

Merger

The Urth list — 117 messages, 18 voices, 28 Jan 2011

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5946>

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Lee Berman — 28 Jan 2011, 18:50

From Merriam-Webster (with apologies to OED preferers, but this one is free online)

a : the act or process of merging

b : absorption by a corporation of one or more others; also : any of various methods of combining two or more organizations

Perhaps we can agree this definition fits what happens with the alzado rather nicely?

I think Dan's concern is over the temporary/permanent nature of the merger. If we go by what seems to happen with Vodalus' banquet we might think the merger is temporary perhaps with only minor vestiges remaining.

Still, as Severian does combat with the alzado they have a conversation on strategy which would seem to go beyond both Becan's and Severa's resources. (yes, Becan was a hunter, but my impression is that the battle savvy goes beyond this). I get the sense the alzado has acquired a library of stored memories to draw upon, including a trained soldier or assassin or something.

This is paralleled with Severian in UotNS I think. He is no longer plagued by spontaneous takeovers by Thecla but I guess she is still there, just unneeded. The old Autarch pops up once, but only at the appropriate time and need.

I think the idea of a merger is pretty appropriate, a la Daimler-Chrysler. The larger company took over the smaller one. There is a new merged identity though if there is conflict the majority partner tends to have the merged corporation serve its needs above the minority partner. Thus Becan is willing to let his family suffer pain, since the alzado requires it. But, as others noted, the alzado is also willing to risk a lot to protect his/Becan/Severa's next meal/family.

(So how does this relate to Procter & Gamble? Did this corporation force Gene Wolfe and his family move from somewhere nice to the hellish outer urban areas of Chicago? [sorry Ryan :-]).

It is pretty easy to see how the Autarchy and New Sun status of Severian/Thecla/old Autarch serves the needs of all three (throw Ymar in there if you like).

So, how does the merger of Horn/Silk/Neighbor do that? (Neighbor for James, though I like the idea also).

Jordon Flato — 28 Jan 2011, 19:41 · in reply to Lee Berman

Isn't there a difference in what happens to the 'memories' or 'identities' in Severian as opposed to everyone else, including the Alzado? Sev has the power to restore life. I've always been fairly certain that for Severian, the people he brings into himself are more alive, in a real way, than for any previous Autarch, or certainly and Vodellarii or ingesters of the alembic. Perhaps this plays a role in why Severian succeeds when Appian fails. Severian doesn't just have the

memories of past lives in him, I think they are really alive in him in a fundamental way, which is new, unique, and unseen in any other instance of ingestion of the Alembic.

On Fri, Jan 28, 2011 at 10:50 AM, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com>wrote:

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Lee Berman — 28 Jan 2011, 20:11 · follows Jordon Flato

James Wynn: Isn't it just as arguable that Becan was confused about the reasonableness of reuniting his family in the animal and the used the animal fighting instincts as a tool to protect them?

I think so.

Jordon Flato: Isn't there a difference in what happens to the 'memories' or 'identities' in Severian as opposed to everyone else, including the Alzabo? Sev has the power to restore life....

I would say that there are three differences to be found in the text between Severian's fleshly ingestion of the autarch and others' ingestions. One is, as you mention, that Severian's power of resurrection is likely coming into play, making the memory implant more substantial and permanent.

Another is the the analeptic or pharmacon or whatever it is called in the phial of the autarch is suggested to be similar but superior to the alzabo extract. (I think it is likely a purified example of the same stuff- there is something fishy about even the autarch memory-sharing)

Third is that the autarch specifically instructs Severian to eat only his forebrain the "more retentive tissues" for memory. The Vodalus crowd and the alzabo are eating arms, legs, livers, etc.

All three would seem to combine to make the sharing experience more intense and more permanent (the autarch's memories of his predecessors would seem to be fairly permanent). Still, as we see in UotNS it isn't so overwhelmingly intense and permanent over time. (thank goodness, or the story in UotNS would have sucked with constant unnecessary interruptions).

Lee Berman — 28 Jan 2011, 20:27 · follows Lee Berman

I feel like mentioning that, with full admiration for Gene Wolfe, he was as we all are, a product of his times. It has been discussed previously how BotNS was probably influenced by popular movies and TV shows of the time, as well as the prevailing pop science obsessions of the 70's which included cloning, black holes/quasars, aliens as ancient gods, pyramid power and ESP.

Another pop science phenomenon of the time was the chemical basis of memory. McConnell's now discredited research got many researchers (including, unfortunately, some high schoolers' science projects) in which everything from flatworms to mice were taught to solve mazes, killed, minced and fed to other worms or mice in hopes they would solve the maze faster. (We see a similar use of this concept with Mr. Million).

I think current research considers that RNA may play a role in memory retention, but the basic storage is

in standing neural circuitry rather than a chemical code which is transferrable organism to organism.

Gerry Quinn — 28 Jan 2011, 21:05 · in reply to Jordon Flato

From: Jordon Flato

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Certainly it's different in this regard, but to say this is why Severian succeeded while previous Autarch's failed involves a bit of a time-loop semi-paradox. The problem is that Severian's power is also the *result* of him succeeding - he has access to the negentropic power of the White Fountain and can turn back time to heal the sick, resurrect the dead etc.

Had a previous Autarch succeeded, he also (or instead) would have had those powers.

It is a standard problem in the theory of time travel - it tends to create events that have no cause, or have more than one cause, or (as in this case) are their own cause. Of course this does not rule out time travel per se, it just means (as everyone on this list will be aware anyway) that a world in which time travel exists operates differently with regard to causality than the standard thermodynamic model of the universe. Universes with a creator, which is certainly the case for all literary universes, and perhaps other universes as well, do of course tend to operate in this way.

I'm not arguing that you are incorrect in suggesting that Severian's powers play a role in his success - just pointing out that if so they are effect as much as cause.

- Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn — 28 Jan 2011, 21:05 · in reply to Lee Berman

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

James Wynn:

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I think so.

I don't. The alzabo evolved (or was genetically engineered) to eat humans and use their minds. Humans did not evolve to be eaten by alzabos. In the absence of strong evidence to the contrary (e.g. evidence that Becan was fighting the alzabo instincts) we should assume that Becan-in-alzabo was operating in the perceived interests of the alzabo.

- Gerry Quinn

Jordon Flato — 28 Jan 2011, 21:21 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Gerry, you are of course correct. And while it doesn't discount my idea, it makes it semi-irrelevant. It is a fantastically beautiful knot which tickles my brain's erogenous zones...

This is in fact one of my favorite aspects of the book, and the one aspect that, once I had finished *Urth of the New Sun*, made me completely discount the idea of their being 'other' Severians (Sev 1 Sev 2, etc.)

For my money, the very existence of Severian is SO precluded on everything he does after his birth (the conciliator myth, the guild, the this the that the other etc) that wouldn't have existed had the current iteration not traveled back into the past and generated his history.

