

On Pedophillia and Homosexuality

The Urth list — 17 messages, 8 voices, 21 Jul 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5672>

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Nicholas — 21 Jul 2010, 20:05

" don't see where you get this from. Granted Baldanders is not shown as having any sexual interest in women, and by default one might assume that such a character might (or might not) be gay. But the modified child in his bed hardly qualifies as a man."

You make two bad assumptions that the classic world didn't. The first is that sexual preference is fixed. As I pointed out this is a new (and I think very wrong) idea. Two, that the boys essential nature isn't human and male. What is he, a female mouse? A Greek wouldn't understand the fine difference you're driving at to protect modern sensibilities (sensibilities trained by a halting assumption of Christian ethics). What difference does it make when I sleep with a slave that is three or thirty?

Seen from a Christian perspective Badlanders is an idolater of the worst and primal sort. This might explain his strange flirtations with Severian, he's the only man that can be seen as a rough equal. They are almost foils of each other.

Sent from my iPhone

Matthew Weber — 21 Jul 2010, 20:12 · in reply to Nicholas

On Wed, Jul 21, 2010 at 1:05 PM, Nicholas <nickjost at yahoo.com> wrote:

" don't see where you get this from. Granted Baldanders is not shown as having any sexual interest in women, and by default one might assume that such a character might (or might not) be gay. But the modified child in his bed hardly qualifies as a man."

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I wouldn't even say a halting assumption of Christian ethics; it's the influence of the late 19th-century construction of the innocence of childhood (of course, only middle- and upper-class children were innocent, as a perusal of the literature on Victorian child prostitution will show).

Nicholas' comments about sexual orientation are spot-on--see Foucault's History of Sexuality for some very illuminating thinking on this subject.

Matt +

A grudging and infrequent worshipper of the gods.
Horace [Quintus Horatius Flaccus] (65-8 B.C.), Odes, bk. I [23 B.C.],
ode xxxiv, l. 1

David Stockhoff — 22 Jul 2010, 00:44 · in reply to Matthew Weber

I agree. Although I am skeptical that the "boy" is a catamite. Severian thinks so, but he can be wrong.

Matthew Weber wrote:

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brunians at brunians.org — 22 Jul 2010, 00:48 · in reply to David Stockhoff

Severian is an excellent judge of human nastiness.

Every good corrections officer is.

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David Stockhoff — 22 Jul 2010, 02:57 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

That's a good point.

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Jerry Friedman — 22 Jul 2010, 03:01 · in reply to Nicholas

From: Nicholas <nickjost at yahoo.com>

" don't see where you get this from. Granted Baldanders is not shown as having any sexual interest in >women,

Specifically, not in the endlessly desirable Jolenta.

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You did say specifically that Baldanders liked the attentions of "men", not "men and boys". And where should I have noticed that's what he liked? Also, you said that Severian noticed and grokked that men are attracted to other males. Where did I miss that? I remember he mentions some men who are impotent save with men like themselves.

The first is that sexual preference is fixed. As I pointed out this is a new (and I think very wrong) idea.

Whether it's right or wrong, isn't it in the Symposium? Some of the two-backed beasts are male-female, some female-female, and some male-male? And Severian seems to believe that at least some people's sexual preference is fixed.

Two, that the boys essential nature isn't human and male. What is he, a female mouse? A Greek wouldn't understand the fine difference you're driving at to protect modern sensibilities (sensibilities trained by a halting assumption of Christian ethics).

Sure a Greek would understand it. There's a reason for the word paidērastes (if I got that right), boy-lover, not man-lover. And Severian says he doesn't believe Baldanders practiced pederasty with the overgrown boy. As far as I can tell, you're assuming that people are sexually attracted to other people's essential nature, whatever that is. I think age and other superficial features have a lot to do with it. If A is attracted to B when B is thirty, it doesn't follow that A is attracted to B when B is three (or ninety). Most people find secondary sexual characteristics attractive. (Of course, Severian may have meant that Baldanders might have been waiting till the boy developed those characteristics. It's easier to believe B could be attractive at both thirteen and thirty.)

What difference does it make when I sleep with a slave that is three or thirty?

...

