. I hate to use the word "obvious" but....

On 7/9/2010 3:03 PM, Ant?nio Pedro Marques wrote:

2. Once you had corrected it, the information you ask for is in the archives and I have better things to do than reenact the whole discussion:
On 7/7/2010 6:05 PM, Ant?nio Pedro Marques wrote: That has been discussed to death.

Note that less than 1.5 hours had passed between your last post and this one. Do you really think that merely declaring your preference for 'speculative advantage' over 'narrative advantage' has Drained the Well on this question? Really? Really???? I laughed when you posted this, but my sense of humor is wearing thin.

Secondly, all I've done here is rephrase the question in terms you say you prefer. In this instance, I gave you another chance at showing how the question of Sev's lineage is superior to questions of the identity of other characters. But you didn't take it. For some reason, you thought you had *proven* something at this point. I don't understand why.

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u+16b9

brunians at brunians.org — 10 Jul 2010, 01:26 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

The man argues like a protestant.

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On 7/9/2010 2:27 PM, Antonio Pedro Marques wrote:

Way to go about not saying anything.

Self-congratulation is unseemly, Antonio.

u+16b9

David Stockhoff — 12 Jul 2010, 23:29 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

I agree.

One comment though---I thought Rudesind was tall because of his long limbs, but you're right---he's average to short. Severian is tall but not that tall.

However, those long limbs and short height do create a problem. He doesn't sound human. How is it possible to have long arms/legs/feet and yet be short?

Short torso? Slumped posture? Generally smaller size, like an actual monkey? Is he a monkeyman, like the dogmen in the armored coach? Is that what the "cover story" Inire gave him refers to?

I don't have a theory. I just don't get it.

Roy C. Lackey wrote:

Okay, let's see if we can find some middle ground in all this monkey business.

That some characters in the Urth Cycle are compared, in some way, with monkeys is beyond dispute. Since Wolfe wrote it, I think almost everyone will agree that the simian markers signify *something*. What seems to be at issue is what that something is.

There are also some appearances of monkey-like creatures, including the dog-ape hybrid figure who looked in on Severian in the lazaret. Inire, Rudesind and Fechin are each likened (by Sev or report of another character) to a monkey, but in different ways.

Inire is rumored to look like a monkey and said to be the oldest man in the world, so he must look like a very old man. He is said to be a little man, with a wry neck and bow legs.

Rudesind has a wrinkled neck, long arms and legs, long feet, crooked fingers and moves up and down his ladder like an aged monkey. His height is undetermined, but when he led Sev to the Old Autarch in the House Absolute (in CLAW) he was leaning on Sev's arm and had to cock his head up to look Sev in the face. That implies that he is not very tall. He has brown eyes that are "rheumy" and the hairs on his face are white with age.

Fechin is said by the old man at Casdoe's cabin (hereafter I will call him "Old Man", since his name is not given**) to be tall and have red hair on his hands and arms. His arms, but for their size, are said to have looked like a monkey's. His face, however, was unlike a monkey's; it was handsome.

(** That his name is not given may or may not be important.)

Old Man and Rudesind both knew or met Fechin when they were boys, and the old men were thought by Sev to be about the same age. Each had their picture drawn or painted by Fechin when they were boys.

I don't think there is much to argue about in the above. Maybe having all these basic facts in one place will suggest a theory other than Inire somehow being some or all of these characters.

It should also be remembered that Sev's first manuscript was written ten years after he became autarch, and that he had full access to the Old Autarch's memories. The significance of that is that he had decades of familiarity with Inire, which means most of the normal human lifespans of the above men except, of course, Inire. If Rudesind, an acknowledged agent of the Old Autarch (and of Inire), had not aged like a normal human being during the Old Autarch's tenure, then Sev should have and would have known

it.

-Roy

David Stockhoff — 12 Jul 2010, 23:31 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

That doesn't seem to apply here. What function does a baboon have?

I always assumed "baboon" was meant--- a baboon is a dogheaded ape and was thought such by the Egyptians.

Jeff Wilson wrote:

On 7/8/2010 11:31 PM, Mr Thalassocrat wrote:

On Fri, Jul 9, 2010 at 1:37 PM, Roy C. Lackey <rclackey at stic.net
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** Not very important, but I don't think a dog/ape hybrid is intended. "Cynecephalus" (dog-headed) is a term which seems to get applied to baboons - eg /Papio cynocephalus
//http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow_Baboon// /

Yes, but the translator says that animal names are given by role rather than by taxonomy.

