

Brook Madregot runs between

The Urth list — 38 messages, 13 voices, 11 Aug 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5699>

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Lee Berman — 11 Aug 2010, 03:48

Well, this has been an even more surreal discussion than normal here. I think there may be something of an old guard, keepers of the flames of truth from the earlier years of this forum to be protected from whippersnappers. But the strong association with certain theories and fierce loyalty has me questioning if I even know the meaning of simple words in English or perhaps I am going insane. Roy C. Lackey I must single you out as a prime culprit, ;-) while still recognizing the undisputed depth and breadth of your knowledge of Gene Wolfe's writing.

When Roy takes the phrase "**Yesod, the universe higher than our own**" to unequivocally mean it is a separated entity, I just don't understand. To me "higher" implies connection; a comparison of two points on the same scale, ladder, spectrum, whatever. Perhaps the separation part it is a social class issue and I am too plebian to get it ;-).

I had a similar fear that I was going illiterate when Roy attempted to prove the same point with:

The Brook Madregot runs **between** the universes Briah and Yesod (285), so of course they are apart.

Another WTF moment for me. But giving it some thought I realized he was thinking of the word "between" differently than I was. For him it is a separation word like "The Danube flowed between the towns of Buda and Pest". For me, in this context, it is a connection word like, "Interstate 5 runs between Seattle and San Diego".

I can see that if one has always assumed Yesod to be separate and distinct from the sequence of universes, each statement in the text becomes twisted to mean that very thing. Likewise for me and perhaps others who have always assumed that Yesod was connected in a sequence to Briah.

I think that this particular textual passage (below) seems to argue for sequential connection not separation. But perhaps others will disagree.

Severian- "But this place is Briah, or part of it. It's a passage in your ship, the one you showed me when you led me to my stateroom"

Tinkerbelle Tzadkiel- "If that is so, you were near Yesod when you were with me on our ship. This is the Brook Madregot, and it runs from Yesod to Briah".

Severian- "Between the universes? How could that be?"

Tinkerbelle Tzadkiel- "How could it not be? Energy gropes for some lower state, always..."

Severian- "But it's a stream, like the streams of Urth"

Tinkerbelle Tzadkiel nods- "Those too are of energy seeking a lower state...."

I'm not sure if I understand Roy and Tony and Jeff and others' view correctly- is Yesod to be viewed as a lonely orphan universe sticking off to the side of Briah? Or does it go through its own

Bangs and Gnabs? Either way seems messy but I am open to the possibility that this might be the intended interpretation.

I think the text also allows for my view that Briah is destroyed, giving rise to Yesod. I find it simpler and more elegant. Yesod is higher than Briah, both in energy and spirituality. Like Dan I am pleased that this view allows Yesod to be our own universe and suggests a reason why our Earth is spiritually more advanced than Urth (Jesus).

Ryan Dunn — 11 Aug 2010, 04:13 · in reply to Lee Berman

On Aug 10, 2010, at 11:48 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

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Something like this, Lee?

http://img1.artweb.com/users/7588/218163_multiverse-28.jpg

Pardon the New Age diagram, but Multiverse has several visual interpretations. This was just one of them.

...ryan

Jerry Friedman — 11 Aug 2010, 05:09 · in reply to Lee Berman

From: Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com>

...

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between the towns of Buda and Pest".

Not to speak for Roy, but I'd be very surprised if that's what he was thinking.

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I can see that if one has always assumed Yesod to be separate and distinct from the sequence of universes, each statement in the text becomes twisted to mean that very thing. Likewise for

me and perhaps others who have always assumed that Yesod was connected in a sequence to BriaH.

I think that this particular textual passage (below) seems to argue for sequential connection not

separation. But perhaps others will disagree.

I will. I think there are different dimensions of possible connection here.

Severian- "But this place is BriaH, or part of it. It's a passage in your ship, the one you showed me when you led me to my stateroom"

Tinkerbelle Tzadkiel- "If that is so, you were near Yesod when you were with me on our ship. This is the Brook Madregot, and it runs from Yesod to BriaH".

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I'm not sure if I understand Roy and Tony and Jeff and others' view correctly- is Yesod to be

viewed as a lonely orphan universe sticking off to the side of BriaH?

Not off to the side--above.

Or does it go through its own Bangs and Gnabs? Either way seems messy but I am open to the possibility that this might be the intended interpretation.

My view is that it's like a shotgun house. On the first floor are rooms in a linear sequence (universes including BriaH and our universe in a time sequence, or maybe ours is called BriaH

too). The roof is flat and has a railing and some lawn chairs so you can go up there when the house is too hot or you want to stargaze. (The habitable space on the roof is Yesod, the universe above Briah.) You can get from the roof to the lower story at various places in the sequence of rooms (various times). When it rains, water leaks down from the roof into the rooms. (I don't need to say what that corresponds to.)

Whether Yesod has its own Bangs and Gnabs I can't say. Maybe it's more like an upper story with rooms that match the lower one. I also can't say what's above Yesod, if anything. And of course there are more dimensions to allow for all those different timelines.