They're both rape, and I believe they're both evil, but I imagine it makes a difference to the victim. And as I said above, it probably makes a difference to the slaveowner, too.

I think you're right to call attention to the differences between ancient and modern beliefs, and to the possibility that the latest belief might not be the ultimate truth, and to the possibility that Wolfe didn't believe the latest belief of the time when he wrote BotNS, but I think you're taking things too far.

Jerry Friedman

brunians at brunians.org — 22 Jul 2010, 03:08 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

Whatever.

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Jeff Wilson — 22 Jul 2010, 03:46 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

On 7/21/2010 10:01 PM, Jerry Friedman wrote:

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Baldanders likely assisted Dr Talos with her makeover, and so would have a lot of associations with her that others would not. Also, Baldanders is really old and despite his prolonged adolescent growth, he doesn't seem to have the teenage horniness one might expect, so he could be "done" or just have a low sex drive.

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At first I read this as "impatient", and perhaps he is indeed the sort of sexist pig who doesn't have time for women, despite being otherwise enlightened about the human condition. A similar attitude was prevalent at King's College among the mostly male DNA reasearchers at the expense of Rosalind Franklin.

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

brunians at brunians.org — 22 Jul 2010, 03:58 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

He's got a buttboy, Wilson.

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Adam Thornton — 22 Jul 2010, 04:02 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

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I figured that Baldanders had long ago learned to channel his energies into studies that would increase his longevity and power. Or, to quote the punchline of an old but good joke:

"I'm an engineer. I don't have time for a girlfriend, but a talking frog is pretty cool."

Adam

brunians at brunians.org — 22 Jul 2010, 04:09 · in reply to Adam Thornton

Otto Skorzeny was an engineer.

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Adam Thornton — 22 Jul 2010, 04:12 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

On Jul 21, 2010, at 11:09 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

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So was Isambard Kingdom Brunel. As was Robert E. Lee.

Adam

brunians at brunians.org — 22 Jul 2010, 04:45 · in reply to Adam Thornton

As was George Henry Thomas.

Graduates from West Point and Annapolis and presumably Colorado Springs take engineering degrees.

I find I am not sure if they all do. Perhaps some do not.

Anyway, engineers tend to look at the World a certain way.

We've been made into geeks for a number of reasons, most of them unclear.

Of course, you know, someone who does software and nothing but software cannot be considered an actual engineer.

Engineers make things.

One way or another.

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brunians at brunians.org — 22 Jul 2010, 04:50 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org
Gene Wolfe's an engineer, Wilson's an engineer.

I'm an engineer among other things.

Who else here?

.

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Jeff Wilson — 22 Jul 2010, 05:19 · in reply to Adam Thornton

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For such a focussed scientist, he seems to be spending a lot of his personal time putting on plays.

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brunians at brunians.org — 22 Jul 2010, 05:38 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

I think that's Talos, Wilson.

No matter, Talos is a manifestation of Baldander's will as much as the big guy himself.

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Gerry Quinn — 22 Jul 2010, 07:40 · in reply to Nicholas

From: Nicholas

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I make no such assumption. Perhaps outside the short time we know him, Baldanders is a connoisseur of sheep, or perhaps he eventually transforms himself into a tribade. However, at the time we meet him, all we see is that he seems to have little interest in women. If we assume that, as with most people, he has at least **some** sexual interests, then we will consider it at least more likely than average that he will turn out to have an interest in men. This is all beside the point anyway.

Two, that the boys essential nature isn't human and male. What is he, a female mouse? A Greek wouldn't understand the fine difference you're driving at to protect modern sensibilities (sensibilities trained by a halting assumption of Christian ethics). What difference does it make when I sleep with a slave that is three or thirty?

You said yourself: " He's interested in men because they are like him and he is his own idol." Baldanders is a mature man; a three year old boy is not much like him. And a child may be human and male, without thereby being a man.

The Greeks would in my opinion have made this distinction also, even if they tolerated adult males having sex with adolescent boys. (I reserve judgement on how much this alleged tolerance has to do with historical fact, and how much with the predilections of certain classical scholars looking wistfully back towards a mythical golden age of pederasty.)

- Gerry Quinn