On Fri, Jan 28, 2011 at 1:05 PM, Gerry Quinn <gerryq at indigo.ie> wrote:

From: Jordon Flato <jordonflatourth at gmail.com>

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Gerry Quinn — 28 Jan 2011, 21:23 · in reply to Lee Berman

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

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of the 70's which included cloning, black holes/quasars, aliens as ancient gods, pyramid power and ESP.

Another pop science phenomenon of the time was the chemical basis of memory. McConnell's now discredited research got many researchers (including, unfortunately, some high schoolers' science projects) in which everything from flatworms to mice were taught to solve mazes, killed, minced and fed to other worms or mice in hopes they would solve the maze faster. (We see a similar use of this concept with Mr. Million).

Certainly Wolfe like everyone must be restricted for the most part to the science, pop science, and non-science of his own and previous times. But I don't think one can assume that in his discussion of the alzabo, he was attempting to be scientifically reasonable or plausible. He was indeed suggesting that the basis of memory was chemical, but because it was a cool idea that he had a use for, not because he believed it. Even the most ardent believer in RNA memory would not have expected that detailed historical memories would be dispersed throughout the flesh rather than pretty much concentrated in the brain.

Mr. Million, if I recall correctly, had his brain destructively scanned for reproduction in an electronic simulator. This suggests something like the current model, in which connections between neurons are the basis of memory.

Wolfe has not to my knowledge used pyramid power, but he would use it without a qualm today if it suited the story.

I think current research considers that RNA may play a role in memory retention, but the basic storage is in standing neural circuitry rather than a chemical code which is transferrable organism to organism.

Yes. But (without trying to dig out the history of the science) I think in modern times this has always been the mainstream view.

- Gerry Quinn

James Wynn — 28 Jan 2011, 21:48 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

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I think so.

I don't. The alzabo evolved (or was genetically engineered) to eat humans and use their minds. Humans did not evolve to be eaten by alzabos. In the absence of strong evidence to the contrary (e.g. evidence that Becan was fighting the alzabo instincts) we should assume that Becan-in-alzabo was operating in the perceived interests of the alzabo.

Your perspective is on rails, I'm afraid. For you, nothing could be seen as Becan fighting alzabo instincts--even the alzabo fighting to save Becan's family after having recently had two full meals. Your understanding of the available options is therefore highly constrained, and blinds

you to other obvious options:

- 1) The alzabo might well have been engineered to allow dead humans to live on in an animal, and then it went feral.
- 2) A naturally mutated ability of a True Merge with their prey that transformed the alzabo into something new does not necessarily mean the New Creature was less robust than alzabos without that ability to merge at all.

The "new creature" wants to thrive and survive just as the alzabo and its prey wanted to survive and thrive. It's rather crabbed thinking to insist that the interests of the New Creature are usually evolutionarily subversive to the interests of the alzabo animal -- or to its prey for that matter. Look at how it worked with Becan's family.

If you say, "Well, if _I_ were designing an alzabo, I would have the non-sentient animal's interests predominate those of it's prey." But evolution doesn't work that way. If an animal has an ability that helps it survive better in a particular environment it goes with it. And there is no book of rules that says Life must work according to Such-and-Such order.

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Son Of Witz — 28 Jan 2011, 22:20 · in reply to Lee Berman

On Jan 28, 2011, at 10:50 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

This is paralleled with Severian in UotNS I think. He is no longer plagued by spontaneous takeovers by Thecla but I guess she is still there, just unneeded. The old Autarch pops up once, but only at the appropriate time and need.

I think the idea of a merger is pretty appropriate, a la Daimler-Chrysler. The larger company took over the smaller one. There is a new merged identity though if there is conflict the majority partner tends to have the merged corporation serve its needs above the minority partner.

I'm on the same page with Lee here.

I hadn't really considered Thecla's near-absence from UotNS. IIRC, she is barely there. Your corporate comparison echos the idea that the Alzabo is a Proctor & Gamble metaphor.

From: Jordon Flato

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I agree with Flato in that Thecla is alive in him in a different way than the Analeptic absorption. Lee's point about her not making a fuss in UotNS is making me wonder if there is a true merger between the two.

The dream, where they read from the same book with their hair braided together is the best. By the end, Severian's narrative infuses her voice with less WTF? disruption, no?

From: Gerry Quinn:

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Had a previous Autarch succeeded, he also (or instead) would have had those powers.

I think there was no success to be had for a previous Autarch.

IIRC, the ones who tried are Ymar, Appian, & Severian.

Appian was a setup, and Ymar was the first, inspired by Sev, who planted the "tradition" that he hoped to partake in to Ymar, who then started the Tradition.

Can someone hook me up with the story where Appian is named?

On Jan 28, 2011, at 1:54 PM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

Has nobody but me considered the possibility that Severian's presence has rekindled Becan's mind in the alzado (much the way he rekindles Thecla in himself) so that Becan actually overrides the alzado's instincts to protect his family?

Ha! I love it.

Jeff Wilson — 28 Jan 2011, 23:57 · in reply to Son Of Witz

On 1/28/2011 4:20 PM, Son Of Witz wrote:

On Jan 28, 2011, at 10:50 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

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Close examination of volumes I-IV, written either days before or days after he leaves for Yesod, reveal he is still subject to identity shifts, especially when he recalls a previous shift.

From: Jordon Flato

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The old autarch's explanation allows that much of his brain cells are still literally alive inside Severian. Thus, resurrective power is not required there, but Thecla pretty much has to have it after being cooked.

From: Gerry Quinn:

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It may be that they were looking for a candidate with suitable psionic potential that they could then magnify. I think it likely Sev has some tiny healing or time bending ability on his own that he uses to restore the clinically dead Triskelle. After the mind-contact is established on the night of his ascension to journeyman, he goes on to more impressive uses powered by the

Fountain. It's foreseeable that other gifts like that of the Pelerine, or the Sorcerer, or Ceryx, and positively Typhon, would be useful in pursuing one ineffable agendum or another.

Can someone hook me up with the story where Appian is named?

He isn't, but he posthumously reminisces about being supervised and taught by someone named Appian, and it has been inferred that Appian is his predecessor steward from whom he inherited his position and his name, as did Odilio.

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

Lee Berman — 29 Jan 2011, 04:18 · follows Jeff Wilson

Can someone hook me up with the story where Appian is named?

The name of the story I think you are looking for is "The Cat".

Jeff Wilson: It may be that they were looking for a candidate with suitable psionic potential that they could then magnify.

Toward the end of Citadel I think, Severian ponders that he seems to have revived Triskele before he received The Claw. He has two theories.

1. He will succeed in bringing the New Sun and such an awesome power of planetary resurrection can't help but echo backward in time and confer a small dose of it to younger Severian.
2. He will fail to bring the New Sun and be unmanned. But the hierogrammates will bestow upon him a nice parting gift to make up for his lost testicles and the gift of resurrection will be bestowed retroactively in time.