I think the text also allows for my view that Briah is destroyed, giving rise to Yesod. I find it

simpler and more elegant. Yesod is higher than Briah, both in energy and spirituality. Like Dan'I I am

pleased that this view allows Yesod to be our own universe and suggests a reason why our Earth is

spiritually more advanced than Urth (Jesus).

I find it very hard to see how Severian, in Yesod, could be at a time before the people he knew were born, if Yesod is later in time than Briah. As people have pointed out.

Earth is very much like Urth. Few of us would have thought Urth was a subsequent universe rather than our future if Wolfe hadn't said so outside the book. Yesod seems like a totally different place, far more different that the existence of Jesus could explain, from what I can see at Google Books and Amazon. But I can't prove anything from what I can see.

Jerry Friedman

Roy C. Lackey — 11 Aug 2010, 05:14 · in reply to Lee Berman

Lee Berman wrote:

[snip]

I can see that if one has always assumed Yesod to be separate and distinct from the sequence of universes, each statement in the text becomes twisted to mean that very thing. Likewise for me and perhaps others who have always assumed that Yesod was connected in a sequence to Briah.

I think that this particular textual passage (below) seems to argue for sequential connection not separation. But perhaps others will disagree.

I disagree.

Severian- "But this place is Briah, or part of it. It's a passage in your ship, the one you showed me when you led me to my stateroom"

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She is speaking of entropy, as Apheta had earlier when she acknowledged that it was something that even the Hierogrammates had to deal with. Because energy always seeks a lower state, the Brook reflects that, as she indicates on the next page:

"I can tell you this: Madregot flows from the glory of Yesod"--she pointed upstream--"to the destruction of BriaH, down that way." She pointed again. (286)

In other words, the Brook flows *from* Yesod *to* BriaH, from the higher plane to the lower, just as Malrubius had told Severian ten years earlier. Put still another way, Yesod and BriaH are not on the same plane. Neither do they follow one another in a series. In the cosmology Wolfe uses in the Urth Cycle, Yesod is on a separate plane that is somehow "higher than our own", "our own" in context meaning BriaH.

-Roy

Jeff Wilson — 11 Aug 2010, 07:48 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 8/10/2010 10:48 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

I'm not sure if I understand Roy and Tony and Jeff and others' view correctly- is Yesod to be viewed as a lonely orphan universe sticking off to the side of BriaH?

Yesod is above the cycles of BriaH the way the Corridors of Time are above the roads of the Commonwealth. Expansion/inflation of space makes BriaH it's own neighbor in finite but unbounded space; the successive cycles are neighbors in time, though separated by the unassailable fences of creation and destruction of all matter. Yesod and Abaddon are neighbors in yet another dimension, possibly the same as the Corridors of Time, but of a distance of much greater magnitude, requiring the exalted power of Tzadkiel to allow safe travel between them within a human lifetime.

Or does it go through its own
Bangs and Gnabs? Either way seems messy but I am open to the possibility that this might be the intended interpretation.

The use of "manvantara" brings in the concept of Hindu myth's nested cycles, so possibly Yesod does have its own bang-gnab cycle, but one very different from ours/BriaH's. Yesod the universe is said to contain many constructed worlds, but Severian visits one machine-planet that seems to be embedded in a small universe with a simulated sun and stars for cosmetic reasons. (There are no tides, so the sun of Yeasod is not anything like a star or even a moon.) The machine-planet itself has various levels inside of it, so perhaps they count as various constructed worlds.

The simulated day in Yesod is very short compared to the subjective length of URth's day. This may also mean that the Yesod cycle stretches over many BriaH cycles, even if the billion-trillion years per cycle in BriaH seem like a few decades to the Hierodules. It also may be that this is arbitrary, based on actions the Yesodis take rather than Yesod having a fixed flow of time like BriaH.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at

David Stockhoff — 11 Aug 2010, 11:54 · in reply to Ryan Dunn

Whatever the case, BriaH can't be inside Yesod. That would turn Apheta's remark about traveling backwards into nonsense.

Ryan Dunn wrote:

On Aug 10, 2010, at 11:48 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

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Pardon the New Age diagram, but Multiverse has several visual interpretations. This was just one of them.

...ryan

Gerry Quinn — 11 Aug 2010, 12:45 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

From: "Jerry Friedman" <jerry_friedman at yahoo.com>

I find it very hard to see how Severian, in Yesod, could be at a time before the people he knew were born, if Yesod is later in time than BriaH. As people have pointed out.

I don't think time is necessarily commensurable across universes. That is, I think the question of whether an event in Yesod preceeds or succeeds an event in BriaH has no meaningful answer. (For the history of an individual passing between them it may have an answer, but the answer could be different for other individuals.)

Earth is very much like Urth. Few of us would have thought Urth was a subsequent universe rather than our future if Wolfe hadn't said so outside the book. Yesod seems like a totally different place, far more different than the existence of Jesus could explain, from what I can see at Google Books and Amazon. But I can't prove anything from what I can see.

