

Mirror Image Freedom

The Urth list — 21 messages, 9 voices, 15 Dec 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5823>

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Lee Berman — 15 Dec 2010, 12:37

Discussion of Sidero sparked my thoughts regarding Inire and Tzadkiel, Commonwealth and The Ship as

reversed mirror images of each other. On the issue of freedom: The Commonwealth is highly restrictive place.

A caste system locks people into their social status. Guilds lock people into careers. There is slavery/

indentured servitude. The roads are closed. Reverence for the Autarch is mouthed everywhere (joining the

war seems to be the only measure of freedom available..oh, and also pioneering a barren land as Casdoe and

Becan do). (if we expand our view of Urth to Ascias the freedom issue is even worse)

On the Ship there isn't much restriction at all. We have an apparently absent Captain about whom sailors

grumble has been too lax in control of jibers. Severian can wander around anywhere and everywhere, on deck,

climb the sails etc. He can become a sailor at the drop of a hat. The only measure of authority seems to be,

ironically, a piece of machinery designed entirely for human servitude: a suit of armour. Sidero is (to me)

one of the most unpleasant characters in BotNS. But perhaps he is a symbol of freedom, (or the problems with

too much freedom?) in his fury at being put to the use he was designed for, by Severian crawling inside him.

David Stockhoff — 15 Dec 2010, 13:41 · in reply to Lee Berman

You're right---that's a huge, diametrical opposition. Stark differences in freedom seem to appear in the series, as well as the Wizard Knight.

What do you think it means?

On 12/15/2010 7:37 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

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On the Ship there isn't much restriction at all. We have an apparently absent Captain about whom sailors grumble has been too lax in control of jibbers. Severian can wander around anywhere and everywhere, on deck, climb the sails etc. He can become a sailor at the drop of a hat. The only measure of authority seems to be, ironically, a piece of machinery designed entirely for human servitude: a suit of armour. Sidereo is (to me) one of the most unpleasant characters in BotNS. But perhaps he is a symbol of freedom, (or the problems with too much freedom?) in his fury at being put to the use he was designed for, by Severian crawling inside him.

Lee Berman — 15 Dec 2010, 15:48 · follows David Stockhoff

David Stockhoff- You're right---that's a huge, diametrical opposition. Stark differences in freedom seem to appear in the series, as well as the Wizard Knight. What do you think it means?

Heh, good question! You made me think about it. I have to be cautious to not inject my own views into things, but rather focus on what I think are Gene Wolfe's (my own socio-anthropological viewpoint is that individual freedom and government control are, along with all political and religious variations, a function of human adaptation to the prevailing environment of the time).

From a gnostic point of view, order/control in opposition to freedom/chaos is found in the metaphors of Apollonian vs. Dionysian aspects of human nature. Apollonian being the scientific male side and Dionysian being the female (or perhaps hermaphroditic) mystical side.

(haven't we seen a conflict between these two approaches in recent debates in here? As I mentioned in one post, my approach here is seen in an entirely different light when I am perceived as female; testosterone levels drop and the alpha male snarling subsides)

I am more and more considering that The Cumaeen should be seen as the female aspect of Father Inire just as Tzadkiel has "his" female side. Since the Commonwealth is a controlled, regulated, rigidly maintained place, we have *Father* Inire as its de facto ruler. We never see Tzadkiel as captain of the rather mystical, free-wheeling Ship on the outgoing voyage. But on the return trip we do see Tzadkiel sitting in the captain's chair and at that time Tzadkiel is female.

From a political point of view, Gene Wolfe is a mixed bag. He (like me) was born and raised in a society which (some say fanatically) obsesses about individual freedom. But as an engineer and scholar we can guess he has an appreciation for the need for a rigidly ordered society also; though order through a royal hierarchy seems to appeal to him more than order imposed by communist ideology and politburo committees (Group of 17).