Well, we know from UotNS that Severian succeeds and that the power of resurrection is beyond the hierogrammates' power (though perhaps they could give it as a gift without being able to wield it themselves).

But Severian's success would seem to point to the validity of #1, just as he had hoped.

Moreover, the white fountain is given a bluish color, iirc. It is doppler shift as it is moving toward Urth but it seems also to mirror the Claw's (encased) color in theme, perhaps further suggesting the White Fountain is sending him some partial Claw-like power. Perhaps it is less effective as it is coded to his older self.

Still when Severian is young, the White Fountain is extremely close to Urth relative to the full journey it travelled. Only 60 years left on a journey which started at the dawn of civilization. (not that Wolfe had to have all that explicitly worked out as he finished CotA; I have the feeling that at that point of writing he envisioned the white fountain simply placed in the black hole, not travelling through space to get there).

Jeff Wilson — 29 Jan 2011, 08:50 · in reply to Lee Berman

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Would that not also undo the emasculation?

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Lee Berman — 30 Jan 2011, 04:16 · follows Jeff Wilson

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Jeff Wilson- Would that not also undo the emasculation?

Heh. Restoring my own crotch might be a high priority if I had the power of resurrection. Lucky Severian didn't have to, I guess (though as far as we know he remained childless).

I still argue that a simple, non-emasculating vasectomy would have done the trick. Something fishy going on there. You'd almost think there was a conspiracy to put androgyny into the story as much as possible.

Gerry Quinn — 30 Jan 2011, 17:41 · in reply to James Wynn

From: "James Wynn" <crushtv at gmail.com>

Isn't it just as arguable that Becan was confused about the reasonableness of reuniting his family in the animal and the used the animal fighting instincts as a tool to protect them?

I think so.

I don't. The alzado evolved (or was genetically engineered) to eat humans and use their minds. Humans did not evolve to be eaten by alzabos. In the absence of strong evidence to the contrary (e.g. evidence that Becan was fighting the alzado instincts) we should assume that Becan-in-alzado was operating in the perceived interests of the alzado.

Your perspective is on rails, I'm afraid. For you, nothing could be seen as Becan fighting alzado instincts--even the alzado fighting to save Becan's family after having recently had two full meals. Your understanding of the available options is therefore highly constrained,

and blinds you to other obvious options:

Spare us the psychoanalysis. If you can show Becan fighting alzado instincts, I am prepared to be convinced. The fact that I do not agree with your conclusions does not in itself demonstrate the limitations of my mentality.

1. Severian attacked, thinking he could scare away the zoanthropes; the alzado might reasonably have drawn the same conclusion. Severian and alzado are approximately equal in fighting terms. It was not a suicide mission. Alzados probably have a big appetite.
2. Severian killed four zoanthropes. The alzado killed three zoanthropes, and Casdoe. So Becan-in-alzado was still working to kill and eat his family, not to save their lives.

If you think Becan was fighting the alzado, the only grounds you seem to have for arguing this are that he made the alzado attack rashly when it would have been better advised to slink away. But the purpose of Becan-in-alzado was still to eat his family, not save their lives. That's not much in the way of fighting alzado instincts. Why would he fight some instincts, and not others?

- 1) The alzado might well have been engineered to allow dead humans to live on in an animal, and then it went feral.

Right... and instead of making a pretty creature with hands, for example, the engineers made a ravening monster seemingly designed to slaughter humans. Why would they do that, given that the prey of your hypothetical creature would presumably have gone to it willingly?

- 2) A naturally mutated ability of a True Merge with their prey that transformed the alzado into something new does not necessarily mean the New Creature was less robust than alzados without that ability to merge at all.

If I understand you correctly, you are speaking of something like a wolf that suddenly finds the minds of its human prey merge with its own. But why would such a creature have the urge to eat other humans? Surely its first thought would be to protect them by eating animals instead!

The "new creature" wants to thrive and survive just as the alzado and its prey wanted to survive and thrive. It's rather crabbed thinking to insist that the interests of the New Creature are usually evolutionarily subversive to the interests of the alzado animal -- or to its prey for that matter. Look at how it worked with Becan's family.

You're not really making sense to me here. Certainly the alzado wants to survive and thrive. It does this by killing its prey, as it killed Becan's family. What's unusual about this? A wolf would have done the same.

If you say, "Well, if I were designing an alzado, I would have the non-sentient animal's interests predominate those of its prey." But evolution doesn't work that way. If an animal has an ability that helps it survive better in a particular environment it goes with it. And there is no book of rules that says Life must work according to Such-and-Such order.

Ummm... the very basis of evolution is survival of the fittest. Fit alzados are alzados that eat well and mate with lots of lady alzados. Alzados whose instincts in this regard tend to be subverted by the minds of their prey are unfit alzados, who leave fewer progeny. Over time, the alzado population may be expected to become very good at preventing the instincts of its prey from interfering with its own, even as it benefits from their minds. And indeed, this prediction of Darwinian theory is confirmed - Becan's intellect is seemingly unimpaired, yet he concurs wholeheartedly with the alzado's instinct to kill and eat his family.

- Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn — 30 Jan 2011, 18:16 · in reply to Lee Berman

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

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The whole business as explained by Malrubius's aquastor doesn't make a whole lot of sense.

(1) Why be concerned that the particular autarchs who undertook and failed the trial might found a dynasty? I don't see why a dynasty founded by them should be worse than a dynasty founded by some autarch who never undertook it.

(2) Severian had time to sire plenty of heirs between the time he became Autarch and the time he departed for Yesod.

One can make various speculations.

For (1) it might be that an autarch who went to Yesod would gain so much in knowledge or credibility that a dynasty would be more likely. It might instead be that a dynasty started by such an autarch would be symbolic of an inward-turning Urth, unwilling to try again for redemption.

For (2) it might be that the consequences operate backward in time so that a failed autarch would be born an androgyne. We know nothing of Appian's history in this regard. About Ymar we know that he once spurned a beautiful woman and followed a dog, which does not go against the theory but hardly constitutes strong evidence for it.

Nothing appears terribly convincing. So was Malrubius's aquastor lying, perhaps not about the price of failure, but about its purpose? Might the willingness to proceed despite the risk of such consequences be part of Severian's trial? That has a certain degree of plausibility.

Wolfe doesn't seem to give any clues, so it's hard to know.

- Gerry Quinn

James Wynn — 30 Jan 2011, 20:20 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Gerry-

Spare us the psychoanalysis. If you can show Becan fighting alzado instincts, I am prepared to be convinced. The fact that I do not agree with your conclusions does not in itself demonstrate the limitations of my mentality. 1. Severian attacked, thinking he could scare away the zoanthropes; the alzado might reasonably have drawn the same conclusion. Severian and alzado are approximately equal in fighting terms. It was not a suicide mission. Alzados probably have a big appetite. 2. Severian killed four zoanthropes. The alzado killed three zoanthropes, and Casdoe. So Becan-in-alzado was still working to kill and eat his family, not to save their lives.