I agree. I see no real reason to think of Urth as anything other than our future. Note that in the Book of the Long Sun Silk sees a vision of Jesus on Palm Sunday, the name Allah also appears, as does a distorted version of the Adam and Eve story. Not to mention the Apollo landing images etc. Sure, those informations *could* come from different universes, but I see no strong reason to think so.

- Gerry Quinn

Lee Berman — 11 Aug 2010, 12:53 · follows Gerry Quinn

Roy C. Lackey: "I can tell you this: Madregot flows from the glory of Yesod"--she pointed upstream--"to the destruction of Briah, down that way." She pointed again.
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In other words, the Brook flows *from* Yesod *to* Briah, from the higher plane to the lower, just as Malrubius had told Severian ten years earlier. Put still another way, Yesod and Briah are not on the same plane. Neither do they follow one another in a series.

Once again Roy, I am flummoxed by your post. To my way of thinking your citations appear to undercut your own assertions and support mine.

If Brook Madregot flows "downhill" from the glory of Yesod to the destruction of Briah it says to me that it serves as a connector between the creation of Yesod and the Grand Gnab or destruction of Briah. Put in another way, these two universes are in line with each other allowing a stream to flow from one to the other.

A stream can flow between a higher town on Pike's Peak to a lower town. But it can't flow to a town on a separate mountain.

Moreover, if Brook Madregot connected two otherwise unconnected universes, we would expect it to traverse the space between then stop. But it doesn't work that way. Severian uses Brook Madregot to move up and down the timestream of Urth. This suggests that the timestream of Urth is connected in a line all the way to Yesod.

Severian has limited power to travel up and down Brook Madregot. So if Severian had enough power he could travel upstream all the way to Yesod or downstream all the way to the beginning of Urth, beginning of Briah (big bang) and beyond (Abaddon).

Is there a place in the text which suggests Brook Madregot is not a single straight line? A suggestion that there is a branching or sidetrack to Yesod which would support your idea of separation? I can't remember. But I think this is required.

James Wynn — 11 Aug 2010, 13:47 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 8/10/2010 10:48 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

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Lee,

The problem is much bigger than this single phrase. As I detailed, that entire passage makes the construct that Yesod is in our chain of universes untenable, however much I am viscerally inclined to that model.

u+16b9

Lee Berman — 11 Aug 2010, 14:33 · follows James Wynn

James Wynn: *"*Yesod, the universe higher than our own*"*

Lee, The problem is much bigger than this single phrase. As I detailed, that entire passage makes the construct that Yesod is in our chain of universes untenable, however much I am viscerally inclined to that model.

James, I went back and re-read your post and again I couldn't find anything that makes Yesod as successor to BriaH as untenable. Perhaps you can explain?

For, example the bit about vantage point, looking both forward and back. I don't see the need for leapfrogging universes.

As I see it the Hiero race created Hierogrammates but perished in the destruction of BriaH. Hierogrammates were able to escape to the next universe, Yesod.

They are parked at the beginning of Yesod. Hence Severian doesn't have to travel far to reach the Yesod planet. With this "machine planet" Hierogrammates are in the process of constructing the future planets of Yesod, including, eventually, Earth (not Urth).

Thus from this early Yesod vantage point they are able both to work forward to construct the future of Yesod and send agents back to BriaH to ensure their own creation.

Does this work?

Craig Brewer — 11 Aug 2010, 14:55 · in reply to Lee Berman

I'll add something to the discussion, noting from the beginning that I don't have a personal stake in the argument, although I probably agree with how Roy is reading the textual passages in question.

My difficulty with the Yesod-as-later-BriaH theory is thematic. What happens in the BriaH universe is largely cyclical. Similar stories get played out over and over. The entire idea of a "New Sun" is about Urth/Earth's renewal, it seems, rather than complete transformation and evolution. Or, at the very least, when the New Sun arrives, Urth is transformed rather than overcome or left behind.

Yesod seems "higher" than BriaH in a number of senses, but primarily spiritually. It's not exactly heaven, but it is a place where judgment gets passed on the "lower" realm. It might be a higher dimension (however we understand that word), but it doesn't seem to me like the kind of thing or place that is ever a realistic goal for Urth-ers to achieve. (A Christian wants to become a better or saved Christian, for example, but it's not precisely a Christian's goal to become an angel, if that analogy makes sense.)

If Yesod is actually what BriaH is supposed to become, then I don't really understand how all of Severian's struggles and adventures are supposed to lead to that goal. I completely understand

how he's supposed to transform BriaH/Urth and bring about its renewal, "save" it, etc. But if that's the case, then BriaH is going to go through evolution on its own path, not turn itself into a higher spiritual mode of existence. In other words, if Yesod is what BriaH is supposed to become, then doesn't that make the entire drama of simply bringing a New Sun within the BriaH-universe something pretty trivial?