By assigning the Dionysian, personal freedom loving domain of BotNS to his Angel and the Apollonian rigidly controlled domain to his Devil (sorry) I think Wolfe is suggesting that if we cannot have perfect balance we ought to always err on the side of freedom. Having Tzadziel's son, Venant, be killed during the battle on Yesod probably invokes his recognition of the price we must pay for freedom.

I have not read Wizard Knight yet. Since it was written by Wolfe post-Cold War I would be interested in finding any socio-political differences from BotNS. Spoilers by those who have read it are welcome.

Gerry Quinn — 15 Dec 2010, 18:35 · in reply to Lee Berman

From: "Lee Berman" <severiansola at hotmail.com>
From a gnostic point of view, order/control in opposition to freedom/chaos is found in the metaphors of Apollonian vs. Dionysian aspects of human nature. Apollonian being the scientific male side and Dionysian being the female (or perhaps hermaphroditic) mystical side.

(haven't we seen a conflict between these two approaches in recent debates in here? As I mentioned in one post, my approach here is seen in an entirely different light when I am perceived as female; testosterone levels drop and the alpha male snarling subsides)

That must be the explanation. This "alpha male snarling" (i.e. expressions of doubt regarding your theories) couldn't possibly be simply an indication that some people find your ideas unconvincing, now, could it?

- Gerry Quinn

Lee Berman — 15 Dec 2010, 19:41 · follows Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn- That must be the explanation. This "alpha male snarling" (i.e. expressions of doubt regarding your theories) couldn't possibly be simply an indication that some people find your ideas unconvincing, now, could it?

Gerry I don't find your posts the best example of alpha dog snarling around here in the past 6 years but if the shoe fits..

You have strongly asserted that all ideas must be subjected to rigorous testing and evaluation. And you have presented yourself as the perfect testor and evaluator, a dispassionate, ethereal dispenser of objective, rational, logical evaluation. One who is able to correctly assess the likelihood, the mathematical probability of correctness of all ideas presented here.

I myself, do not believe that ideas and the testing of ideas can be somehow divorced from the humanity of the thinker and evaluator. Surely if ideas must be rigorously tested, so must the evaluator be tested, yes?

You have undergone an examination recently. I am pleased to report you seem fully human to

me. Nothing
to be ashamed of there IMHO. You have been proven to not be a computer program. You are
driven by factors
other than pure dispassionate intellect. But perhaps the time has come to stop woofin'.

or in other words...

You may not always be right but I ain't always wrong ;-).

Gerry Quinn — 16 Dec 2010, 17:33 · in reply to Lee Berman

From: "Lee Berman" <severiansola at hotmail.com>

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You have strongly asserted that all ideas must be subjected to rigorous
testing and evaluation.

Yes.

And you have presented yourself as the perfect testor and evaluator, a
dispassionate, ethereal
dispenser of objective, rational, logical evaluation.

When have I ever presented myself as such? I have indicated that it is something we should
aspire to; I have never stated or implied that I embody it.

One who is able to correctly assess the
likelihood, the mathematical probability of correctness of all ideas
presented here.

I would like to think that my assessments are good, but I make no special claim to success. In
particular, I make no special claim to authority in this regard. My arguments in favour of are
against a particular idea or theory should stand on their own merits, just like yours or anyone
else's.

I myself, do not believe that ideas and the testing of ideas can be
somehow divorced from
the humanity of the thinker and evaluator. Surely if ideas must be
rigorously tested, so must the
evaluator be tested, yes?

It rather depends on the nature of the evaluation. If A presents a theory and B stamps it
'REJECTED' without explanation, we must certainly take into account or views of B if we are
paying heed to the rejection. But if B lays out a strong and logical case for rejection, B's
character and motives of less import. Indeed, we may suspect that A's protests in this regard
may reflect more on A than on B.

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I will continue to express my views regarding theories you or others may present here, just as I hope others will express their views regarding mine. In all cases I would expect such views and theories to be supported or challenged by evidence (principally textual) rather than by special pleading and innuendo.