Why should I show anything? Does Severian's analysis of why Becan Alzado fought not impress you at all? He describes an equal merging of the desires between Becan and the animal. But you say it's just the animal after all? I'm merely just adopting the actual explanation expressed in the text after all.

If you think Becan was fighting the alzado, the only grounds you seem to have for arguing this are that he made the alzado attack rashly when it would have been better advised to slink away. But the purpose of Becan-in-alzado was still to eat his family, not save their lives. That's not much in the way of fighting alzado instincts. Why would he fight some instincts, and not others?

The stated purpose of the Becan Alzado was to reunify Becan's family. He even devoured his wife as he was dying. Last meal? What was the survival benefit of this?

1) The alzado might well have been engineered to allow dead humans to live on in an animal, and then it went feral.

Right... and instead of making a pretty creature with hands, for example, the engineers made a ravening monster seemingly designed to slaughter humans. Why would they do that, given that the prey of your hypothetical creature would presumably have gone to it willingly?

???

Why would you assume the engineers had full freedom to create an animal in any form they wanted? On the other hand, why would the resurrected humans not prefer to be in an alzado rather than a pomeranian?

2) A naturally mutated ability of a True Merge with their prey that transformed the alzado into something new does not necessarily mean the New Creature was less robust than alzados without that ability to merge at all.

If I understand you correctly, you are speaking of something like a wolf that suddenly finds the minds of its human prey merge with its own. But why would such a creature have the urge to eat other humans? Surely its first thought would be to protect them by eating animals instead!

No. You don't understand what I'm saying. An animal alzados presumably eat anything. If alzados' natural prey is a social animal, then the new creature would naturally seek to unify others of his prey's kind.

The "new creature" wants to thrive and survive just as the alzado and its prey wanted to survive and thrive. It's rather crabbed thinking to insist that the interests of the New Creature are usually evolutionarily subversive to the interests of the alzado animal -- or to its prey for that matter. Look at how it worked with Becan's family.

You're not really making sense to me here. Certainly the alzado wants to survive and thrive. It does this by killing its prey, as it killed

Becan's family. What's unusual about this? A wolf would have done the same.

AS DESCRIBED BY SEVERIAN the Becan alzado behaves as an animal alzado, but its interests are different. But the apparent motivation is radically different from the actual motivation, and the motivation is what is really interesting to Wolfe. The discussion about why the burning tent ascended is a more emphatic example of this, but he often does the same thing more subtly without overtly explaining it.

****MINOR SPOILER****

Wolfe has a new story out called "Innocent". The narrator is in jail as a child abductor/molester. But, in fact, he rescued the child from an abductor/molester. The truth is, the narrator is a werewolf. Even though his every action in the presence of the child is that of a pedophile, his actual interest was to devour the child and that's all.

****SPOILER END****

But evolution doesn't work that way. If an animal has an ability that helps it survive better in a particular environment it goes with it. And there is no book of rules that says Life must work according to Such-and-Such order.

Ummm... the very basis of evolution is survival of the fittest.

No. It is natural selection, and that is not remotely the same thing.

Fit alzabos are alzabos that eat well and mate with lots of lady alzabos. Alzabos whose instincts in this regard tend to be subverted by the minds of their prey are unfit alzabos, who leave fewer progeny.

There's absolutely NO reason to assume this and we know nothing about alzado reproduction. The variations even among mammals are far more broad than you seem to believe.

Over time, the alzado population may be expected to become very good at preventing the instincts of its prey from interfering with its own, even as it benefits from their minds.

Once again. You seem to believe that evolution works with some sort of plan in mind. If a merger works, there is no pressure for the alzado biology to change. That would be like saying that over time crocodiles should have evolved the ability to run like gazelles.

And indeed, this prediction of Darwinian theory is confirmed - Becan's intellect is seemingly unimpaired, yet he concurs wholeheartedly with the alzado's instinct to kill and eat his family.

Why his family? Why a house with multiple people in it protected by a man with a sword? Why not someone walking alone in the woods? Why not a zoanthrop?

~ u+16b9

Andrew Mason — 30 Jan 2011, 22:20 · follows James Wynn

Lee Berman wrote:

Can someone hook me up with the story where Appian is named?

The name of the story I think you are looking for is "The Cat".

However, I don't think it's clear that the Appian of 'The Cat' is in fact Severian's immediate predecessor. It could be doubted, partly because it's difficult to make the dates work - there's some discussion of that in the archives - though of course dates in *New Sun* are always a bit mysterious - but also because it would be odd for Wolfe to keep the Autarch's name mysterious

throughout the series, and then give it away casually in a short story.

The unnamed major characters, and what we are meant to do about them, are one of the ongoing mysteries of the work. My suspicion is that we might be able to find their names by reflection on saints. Perhaps the Autarch is called after a saint who was a eunuch? According to Wikipedia (yes, I know...) the first definite eunuch saint was Ignatius of Constantinople (not to be confused with some more famous Ignatiuses).

Toward the end of Citadel I think, Severian ponders that he seems to have revived Triskele before he received The Claw. He has two theories.

1. He will succeed in bringing the New Sun and such an awesome power of planetary resurrection can't help but echo backward in time and confer a small dose of it to younger Severian.
2. He will fail to bring the New Sun and be unmanned. But the hierogrammates will bestow upon him a nice parting gift to make up for his lost testicles and the gift of resurrection will be bestowed retroactively in time.

I don't think that's right. What he seems to say is that, given he will be castrated if he fails, there should be some counterbalancing reward if he succeeds - not a consolation prize, but something to justify the risk.. (What he actually says is 'should I conform to their desires', which I guess is a bit ambiguous, but I would read this as 'should I pass the test - should I prove to be the sort of person they want me to be'.) So both proposals turn on his succeeding in bringing the New Sun; the difference is in the source, in one case the Increate, working through the natural sympathy of things, in the other the Hierogrammates, as an explicit reward.

Andrew Mason — 30 Jan 2011, 22:33 · follows Andrew Mason

Gerry Quinn wrote: >

The whole business as explained by Malrubius's aquastor doesn't make a whole lot of sense.

(1) Why be concerned that the particular autarchs who undertook and failed the trial might found a dynasty? ?I don't see why a dynasty founded by them should be worse than a dynasty founded by some autarch who never undertook it.

As far as I can see, it isn't Malrubius who says the bit about founding a dynasty; it's someone - perhaps Apheta - in _Urth_, after the 'test' has taken place. It may relate only to 'Appian', the point being that if he had children they would have prevented Severian, specifically, becoming Autarch. (Are we actually ever told that Ymar was castrated, or just left to infer it?)