It always seemed to me that Yesod/BriaH were on levels in similar-but-not-identical ways that the levels worked in TWK: BriaH is like the human level. Yesod is like the Asgard level. Asgard is "better" than where Able spends most of his time. And Able can work to make humans better people. But the point is never really to turn all humans into angels or all elves into humans or what-not. The levels are each valued differently, but that doesn't mean that the lower ones are supposed to become the higher ones, even if they can learn from what happens in the higher ones. Individuals, like Able, may well be able to move through and "evolve" through the different levels, as similar in the way that Severian learns quite a bit from his experience in Yesod, but there are still meaningful horizontal stories even if the ultimate metaphysical story is vertical.

James Wynn — 11 Aug 2010, 15:08 · in reply to Lee Berman

I said:

Lee, The problem is much bigger than this single phrase. As I detailed, that entire passage makes the construct that Yesod is in our chain of universes untenable, however much I am viscerally inclined to that model.

Lee replied:

James, I went back and re-read your post and again I couldn't find anything that makes Yesod as successor to BriaH as untenable. Perhaps you can explain?

For, example the bit about vantage point, looking both forward and back. I don't see the need for leapfrogging universes. As I see it the Hiero race created Hierogrammates but perished in the destruction of BriaH. Hierogrammates were able to escape to the next universe, Yesod. They are parked at the beginning of Yesod. Hence Severian doesn't have to travel far to reach the Yesod planet. With this "machine planet" Hierogrammates are in the process of constructing the future planets of Yesod, including, eventually, Earth (not Urth).

But Lee, there's no reason for the Hierogrammates to get involved in BriaH if they came from there. The event that led to the creation of their race has positively occurred there without their help. Let me repost the passages again:

"I was not told what became of the Humanity of that cycle. Perhaps it survived until the implosion of the universe, then perished with it. Perhaps it evolved beyond our recognition. But the beings Humanity had shaped into what men and women wished to be escaped, opening a passage to Yesod, the universe higher than our own, where they created worlds suited to what they had become. From that vantage point *they look both forward and back*, and in so looking they have discovered us."

There is simply no reason at all for the Hierogrammates to "look back" to BriaH if they were created there. And they would hardly have to search hard to find Severian. And by your model, there's no reason believe it is especially easy for them to look forward at all. But by your model, they aren't looking forward. Only back.

Thus from this early Yesod vantage point they are able both to work forward to construct the future of Yesod and send agents back to BriaH to ensure their own creation. Does this work?

No. Let me explain. Before the passage quoted above, Severian says:

"The hammer they wield is their ability to draw their servants back, down the corridors of time, and to send them hurtling forward to the future. *(This power is in essence the same as that which permitted them to evade the death of their universe--to enter the corridors of time is to leave the universe.)*"

If the power to move into the Corridors of Time is the same as escaping a universe, one would have to conclude --by your model-- that those weird corridors are just a mundane location in early Yesod. But then why should not everyone in Briah be able to easily move through Time in Yesod and Abbadon as well? Additionally, Yesod would be useless for traveling in Time within Yesod.

So this is why I say that Yesod being a meta-universe beyond Briah and Abbadon and the next universe is the only tenable model.

u+16b9

James Wynn — 11 Aug 2010, 15:30 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 8/11/2010 7:53 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

Is there a place in the text which suggests Brook Madregot is not a single straight line? A suggestion that there is a branching or sidetrack to Yesod which would support your idea of separation? I can't remember. But I think this is required.

Lee,

Does this explanation posit a meta-universe called, say, "Madregot"?

u+16b9

Craig Brewer — 11 Aug 2010, 15:35 · in reply to James Wynn

Has anyone else suddenly had the majority of Urth posts end up in spam mailboxes? I haven't changed my settings at all, and I'm trying to figure out what might be happening.

Fred Kiesche — 11 Aug 2010, 15:37 · in reply to Craig Brewer

Me--no. But maybe due to the volume?

But it could be Yahoo. I've had the opposite happen in my Yahoo A/C. The past two days the stuff that is very obviously spam is ending up in my inbox.

On Wed, Aug 11, 2010 at 11:35 AM, Craig Brewer <cnbrewer at yahoo.com> wrote:

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Lane Haygood — 11 Aug 2010, 15:58 · in reply to Fred Kiesche

Oddly enough, the only ones that I ever caught in my spam filter were Josh's. I told gmail to knock it off, and it did.

But the rest of them get through fine.

LH

On Wed, Aug 11, 2010 at 10:37 AM, Fred Kiesche
<godelescherbach at gmail.com> wrote:
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Craig Brewer — 11 Aug 2010, 16:14 · in reply to Lane Haygood

Thanks for the info. It's just me (or just yahoo). I added a filter just to move anything with "urth" to the Inbox...simple fix if anyone else has the same problem since yahoo doesn't seem to allow a lot of user modification of what counts as spam.