- Gerry Quinn

Lee Berman — 16 Dec 2010, 18:08 · follows Gerry Quinn

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This is simplistic and biased. You clearly see yourself in the role of B. Only A is seen as capable of ego-related bias, never B. You just won't recognize that what seems "strong and logical" to you is not seen that way by every other person.

I will continue to express my views regarding theories you or others may present here, just as I hope others will express their views regarding mine. In all cases I would expect such views and theories to be supported or challenged by evidence (principally textual) rather than by special pleading and innuendo.

Your "God and Christ are in the Sun Series" theory is a good example. To you, that theory is based on strong textual evidence. Yet I can see your mental edits, resulting in the deletion of textual mentions of so many other gods, many by name. You don't want them so aren't there. But Christ is wanted, so you include him in the story based on flimsy evidence which is as good an example of "pleading and innuendo" as there can be.

Normally I would not use such patronising language to express doubt regarding someone else's valued, long-considered personal interpretations. I only use it here to illustrate what it is like to be criticized by Gerry Quinn.

I would never suggest you stop expressing your views. Nor do I expect you to change the unctuous tone that creeps into your posts. You are who you are. The best I can hope is that you become aware of it. I'll leave it at that.

Gerry Quinn — 16 Dec 2010, 19:25 · in reply to Lee Berman

From: "Lee Berman" <severiansola at hotmail.com>

Gerry Quinn- If A presents a theory and B stamps it 'REJECTED' without explanation, we must certainly take into account or views of B if we are paying heed to the rejection. But if B lays out a strong and logical case for rejection, B's character and motives of less import. Indeed, we may suspect that A's protests in this regard may reflect more on A than on B.

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Far from it. In the case of the Antechamber, for example, I am clearly in the position of A, whereas David Stockhoff, in particular, is in the position of B. I don't whimper and question his motives and attempt to psychoanalyse him. I answer his points as best I can and try to come up with better ones of my own.

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I've accepted without demur that Dionysus is mentioned, which I had not noticed before. I have tended to refer to Jesus rather than Christ, as the text is explicit there.

Normally I would not use such patronising language to express doubt regarding someone else's valued, long-considered personal interpretations. I only use it here to illustrate what it is like to be criticized by
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It makes me laugh when you refer to 'patronising language' and 'unctuous tones'.

- Gerry Quinn

James Wynn — 16 Dec 2010, 19:37 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

It makes me laugh when you refer to 'patronising language' and 'unctuous tones'.

He laughed unctuously.

Lee Berman — 16 Dec 2010, 19:52 · follows James Wynn

Gerry Quinn- I can only hope you will learn to criticise like Gerry Quinn. You could make a start by including more references to the text and fewer personal attacks.

I don't know you personally, Gerry. Any criticism I have of you is based purely on your writing.

By your definition, wouldn't calling someone else's expression of heartfelt feelings as "whimpering" be a personal attack?

Not really interested in lessons of that sort. Sorry. My references to the text are numerous and substantial, as you would know if you read them. Your assessment of my lack of references is based on alpha dog snarling not reality.

It makes me laugh when you refer to 'patronising language' and 'unctuous tones'.

What is your purpose in telling me this? So I can, in a sense, "hear" your laughter?

Lee Berman is also wondering what personality trait is implied by referring to one's self in third person.

Son of Witz — 16 Dec 2010, 20:10 · in reply to Lee Berman

I'm gonna say it for everybody...

Give it a rest, guys, you have made your points over and over and now it's time to move away from the discussions about the discussion.

Both Lee and Gerry are making excellent contributions aside from this sniping bullshit. Just leave it alone already.

~witz

On Dec 16, 2010, at 11:52 AM, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:

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person.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 16 Dec 2010, 20:11 · in reply to Son of Witz

+1

On Thu, Dec 16, 2010 at 12:10 PM, Son of Witz
<Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org> wrote:

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Lee Berman — 16 Dec 2010, 20:24 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Son o' Witz- I'm gonna say it for everybody...Give it a rest, guys

Dan'l- +1

Oh, you guys. Gerry and I have been having a lot of fun with this. But, once it expressly becomes an annoyance to others, well...that needs to be it. All fun things must come to an end. And with apologies to all for the annoyance and thanks for indulging the gladiators for as long as y'all did.