I don't think it likely that this was a deception, given that it is revealed after the main goal of the Hierogrammates' plan has already been achieved.

“So was Malrubius's aquastor lying,

perhaps not about the price of failure, but about its purpose” “Might the willingness to proceed despite the risk of such consequences be part of Severian's trial” ?That has a certain degree of plausibility.

I think that is what we are originally led to believe, the 'dynasty' point being revealed later. I don't think it is wholly false, but in 'Appian's' case there was also a more specific purpose. (Since his trial was a fake, there was no real point in using the threat to test _him_, though of course the memory of the penalty can still be part of the test for Severian.)

Lee Berman — 30 Jan 2011, 22:56 · follows Andrew Mason

James Wynn: The stated purpose of the Becan Alzabo was to reunify Becan's family. He even devoured his wife as he was dying. Last meal? What was the survival benefit of this?

There have been some interesting points made on both sides of the debate. But this seems like fairly conclusive evidence of "merger". It makes little sense for a pure alzabo to go through the trouble of chomping Casdoe with its dying gasp; it had to toss aside an already chomped zooanthrope body to do so. Little sense also for a pure Becan to make this final action. Only for a merged Becan (and Severa)/Alzabo creature does this final action make sense.

The alzabo might well have been engineered to allow dead humans to live on in an animal

I'm not understanding the assumption that alzabos are evolved or engineered to feed on humans. They are alien creatures, like the notules and slugs and salamanders. If these can be used to to kill humans without being evolved or engineered to, why not alzabo?

The fact that the alzabo appears when Agia is hiding in the attic, safe from it, might suggest it has been called through the mirrors by Hethor. Severian later wonders why she didn't sneak down and stab him while he was eating or at some other vulnerable time. Moreover, it is in Casdoe's cabin that Severian tells Agia he knows who Hethor is and that he is the source of the deadly beasts he has encountered. Agia assures Severian that one of Hethor's beasts will kill him if she doesn't do it first. Later...enter alzabo.

Alzabos whose instincts in this regard tend to be subverted by the minds of their prey are unfit alzabos, who leave fewer progeny.

More evidence, I think, that alzabos are not evolved to prey upon humans. Humans are are unique in being both easy prey without weapons and deadly enemies with them. The alzabo's own instincts seem better suited for hunting pure prey species. Alzabo-Becan combined instincts lead to the death of the beast which wouldn't have happened if the prey had been a rabbit-like creature.

I think it is similar to a dog who is killed by chasing cars. Naturally evolved instincts in animals often become deadly when misapplied in a human-based world (as the alzabo brain has partially become).

Gerry Quinn — 31 Jan 2011, 01:46 · in reply to James Wynn

From: "James Wynn" <crushtv at gmail.com>

Gerry-

Spare us the psychoanalysis. If you can show Becan fighting alzabo instincts, I am prepared to be convinced. The fact that I do not agree with your conclusions does not in itself demonstrate the limitations of my mentality. 1. Severian attacked, thinking he could scare away the zoanthropes; the alzabo might reasonably have drawn the same conclusion. Severian and alzabo are approximately equal in fighting terms. It was not a suicide mission. Alzabos probably have a big appetite. 2. Severian killed four zoanthropes. The alzabo killed three zoanthropes, and Casdoe. So Becan-in-alzabo was still working to kill and eat his family, not to save their lives.

Why should I show anything? Does Severian's analysis of why Becan Alzabo fought not impress you at all? He describes an equal merging of the desires between Becan and the animal. But you say it's just the animal after all? I'm merely just adopting the actual explanation expressed in the text after all.

"When the alzado rushed at the zoanthrops, its instinct commanded it to preserve its prey from others; when Becan did so, his instinct, I believe, was to preserve his wife and child."

The instinct to 'preserve' (i.e. stop others getting) his wife and child is no problem for the alzado, so naturally there is no need for it to be obliterated, any more than there is need to stop him talking. The instinct to actually *protect* his wife and child is completely nullified (in fact, he kills his wife). But there's no need at all to remove his feelings of ownership - they are in line with the instincts of the creature. Only the feelings and instincts of Becan that are useful to the alzado are retained. He's a tool.

Severian does not suggest that Becan was fighting the alzado. He says their instincts were aligned. If your mind is being used by an alzado, that's what happens - your instincts fit in with those of the alzado, or they stop existing. Becan's hopes regarding the future lives of his children, for example... gone completely.

That's how things go
When you're in an alzado

If you think Becan was fighting the alzado, the only grounds you seem to have for arguing this are that he made the alzado attack rashly when it would have been better advised to slink away. But the purpose of Becan-in-alzado was still to eat his family, not save their lives. That's not much in the way of fighting alzado instincts. Why would he fight some instincts, and not others?

The stated purpose of the Becan Alzado was to reunify Becan's family. He even devoured his wife as he was dying. Last meal? What was the survival benefit of this?

Why not? A dying dog might gnaw a bone. The instincts of Becan that are useful to the alzado are still present, like the instinct of a dog to chew bones. But how is he fighting the alzado? The alzado doesn't mind eating Casdoo at all.

1) The alzado might well have been engineered to allow dead humans to live on in an animal, and then it went feral.

Right... and instead of making a pretty creature with hands, for example, the engineers made a ravening monster seemingly designed to slaughter humans. Why would they do that, given that the prey of your hypothetical creature would presumably have gone to it willingly?

???

Why would you assume the engineers had full freedom to create an animal in any form they wanted? On the other hand, why would the resurrected humans not prefer to be in an alzado rather than a pomeranian?

The point is, there must be a reason why the creature is a huge carnivore, perfectly suited to prey on unwilling humans and creatures similar to humans (such as Severian has noted live on myriad worlds). If it evolved this way, no problem. That it was designed this way for the benefit of humans is somewhat hard to swallow!

2) A naturally mutated ability of a True Merge with their prey that transformed the alzado into something new does not necessarily mean the New Creature was less robust than alzados without that ability to merge at all.

If I understand you correctly, you are speaking of something like a wolf that suddenly finds the minds of its human prey merge with its own. But why would such a creature have the urge to eat other humans? Surely its first thought would be to protect them by eating animals instead!

No. You don't understand what I'm saying. An animal alzbos presumably eat anything. If alzbos' natural prey is a social animal, then the new creature would naturally seek to unify others of his prey's kind.

It's not seeking to unify anyone. It's seeking fresh meat, and lots of it. Its prey is a social animal, so it uses the social skills of its prey's mind to lure others of its kind. When you think about it, that is the natural prey of such a creature! After all, suppose an alzbos ate a fox. It would use the mind of the fox to catch rabbits. Then it would eat the rabbits. And then all it would know to do would be to eat grass, and as a carnivore, it would starve. Thus it is to be expected that the strains of alzbos that survive and prosper are those attracted to social animals, which can deliver a consistent food supply!