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

From: Lane Haygood <lhaygood at gmail.com>
To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
Sent: Wed, August 11, 2010 10:58:19 AM
Subject: Re: (urth) Spam question

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Urth Mailing List

To post, write urth at urth.net

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

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F.P. Kiesche III "Ah Mr. Gibbon, another damned, fat, square book. Always, scribble, scribble, scribble, eh?" (The Duke of Gloucester, on being presented with Volume 2 of The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.)
Blogging at The Lensman's Children
(<http://theeternalgoldenbraid.blogspot.com/>).

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Jeff Wilson — 11 Aug 2010, 17:12 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

On 8/11/2010 7:45 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

I agree. I see no real reason to think of Urth as anything other than our future. Note that in the _Book of the Long Sun_ Silk sees a vision of Jesus on Palm Sunday, the name Allah also appears, as does a distorted version of the Adam and Eve story. Not to mention the Apollo landing images etc. Sure, those informations *could* come from different universes, but I see no strong reasons to think so.

These are good points, I think that's how the BOTNS was written originally, but the flood would break the covenant with Noah, so URTH's record of the flood coming to pass necessitates that at least the fifth volume comes from another cycle than our own.

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

Lee Berman — 11 Aug 2010, 17:13 · follows Jeff Wilson

James your previous post left me despairing that we could ever communicate our ideas clearly to each other. This part was especially confusing:

James Wynn:

If the power to move into the Corridors of Time is the same as escaping a universe, one would have to conclude --by your model-- that those weird corridors are just a mundane location in early Yesod. But then why should not everyone in Briah be able to easily move through Time in

Yesod and Abbadon as well? Additionally, Yesod would be useless for traveling in Time within Yesod.

But your next post gave me hope.

James Wynn: Lee, Does this explanation posit a meta-universe called, say, "Madregot"?

Yes! It seems so clear to me that perhaps I didn't explain it well. To me, Brook Madregot is the "meta-universe"; the place outside the universes of Briah and Yesod which allows time travel between them and, with baby steps, time travel within Briah, as Severian does.

I don't have my books with me now so I can't check if Brook Madregot is a straight line, implying sequence between Yesod and Briah, or has Kabbalic branchings and tributaries between static, co-existing universes.

I have a vague memory of some branching mentioned, but maybe they referred to alternate, even erased timelines, like Master Ash's. I remember the timeline path that Severian strides as being singular, without forks, branchings or other choices to make. I'll have to check the text when I get home.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 11 Aug 2010, 17:16 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On Wed, Aug 11, 2010 at 10:12 AM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:
but the flood would break the covenant with Noah,

Only if you see the flood as being sent by God. If it's sent by a lesser being without God's prompting, that doesn't break the covenant
-- God didn't promise to prevent creature-made floods.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Jeff Wilson — 11 Aug 2010, 17:28 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 8/11/2010 7:53 AM, Lee Berman wrote:
Is there a place in the text which suggests Brook Madregot is not a single straight line?

URTH LI: "All about me stretched the Corridors of Time, waving meadows roofed with the lowering sky of Time and whisperous with the brooks that ripple from the most supernal universe of all to the least. Bright-winged, the small Tzadkiel fluttered beside one. The green man raced beside another. I chose one that ran as lonely as I, and mounted to it. Behind me along a line that seldom exists, Apu-Punchau, the Head of Day, stepped from his house and squatted to eat the boiled maize and roast meat his people had left for him. I too hungered; I waved to him, then saw him no more.

The Brook is one of many that are part of the Corridors of Time. Multiple corridors can't be a single straight line, brooks even less so.

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

Jeff Wilson — 11 Aug 2010, 17:49 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On 8/11/2010 12:16 PM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:
On Wed, Aug 11, 2010 at 10:12 AM, Jeff Wilson<jwilson at io.com> wrote:

but the flood would break the covenant with Noah,

Only if you see the flood as being sent by God. If it's sent by a lesser being without God's prompting, that doesn't break the covenant -- God didn't promise to prevent creature-made floods.

All creatures serve the plan of the Increate, and Severian as the New Sun does so consciously and intentionally, using supernatural gifts that flow from the Increate. The responsibility for the drowning of Urth can not be put on any mortal being any more than the plagues of Egypt or the trials of Job.

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

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 11 Aug 2010, 17:50 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On Wed, Aug 11, 2010 at 10:49 AM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:
On 8/11/2010 12:16 PM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

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I was thinking more of putting the responsibility upon the Hierofoos.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

James Wynn — 11 Aug 2010, 17:54 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On 8/11/2010 12:12 PM, Jeff Wilson wrote:
These are good points, I think that's how the BOTNS was written originally, but the flood would break the covenant with Noah, so URTH's record of the flood coming to pass necessitates that at least the fifth volume comes from another cycle than our own.

I don't think Wolfe was considering the Noahtic covenant when he wrote about the flood. Does he mention it in the Sun cycle at all? The Noahtic covenant could hardly be as problematic as the Church devolving into worship of the Conciliator or the Charter. Essentially, the stories work fine as one from our distant future, and we shouldn't try to apply theologic import to their basic Setting.