:-)

Son of Witz — 16 Dec 2010, 20:36 · in reply to Lee Berman

On Dec 16, 2010, at 12:24 PM, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:

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:-)

Like I said, I enjoy the hell out of both of your posts when they are on topic.

Gerry Quinn — 16 Dec 2010, 20:49 · in reply to Son of Witz

Will try ;)

- Gerry Quinn

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

From: "Son of Witz" <Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org>
To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>
Sent: Thursday, December 16, 2010 8:10 PM
Subject: Re: (urth) Mirror Image Freedom

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Marc Aramini — 18 Dec 2010, 15:51 · in reply to Son of Witz

One more point, all this talk of an "unknown" christ in Severian's Universe just seems wrong, wrong, very wrong. Even though Severian was later conflated with the Conciliator, those early descriptions of the Conciliator are so Christlike as to be absurd, and the jungle hut with those missionaries seems like, you know, such an obvious reference not to a Conciliator but to a Christian missionary system, in our universe.

Marc

Son of Witz — 18 Dec 2010, 16:38 · in reply to Marc Aramini

On Dec 18, 2010, at 7:51 AM, Marc Aramini <marcaramini at yahoo.com> wrote:

One more point, all this talk of an "unknown" christ in Severian's Universe just seems wrong, wrong, very wrong. Even though Severian was later conflated with the Conciliator, those early descriptions of the Conciliator are so Christlike as to be absurd, and the jungle hut with those missionaries seems like, you know, such an obvious reference not to a Conciliator but to a Christian missionary system, in our universe.

Marc

Yeah.

Again, it seems soooooooooo obvious I can't believe it is controversial.

Craig Brewer — 18 Dec 2010, 17:04 · in reply to Son of Witz

"Jungle Hut Jesus" ... band name?

David Stockhoff — 18 Dec 2010, 19:09 · in reply to Marc Aramini

That's exactly what it is: an obvious reference not to a Conciliator but to a Christian missionary system, in our universe.

On 12/18/2010 10:51 AM, Marc Aramini wrote:

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Urth Mailing List

Lee Berman — 18 Dec 2010, 21:44 · follows David Stockhoff

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David Stockhoff: That's exactly what it is: an obvious reference not to a Conciliator but to a Christian missionary system, in our universe.

Christian missionaries who have been put on display at a zoo and rendered somewhat ridiculous in their speech and behavior.

I think this is an example of starting with a conclusion and then finding the evidence which supports it. Not excluding myself from the process. If the conclusion is that our Jesus is present in BotNS, the ambiguous evidence will be seen as supporting it.

Once my conclusion that this is a gnostic, non-Christ universe hit me, all the evidence for the

existence of Jesus Christ seemed turned to the opposite; evidence against him in this universe.

For me, we have BotNS Flood but it isn't our Flood. We have a BotNS Typhon but he isn't our Typhon.

My default assumption becomes that the BotNS Jesus isn't our Jesus. Might have gotten buried, but earlier I built an argument for how the "scourger" in the Long Sun legend could refer to Severian.

I think we must all admit that our chosen conclusion shapes how we see the evidence.

Jeff Wilson — 19 Dec 2010, 03:38 · in reply to Son of Witz

On 12/18/2010 10:38 AM, Son of Witz wrote:

On Dec 18, 2010, at 7:51 AM, Marc Aramini <marcaramini at yahoo.com
<mailto:marcaramini at yahoo.com>> wrote:

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Marc

Yeah.

Again, it seems soooooooooo obvious I can't believe it is controversial.

I thought it had already been suggested that Christianity had died out on Urth circa the First Empire and never came back, rendering it effectively unknown to the Commonwealth.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
Computational Intelligence Laboratory - Texas A&M Texarkana
< <http://www.tamut.edu/CIL> >