The "new creature" wants to thrive and survive just as the alzbos and its prey wanted to survive and thrive. It's rather crabbed thinking to insist that the interests of the New Creature are usually evolutionarily subversive to the interests of the alzbos animal -- or to its prey for that matter. Look at how it worked with Becan's family.

You're not really making sense to me here. Certainly the alzbos wants to survive and thrive. It does this by killing its prey, as it killed Becan's family. What's unusual about this? A wolf would have done the same.

AS DESCRIBED BY SEVERIAN the Becan alzbos behaves as an animal alzbos, but its interests are different. But the apparent motivation is radically different from the actual motivation, and the motivation is what is really interesting to Wolfe. The discussion about why the burning tent ascended is a more emphatic example of this, but he often does the same thing more subtly without overtly explaining it.

Severian's philosophising is often questionable. What I say in no way contradicts Severian's observations with regard to fact, nor even his observations with respect to the alzbos-useful instincts. There's no "actual motivation" and "apparent motivation" - just two motivations for the same act. But these motivations are not contradictory. Becan is not fighting the alzbos.

But evolution doesn't work that way. If an animal has an ability that helps it survive better in a particular environment it goes with it. And there is no book of rules that says Life must work according to Such-and-Such order.

Ummm... the very basis of evolution is survival of the fittest.

No. It is natural selection, and that is not remotely the same thing.

They are synonymous, at least in this context. As Charles Darwin put it: "This preservation, during the battle for life, of varieties which possess any advantage in structure, constitution, or instinct, I have called Natural Selection; and Mr. Herbert Spencer has well expressed the same idea by the Survival of the Fittest."

Fit alzbos are alzbos that eat well and mate with lots of lady alzbos. Alzbos whose instincts in this regard tend to be subverted by the minds of their prey are unfit alzbos, who leave fewer progeny.

There's absolutely NO reason to assume this and we no nothing about alzbos reproduction. The variations even among mammals are far more broad than you seem to believe.

The details of alzbos reproduction are not relevant; my example was merely illustrative. Indeed, the alzbos in question might have been a female for all we know. The point is that if we assume alzbos have conditions of life and a mode of reproduction such that ordinary evolutionary principles apply, we will expect its nature to be in accordance with such principles. In the same way, we would be surprised to find a breed of fox which tended to act against its own interests, and in the interest of rabbits.

Over time, the alzado population may be expected to become very good at preventing the instincts of its prey from interfering with its own, even as it benefits from their minds.

Once again. You seem to believe that evolution works with some sort of plan in mind. If a merger works, there is no pressure for the alzado biology to change. That would be like saying that over time crocodiles should have evolved the ability to run like gazelles.

Evolution doesn't have a plan, but it provides solutions that work. Alzados that act in the interests of their prey don't work, any more than crocodiles that act in the interest of gazelles. A crocodile might catch a gazelle by running, or by hiding in the water, or in some other fashion - but when the crocodile succeeds the gazelle fails, and vice versa. Crocodile evolution works on crocodiles, not on gazelles.

And indeed, this prediction of Darwinian theory is confirmed - Becan's intellect is seemingly unimpaired, yet he concurs wholeheartedly with the alzado's instinct to kill and eat his family.

Why his family? Why a house with multiple people in it protected by a man with a sword? Why not someone walking alone in the woods? Why not a zoanthrop?

Because this is precisely the sort of workable evolved solution we might expect! The alzado preys on social animals and utilises parts of their minds to catch social animals acquainted with the ones it has eaten. It can use their voice and knowledge to lure their loved ones into the same trap. That's the alzado's way of hunting and its natural instinct. Presumably if it has no human mind to work with, or the human mind has no further prey of the most suitable kind nearby, it roams further afield, perhaps directed by its victims to human habitation, perhaps at random.

We have no reason to suppose it would not devour somebody walking alone in the woods. Indeed, I believe it mentions that it intends to devour Severian as well as Becan's family.

Zoanthropes would be relatively useless to it, though, as they no longer have human minds. Probably this is how they survive so well in a region infested with alzados - the alzados leave them alone unless they are starving.

- Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn — 31 Jan 2011, 01:52 · in reply to Andrew Mason

From: "Andrew Mason" <andrew.mason53 at gmail.com> Gerry Quinn wrote: >

The whole business as explained by Malrubius's aquastor doesn't make a whole lot of sense.

(1) Why be concerned that the particular autarchs who undertook and failed the trial might found a dynasty? I don't see why a dynasty founded by them should be worse than a dynasty founded by some autarch who never undertook it.

As far as I can see, it isn't Malrubius who says the bit about founding a dynasty; it's someone - perhaps Apheta - in _Urth_, after the 'test' has taken place.

It's definitely Malrubius's aquastor, in Chapter 31 of Citadel:

"If you fail, your manhood will be taken from you, so that you cannot bequeath the Phoenix Throne to your descendants. Your predecessor also accepted the challenge."

- Gerry Quinn

James Wynn — 31 Jan 2011, 01:53 · in reply to Lee Berman

u+16b9-

The alzabo might well have been engineered to allow dead humans to live on in an animal

Lee-

I'm not understanding the assumption that alzabos are evolved or engineered to feed on humans. They are alien creatures, like the notules and slugs and salamanders. If these can be used to kill humans without being evolved or engineered to, why not alzabo?

Well, I agree. But it is certainly debatable and I was only offering an alternate purpose for humans engineering of the alzabo. I wanted to show that there more than two possible origins of the creature. Obviously, if it's ability is natural, it probably developed in absence of humans. But it might have been engineered by alien civilizations.

On the other hand, there are no "alien civilizations" in tBotNS, are there? There humans and the descendants of humans. It sort of reminds me of Tracking Song in that.

u+16b9

The fact that the alzabo appears when Agia is hiding in the attic, safe from it, might suggest it has been called through the mirrors by Hethor. Severian later wonders why she didn't sneak down and stab him while he was eating or at some other vulnerable time. Moreover, it is in Casdoe's cabin that Severian tells Agia he knows who Hethor is and that he is the source of the deadly beasts he has encountered. Agia assures Severian that one of Hethor's beasts will kill him if she doesn't do it first. Later...enter alzabo.

Alzabos whose instincts in this regard tend to be subverted by the minds of their prey are unfit alzabos, who leave fewer progeny.

More evidence, I think, that alzabos are not evolved to prey upon humans. Humans are are unique in being both easy prey without weapons and deadly enemies with them. The alzabo's own instincts seem better suited for hunting pure prey species. Alzabo-Becan combined instincts lead to the death of the beast which wouldn't have happened if the prey had been a rabbit-like creature.

I think it is similar to a dog who is killed by chasing cars. Naturally evolved instincts in animals often become deadly when misapplied in a human-based world (as the alzabo brain has partially become).