But if one must, the references to Jesus do not prevent Briah from being a previous universe. Silk sees Jesus during enlightenment from the Outsider. The Crucifixion & Resurrection could well be seen as a key iconic event between the Increate and humanity--one which the Creator uses to "infect" all his other universes.

u+16b9

Gerry Quinn — 11 Aug 2010, 17:55 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

From: "Jeff Wilson" <jwilson at io.com>
On 8/11/2010 7:53 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

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URTH LI: "All about me stretched the Corridors of Time, waving meadows roofed with the lowering sky of Time and whisperous with the brooks that ripple from the most supernal universe of all to the least. Bright-winged, the small Tzadkiel fluttered beside one. The green man raced beside another. I chose one that ran as lonely as I, and mounted to it. Behind me along a line that seldom exists, Apu-Punchau, the Head of Day, stepped from his house and squatted to eat the boiled maize and roast meat his people had left for him. I too hungered; I waved to him, then saw him no more.

The Marshes of Time, then. And are there cannibal Marshmen?

- Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn — 11 Aug 2010, 18:06 · in reply to James Wynn

From: "James Wynn" <crushtv at gmail.com>
On 8/11/2010 12:12 PM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

These are good points, I think that's how the BOTNS was written originally, but the flood would break the covenant with Noah, so URTH's record of the flood coming to pass necessitates that at least the fifth volume comes from another cycle than our own.

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Agreed.

But if one must, the references to Jesus do not prevent Briah from being a previous universe. Silk sees Jesus during enlightenment from the Outsider. The Crucifixion & Resurrection could well be seen as a key iconic event between the Increate and humanity--one which the Creator uses to "infect" all his other universes.

Maybe that is so, but it would be very unconventional in SF: nearly all stories tackling this theme have suggested an independent Incarnation on every planet.

Then again, if one Incarnation on an un-webbed Earth was enough, there is nothing illogical about skipping out certain planets.

- Gerry Quinn

Jeff Wilson — 11 Aug 2010, 18:14 · in reply to James Wynn

On 8/11/2010 12:54 PM, James Wynn wrote:
On 8/11/2010 12:12 PM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

These are good points, I think that's how the BOTNS was written originally, but the flood would break the covenant with Noah, so URTH's record of the flood coming to pass necessitates that at least the fifth volume comes from another cycle than our own.

I don't think Wolfe was considering the Noahitic covenant when he wrote about the flood. Does he mention it in the Sun cycle at all? The Noahitic covenant could hardly be as problematic as the Church devolving into worship of the Conciliator or the Charter. Essentially, the stories work fine as one from our distant future, and we shouldn't try to apply theologic import to their basic Setting.

That suits me, and I agree that he was not thinking about it at the time. But since only a couple of years later the "Urth is a previous cycle" became his steady line, I think he belatedly thought of it and shifting to a previous cycle is extratextual retroactive continuity.

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

Gerry Quinn — 11 Aug 2010, 18:25 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

From: "Jeff Wilson" <jwilson at io.com>

That suits me, and I agree that he was not thinking about it at the time. But since only a couple of years later the "Urth is a previous cycle" became his steady line, I think he belatedly thought of it and shifting to a previous cycle is extratextual retroactive continuity.

When you say "steady line" what exactly do you mean? He gave repeated interviews stating it?

- Gerry Quinn

Jerry Friedman — 12 Aug 2010, 01:25 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

From: Gerry Quinn <gerryq at indigo.ie>

From: "Jerry Friedman" <jerry_friedman at yahoo.com>

I find it very hard to see how Severian, in Yesod, could be at a time before the people he knew were born, if Yesod is later in time than Briah. As people have pointed out.

I don;t think time is necessarily commensurable across universes. That is, I think the question of whether an event in Yesod preceeds or succeeds an event in Briah has no meaningful answer. (For the history of an individual passing between them it may have an answer, but the answer could be different for other individuals.)

So for Severian's history, it makes sense for Apheta to tell him the people he knew are unborn?

Earth is very much like Urth. Few of us would have thought Urth was a subsequent universe rather than our future if Wolfe hadn't said so outside the book. Yesod seems like a totally different place, far more different that the existence of Jesus could explain, from what I can see at Google Books and Amazon. But I can't prove anything from what I can see.

I agree.

Thanks.

I see no real reason to think of Urth as anything other than our future.

Wait a second.

Note that in the _Book of the Long Sun_ Silk sees a vision of Jesus on Palm Sunday, the name Allah also appears, as does a distorted version of the Adam and Eve story. Not to mention the Apollo landing images etc. Sure, those informations *could* come from different universes, but I see no strong reason to think so.

Not in the text, maybe, but Wolfe made at least one explicit statement in the interview with James Jordan.

And since people have been discussing the hut in the Botanic Gardens, that could provide evidence that Urth isn't our future. In our time, "isangoma" and "tokoloshe" are words from southern Africa, where there are no jungles. Margays and uakaris are found in South America. Oreodonts lived in the grasslands and savannas of North and Central America until a few million years ago. The passage about Mount Nebo is distinctly different from the Bible. What reason could Wolfe have had for combining these disparate features except to tell us Robert and Marie didn't live in our world in the last century?