David Stockhoff — 12 Jul 2010, 23:53 · in reply to Lee Berman

Could this fit a genetic program carried out by Inire? The problem there is that you consider Inire to be corrupting, but in that scenario he would be purifying.

Of course incest itself is seen in exactly those terms, which makes this logical.

Lee Berman wrote:

Roy I appreciate your efforts to ground all discussion in direct references from the text. I certainly welcome the generation of a theory which explains all these monkey references better than mine, which struggles and strains to hold together.

I must add that it isn't only the monkey aspect that I see as marking the appearances of Father Inire, it is a constellation of traits. The best illustration of that is the old boatman. It is

from him that we hear the confirming description that Inire is small and bent. But we are told, without acknowledgement by Severian, that the boatman himself fits that very description. If we are looking for a mysterious Inire and we find a guy who looks like him and spends large amounts of time in a place built by Inire and frequented by Inire and his brethren, a red flag goes up for me. Severian is always comparing things to other things and people to other people so I am suspicious when he doesn't make an obvious comparison like this.

Another suspicious scene occurs in regard to the old person in Casdoe's house. The red flag goes up for me because, over a long sequence of events, nobody (except Severian's narration) acknowledges this person. Nobody says, "hey Little Severian, tell grandpa its time to eat" or "hey, grandpa, a monster just ate two of our family, we have to leave". Only Severian interacts with that old person.

My guess is that was done to avoid the use of any revealing pronouns. My guess is that Severian has misjudged the gender of this person. I think this person's description of Fechin is so adoring and admiring that it must come from a woman, not a man. And thus perhaps we have two unreliable narrators. I suspect Fechin is not really tall nor handsome but just perceived that way through loving eyes. I detect some jealousy as the old person discusses how she(?) has to wait for Fechin while he has his liaison with a beautiful girl (Dorcas?). Wait for her turn, I think.

All this is the sort of speculation piled upon speculation that Roy hopes to avoid. And I apologize. The only reason I indulge in it is because it provides (for me) answers to one of the deepest mysteries of the story Who are Severian's family members?

If I am right about the boatman, then Inire is Severian's grandfather. If I am right about the old person in Casdoe's house then Little Severian is Severian's cousin. If I am right about Rudesind, his dead wife and two daughters, then Dorcas is his grandmother, Catherine is his mother and Cyriaca (who has a suspiciously knowledgeable "uncle") is his aunt. I see other clues which suggest Agia and Agilus are cousins and Jolenta is his sister. The source of all the incestuous desires in the family is from the patriarch, Father Inire, a benign but corrupting alien influence on humanity (and Severian's cursed family) which must be cleansed.

Naturally there are text citations I can make to support each of the possibilities I suggest above. If somebody wants to hear them that's fine. Finding mistakes and inconsistencies is also welcome. Otherwise that's my nutshell theory on Father Inire which, for the most part, works for me.

(I'll remention that I think the positive model for this ubiquitous, chimeric being is the non-fallen Tzadkiel, who can simultaneously be as big as an island, small as tinkerbelle, exist as a hairy blob, a caveman, an adonis and a female. How all this relates to Severian's mating with Apheta is an interesting question)

Jeff Wilson — 13 Jul 2010, 02:16 · in reply to David Stockhoff

On 7/12/2010 6:29 PM, David Stockhoff wrote:
I agree.

One comment though---I thought Rudesind was tall because of his long limbs, but you're right---he's average to short. Severian is tall but not that tall.

However, those long limbs and short height do create a problem. He doesn't sound human. How is it possible to have long arms/legs/feet and yet be short?

"When I admitted I did not, he scrambled down from the ladder like an aged monkey, seeming all arms and legs and wrinkled neck; his hands were as long as my feet, the crooked fingers laced with blue veins."

He may simply have a short torso, by birth, osteoporosis, or both. I've seen such an older man around the town where I live who was barely five feet tall but still able to ride an adult-sized tricycle. He would come in to pay on his account at the Sears where I worked years ago, and when he waiting stationary in line I noticed his fingertips nearly reached his knees, a common simian detail.

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

David Stockhoff — 13 Jul 2010, 02:23 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

And could he climb ladders like a monkey? I suppose we'll never know.

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