Gerry Quinn — 31 Jan 2011, 02:07 · in reply to Lee Berman

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

I'm not understanding the assumption that alzabos are evolved or engineered to feed on humans.

They are alien creatures, like the notules and slugs and salamanders. If these can be used to kill humans without being evolved or engineered to, why not alzabo?

They are certainly alien in origin, brought long ago to Urth allegedly "for the use and benefit of man". Presumably they evolved to prey on the creatures of their native world, but Severian notes somewhere that there are many worlds containing creatures of human stock, or so similar to us that they might be called human.

The fact that the alzado appears when Agia is hiding in the attic, safe from it, might suggest it has been called through the mirrors by Hethor. Severian later wonders why she didn't sneak down and stab him while he was eating or at some other vulnerable time. Moreover, it is in Casdoe's cabin that Severian tells Agia he knows who Hethor is and that he is the source of the deadly beasts he has encountered. Agia assures Severian that one of Hethor's beasts will kill him if she doesn't do it first. Later...enter alzado.

The alzado has been around for a while - it ate Severa several days ago, and since then it has been stalking the other inhabitants of the household.. Besides, we know that alzabos are originally from elsewhere, but now native to Urth. Even if we had not been told this, both Vodalus and the Autarch have access to potions made from dead alzabos.

Alzabos whose instincts in this regard tend to be subverted by the minds of their prey are unfit alzabos, who leave fewer progeny.

More evidence, I think, that alzabos are not evolved to prey upon humans. Humans are unique in being both easy prey without weapons and deadly enemies with them. The alzado's own instincts seem better suited for hunting pure prey species. Alzado-Becan combined instincts lead to the death of the beast which wouldn't have happened if the prey had been a rabbit-like creature.

Humans are not such difficult prey for an alzado with a stolen human mind to use as a weapon against them, as we saw.

If an alzado preyed on rabbits, its prey's mind would be best suited to eating grass. Probably it could use it to find the rabbit warren, but the rabbit's mind - unlike a human one - would have no intelligence helpful in killing more rabbits.

I think it is similar to a dog who is killed by chasing cars. Naturally evolved instincts in animals often become deadly when misapplied in a human-based world (as the alzado brain has partially become).

I agree the alzado's death was a similar accident - its instincts to preserve its chosen prey from other predators got the better of it. Doubtless many predators in our world die this way.

- Gerry Quinn

Lee Berman — 31 Jan 2011, 02:54 · follows Gerry Quinn

Andrew Mason: However, I don't think it's clear that the Appian of 'The Cat' is in fact Severian's immediate predecessor.

Yep hard to know for sure. Borski argues that the name Appian is evocative of bees and some of Severian's first acquired memories are of bee keeping presumably from the honey steward profession of the old autarch.

Sure would be a funny coincidence for Wolfe to happen to choose the name "Appian". On the other hand, the bee in Latin is "apis" with one "p". Just checked there is a Saint Apian as well as Saint Appian. So, I dunno. I think it is probably meant to be him.

--but also because it would be odd for Wolfe to keep the Autarch's name mysterious throughout the series, and then give it away casually in a short story. The unnamed major characters, and what we are meant to do about them, are one of the ongoing mysteries of the work.

I'm unsure on this. It does seem unfair to bury the answer to a major mystery of BotNS in a short story. Perhaps it is a way for Wolfe to reward his most loyal fans? Or perhaps it means the name of the old Autarch is considered a minor mystery, by Wolfe.

Lee Berman — 31 Jan 2011, 03:09 · follows Lee Berman

Gerry Quinn: The point is, there must be a reason why the creature is a huge carnivore, perfectly suited to prey on unwilling humans and creatures similar to humans

Far from perfectly suited to hunting humans as the standoff with Severian and its eventual death demonstrate. If it had been "smart" it would have stopped with Severa and Becan. I get the sense their contribution made the alzado a bit "stupid".

I agree the alzado's death was a similar accident - its instincts to preserve its chosen prey from other predators got the better of it.

While other readers recognize Becan's instincts as a partial cause of the alzado's death I suppose it make no sense to further debate the point. All salient aspects of the discussion have been covered.

Lee Berman — 31 Jan 2011, 03:28 · follows Lee Berman

James Wynn: On the other hand, there are no "alien civilizations" in tBotNS, are there? There humans and the descendants of humans.

Before we are made to realize that B, F and O and Inire and the Cumaeans have mythological analogs, there is (at least it was to me) a sense that there are non-human alien civilizations out there. There must be some sort of civilization out there producing blasters and fliers and anti-iron etc.

But using mythology/religion as a guide, I think there is a sense that all the beings to be found in BotNS (and Long/Short) have some intrinsic relationship to humans. I guess the Hierogrammates (and Hierodules) were fashioned from lower animal types, not civilized creatures? On the other hand, apports tell us that to Hiero-types, civilized intelligent beings can be mistaken for animals. I dunno. Wolfe doesn't give us much on "aliens".

But anyway, here is my real sense of things. Forgive me if I am too much a slave to symmetry:

If Hiero-types which are angel-analogs, come (in some manner) from Yesod the universe higher than Briah, then the worst, demonic things come from Abaddon, that universe which is lower than Briah. For me this would include Notules, slugs, salamanders and alzado. (and perhaps Hethor himself, but another thread for that).

Thus it makes sense that they don't really arrive on spaceships physically travelling through space to Urth. They are brought by mirrors which accelerate light to faster-than-light speed, thus leaving the universe and providing inter-universe travel. Angels-Yesod, demons-Abaddon. Mirrors if you want a short cut to either. The symmetry works for me.

Lee Berman — 31 Jan 2011, 03:50 · follows Lee Berman

Andrew Mason: I don't think it likely that this was a deception,...

I think it was and at a few different levels. It was first a deception on the old Autarch, Appian. I think he surprised them with his dedication and bravery in giving it a shot. Not what you'd expect from a honey steward.

If they saw a future where he returned unsuccessfully to Urth and had some kids, it could interfere with Severian taking the throne so they put a stop to that branching.

The autarchs were place holders. Figureheads propped up (by whom? the grand vizier, surely). It didn't matter much what they did as long as the Commonwealth stayed intact. (Thus I argue that Appian's name is a minor mystery. He is not really a major character).

"They" were waiting for Severian and Severian alone. For some reason he had to serve as autarch (maybe Sev 1?) before becoming the New Sun. The white fountain was active during all Severian's younger years. Somebody on Urth was keyed to it. But who? Someone with nascent resurrection powers. Once identified, that person was relentlessly poked, prodded and steered on the necessary path (the aureate path?) to fulfill the destiny of Ushas.

I think "unmanning" (they never say "castration" but c'mon..) was necessary not for the purposes mentioned by the characters. As elsewhere argued, a simple vasectomy would have prevented an Appian dynasty. But Wolfe needed more than just a sterile male for this story. He needed an androgyne. Why?