(By the way, how did Severian understand them? And are "isangoma" and "tokoloshe" words in his language, or did he transcribe them phonetically? Did he transcribe "Paris" phonetically, which means Robert and Marie were speaking English, or did Wolfe put Paris in because Robert was talking about a city where you study art? Usually we should probably ignore Wolfe the translator, but here I'm tempted to think about him.)

Jerry Friedman

Jeff Wilson — 12 Aug 2010, 01:55 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

On 8/11/2010 1:25 PM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: "Jeff Wilson" <jwilson at io.com>

That suits me, and I agree that he was not thinking about it at the time. But since only a couple of years later the "Urth is a previous cycle" became his steady line, I think he belatedly thought of it and shifting to a previous cycle is extratextual retroactive continuity.

When you say "steady line" what exactly do you mean? He gave repeated interviews stating it?

IIRC, yes, but it could be multiple reports of one or two occasions.

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

António Pedro Marques — 12 Aug 2010, 11:23 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

Jerry Friedman wrote (12-08-2010 02:25):

(By the way, how did Severian understand them? And are "isangoma" and "tokoloshe" words in his language, or did he transcribe them phonetically? Did he transcribe "Paris" phonetically, which means Robert and Marie were speaking English, or did Wolfe put Paris in because Robert was talking about a city where you study art? Usually we should probably ignore Wolfe the translator, but here I'm tempted to think about him.)

That one is tricky. If the translator knew that whatever the original was, it was 'a city where you study art', then he knows much more about Urth than he is telling us. Though we tend to ignore

the translator and when we do not, we only think of him as someone who knows just the language - but that's hardly credible, isn't it? Is there any backstory for the translator?

As to Urth being Earth, I don't think Wolfe ever intended it that way. I think his idea was always that the BNS told what *might* happen in our universe, and it did do by telling what *did* happen in a very similar one. Similar but not equal, as the name Urth instead of Earth implicates. And why that one universe? My guess is that here there aren't infinite universes just different in a detail or two. There is ours, and there is Briah, which is quite similar but not equal*, and all the rest are even more different than Briah. I think Wolfe is telling us the story of the most similar parallel universe there is to our own. And our own will be the one to produce the Hieros. As long as we heed Wolfe's warnings. Which we will, otherwise there would be no story to tell.

(*) There may have been a Jesus on Urth, I find it very hard not to there have been. All the rest is too similar, and an 'inferior' Jesus makes no religious sense. But the Church, taken as the body of believers, failed there. The religious organisations on Urth are not the historical successors of the original Church.

Gerry Quinn — 12 Aug 2010, 11:25 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

From: "Jerry Friedman" <jerry_friedman at yahoo.com>

From: Gerry Quinn <gerryq at indigo.ie>

I don;t think time is necessarily commensurable across universes. That is, I think the question of whether an event in Yesod preceeds or succeeds an event in Briah has no meaningful answer. (For the history of an individual passing between them it may have an answer, but the answer could be different for other individuals.)

So for Severian's history, it makes sense for Apheta to tell him the people he knew are unborn?

Maybe she was being imprecise. They are not born as far as Yesod is concerne, if time is indeterminate across universes. Or maybe in Yesod they think of themselves as being at the same time as the beginning of Briah. I don't know.

I see no real reason to think of Urth as anything other than our future.

Wait a second.

Note that in the _Book of the Long Sun_ Silk sees a vision of Jesus on Palm Sunday, the name Allah also appears, as does a distorted version of the Adam and Eve story. Not to mention the Apollo landing images etc. Sure, those informations *could* come from different universes, but I see no strong reason to think so.

Not in the text, maybe, but Wolfe made at least one explicit statement in the interview with James Jordan.

Fair enough. But I think he indicated that this was intended as a *possible* reading: "And decided that I would show that this might be a past cycle. He also says: "I was toying with those ideas, I think, rather than trying to make sense of them."

I don't know: for me the reading of Urth as our future works well; and in any case I certainly don't feel like going *into depth* figuring out the consequences of something the author did not intend to be fully worked out, such as the entropic relationships between Yesod and Briah, or what not!

And since people have been discussing the hut in the Botanic Gardens, that could provide evidence that Urth isn't our future. In our time, "isangoma" and "tokoloshe" are words from southern Africa, where there are no jungles. Margays and uakaris are found in South America. Oreodonts lived in the grasslands and savannas of North and Central America until a few million years ago. The passage about Mount Nebo is distinctly different from the Bible. What reason could Wolfe have had for combining these disparate features except to tell us Robert and Marie didn't live in our world in the last century?

Could be.

(By the way, how did Severian understand them? And are "isangoma" and "tokoloshe" words in his language, or did he transcribe them phonetically? Did he transcribe "Paris" phonetically, which means Robert and Marie were speaking English, or did Wolfe put Paris in because Robert was talking about a city where you study art? Usually we should probably ignore Wolfe the translator, but here I'm tempted to think about him.)

Good question. But translation, like FTL travel issues, is one of those things that SF writers are allowed ignore if they want...

- Gerry Quinn

Lee Berman — 12 Aug 2010, 12:14 · follows Gerry Quinn

Jerry Friedman- And since people have been discussing the hut in the Botanic Gardens, that could provide evidence that Urth isn't our future. In our time, "isangoma" and "tokoloshe" are words from southern Africa, where there are no jungles. Margays and uakaris are found in South America. Oreodonts lived in the grasslands and savannas of North and Central America until a few million years ago. The passage about Mount Nebo is distinctly different from the Bible. What reason could Wolfe have had for combining these disparate features except to tell us Robert and Marie didn't live in our world in the last century?

Uakarki and margays could have climbed the ladder from the garden but oreodonts.. nope. I agree that this and some other objections have called my theory of the Jungle Hut as a Last House-type time travel portal to our Earth into question. Moreover, so does Borski's guess that the people in the hut are Scottish missionaries Robert and Mary Moffat, since they died before the airplane was invented (but where is the burr in their speech?)

This mish mash of different geographic and time period species does reinforce the sense that The Botanic Garden is also a zoo. It suggests that the creator of the zoo considers human beings as a sort of animal, to be put on display.

This can't help but bring back to my mind the "sexual penetrating" meaning of the Latin word "inire" and the derived name of Inuus, epithet of Pan/Faunus, and his proclivity for intercourse with animals. ;-)

António Pedro Marques — 12 Aug 2010, 14:08 · in reply to Lee Berman

Lee Berman wrote (12-08-2010 13:14):

This can't help but bring back to my mind the "sexual penetrating" meaning of the Latin word "inire" and the derived name of Inuus, epithet of Pan/Faunus, and his proclivity for intercourse with animals. ;-)

(Inire may have been (was) used in copulating context, but that wasn't its primary meaning, not any more than it is the primary meaning of english 'enter'.)

Lee Berman — 12 Aug 2010, 14:40 · follows António Pedro Marques

Antonio P. Marques-

(Inire may have been (was) used in copulating context, but that wasn't its primary meaning, not any more than it is the primary meaning of english 'enter'.)

This article may be helpful in explaining what I am getting at:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inuus>

Considering the events in Long Sun, anything to do with the god Pan might be considered to have special significance. (might, I say)

António Pedro Marques — 12 Aug 2010, 14:54 · in reply to Lee Berman

Lee Berman wrote (12-08-2010 15:40):

Antonio P. Marques-

(Inire may have been (was) used in copulating context, but that wasn't its primary meaning, not any more than it is the primary meaning of english 'enter'.)

This article may be helpful in explaining what I am getting at:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inuus>

Inuus's name was there in your original remark.

Considering Wolfe's regard for linguistic rigor, I find an Inuus -> Inire substitution quite unelegant.

Latin verbs were also not quoted in the infinitive, but the present S1, so ineo is how one refers to the verb.

Inire may have been (was) used in copulating context, but that wasn't its primary meaning, not any more than it is the primary meaning of english 'enter'.

Considering the events in Long Sun, anything to do with the god Pan might be considered to have special significance. (might, I say)

For all the identification of Pas with Pan, I don't see what the similarity between them is in the sexual regard. (Well, Typhon was naked when Severian met him. But shrivelled, he says.)

Gerry Quinn — 12 Aug 2010, 16:30 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

From: "Ant?nio Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>

For all the identification of Pas with Pan, I don't see what the similarity between them is in the sexual regard. (Well, Typhon was naked when Severian met him. But shrivelled, he says.)

I seem to recall that the exercise of power perked him up a bit.

- Gerry Quinn

Lee Berman — 12 Aug 2010, 17:06 · follows Gerry Quinn

From: "Ant?nio Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>

For all the identification of Pas with Pan, I don't see what the similarity between them is in the sexual regard. (Well, Typhon was naked when Severian met him. But shrivelled, he says.)

I seem to recall that the exercise of power perked him up a bit.

- Gerry Quinn

Erm, yes. Typhon very strangely gets an erection and "nurses" it while talking to Severian. He also says that when he re-establishes his multi-planet empire, he will be sent tribute in the form of young men and women.

In Long Sun, the painting of Pas/Typhon depicts him "nursing" *two* erections, one for each hand, as he surveys his court, a writhing sexual orgy of worshippers with phallic symbolism popping up all over the place.

Perhaps unrelated, but various reptile species are endowed with two penises. Greek mythological monster Typhon was a multi-headed mandragora on his top half and a snake down below.

I have proposed, at times, that the name Pas is a nickname which could be derived from the Babylonian god of desert storms, Pazuzu. This was mostly a bird-like god but he was quite well known for his "serpentine penis". It is also the name for the fallen angel/demon in The Exorcist, a book I can't imagine Gene Wolfe did not read.