It is my argument that the story needed an androgyne to point to the subtext which is never openly spelled out: a Dionysus-like demiurge has created all we see. The god Dionysus was androgynous and we see his echo in the old Autarch. Also in the Green Man, in Tzadkiel and perhaps in the two-sided male/female coin which is Inire/Cumaeon.

(heh, Appian's androgynous face is on the obverse side of Vodalus' coin. What is on the reverse side?)

Hmm, perhaps I should amend that to, "never openly spelled out until RttW".

Andrew Mason — 31 Jan 2011, 15:26 · follows Lee Berman

Gerry Quinn wrote:

It's definitely Malrubius's aquastor, in Chapter 31 of Citadel:

"If you fail, your manhood will be taken from you, so that you ?cannot bequeath the Phoenix Throne to your descendants. Your predecessor also accepted the challenge."

Ah, OK, then. I guess I was just reading 'so that' as 'with the result that'.

I still don't think it needs to be read as 'We must prevent you starting a dynasty, since a dynasty founded by someone who failed the test would be a bad thing'. Rather it can mean "In taking the test you risk being unmanned, and so losing the ability to found a dynasty, as obviously you would want to" - so on that reading it is indeed part of the test, a test of the Autarch's commitment.

Later we are told (by Tzadkiel, actually, not Apheta as I thought) that it would have been a bad

thing for 'Appian' to have a child, as it would have kept Severian from the throne; but that's specific to his case.

As to the point that an autarch can have a child before he takes the test, perhaps he is told that that would disqualify him, as lack of children is part of the penalty.

Marc Aramini — 31 Jan 2011, 21:51 · in reply to Lee Berman

I came across a forum title Book of the New Sun and why it is the best thing ever.

<http://forums.somethingawful.com/showthread.php?threadid=3248039>

Never heard of the hosting site, couldn't post without registering, but imagine my shock when I found my own name there brought up as someone who is "full of poo" and "writes like a crazy person". They said, be sure to avoid what him.

Would go and at least post a link to my whole Short Sun essay but don't want to pay \$10. The discussion is pretty much focused around "why sev is a liar" and what the purpose of the long sun whorl is, but really nothing too insightful.

Infamy.

Adam Thornton — 31 Jan 2011, 22:03 · in reply to Marc Aramini

On Jan 31, 2011, at 3:51 PM, Marc Aramini wrote:

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Infamy.

Dude. It's Something Awful.

Don't expect much out of it. Although their WTF, D&D series about illustrations in RPGs is really funny.

Gerry Quinn — 31 Jan 2011, 22:14 · in reply to Lee Berman

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

Gerry Quinn: The point is, there must be a reason why the creature is a huge carnivore, perfectly suited to prey on unwilling humans and creatures similar to humans

Far from perfectly suited to hunting humans as the standoff with Severian and its eventual death demonstrate. If it had been "smart" it would have stopped with Severa and Becan. I get the sense their contribution made the alzado a bit "stupid".

How so? It was expecting - very reasonably - to find only easy meat in Becan's household. Casdoe actually opened the door for it! Had Severian not been there, the alzado would have dined in safety and comfort.

Unfortunately it encountered Severian, an indestructible hero you have frequently likened to Hercules. Still the alzado faces him off! One cannot doubt that it is well equipped to deal with ordinary men and women, though - as I said earlier - regions of high population density would be uncomfortable for it.

Its death was I suppose a consequence of the encounter to some extent. Severian had already deprived the unfortunate creature of its prey, and when it saw the same thing about to happen once again it unwisely rushed the mob of zoanthropes. Still, given its size it must have dined well for years. I do not believe the alzado should be classified as endangered on the basis of this one incident.

I agree the alzado's death was a similar accident - its instincts to preserve its chosen prey from other predators got the better of it.

While other readers recognize Becan's instincts as a partial cause of the alzado's death

I suppose it make no sense to further debate the point. All salient aspects of the discussion have been covered.

The original claim was not that Becan's instincts were partly to blame for its death, but that Becan's persona was actually fighting the alzado instincts.

- Gerry Quinn

Son of Witz — 31 Jan 2011, 22:28 · in reply to Adam Thornton

On Jan 31, 2011, at 2:03 PM, Adam Thornton <adam at io.com> wrote:

On Jan 31, 2011, at 3:51 PM, Marc Aramini wrote:

I came across a forum title Book of the New Sun and why it is the best thing ever.

<http://forums.somethingawful.com/showthread.php?threadid=3248039>

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Infamy.

Dude. It's Something Awful.

Don't expect much out of it. Although their WTF, D&D series about illustrations in RPGs is really funny.

Haven't dipped in there. Looks like I could waste some serious time in that D&D thread. The dialogue on this one just cracked me up.

<http://www.somethingawful.com/d/dungeons-and-dragons/illusion-of-decapus.php?page=3>

I think bad fantasy art keeps more people away from the genre than bad fantasy films or books. I wouldn't touch D&D once I thought the art was corny. Now I wish I'd practiced dragons and

shit a bit more.

Adam Thornton — 31 Jan 2011, 22:31 · in reply to Son of Witz

On Jan 31, 2011, at 4:28 PM, Son of Witz wrote:

I think bad fantasy art keeps more people away from the genre than bad fantasy films or books.

I wouldn't touch D&D once I thought the art was corny. Now I wish I'd practiced dragons and shit a bit more.

Huh. D&D art is certainly a mixed bag...but David Trampier was astonishingly talented. Erol Otus did an awful lot of hallucinatory fever-dream paintings that I like too. Jim Holloway, if you're looking for slightly-cartoonish figures with a lot of eye-pleasing motion, is good. Jeff Dee usually wasn't bad.

Sure, Sturgeon's Law still applies...but a lot of the Golden Age (say, 1977 to 1984) D&D art was really well done.

Adam

Gerry Quinn — 31 Jan 2011, 23:21 · in reply to Lee Berman

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

I think "unmanning" (they never say "castration" but c'mon..) was necessary not for

the purposes mentioned by the characters. As elsewhere argued, a simple vasectomy

would have prevented an Appian dynasty. But Wolfe needed more than just a sterile

male for this story. He needed an androgyne. Why?

It is my argument that the story needed an androgyne to point to the subtext which is

never openly spelled out: a Dionysus-like demiurge has created all we see. The god

Dionysus was androgynous and we see his echo in the old Autarch. Also in the Green Man,

in Tzadkiel and perhaps in the two-sided male/female coin which is Inire/Cumaeon.

If in a book of a thousand pages, a relatively minor character is an androgyne, it hardly points to anything in particular, any more than another character being half-man, half-robot. And Dionysus was hardly the only deity with androgynous aspects. But that is beside the point::

The autarch is **not** an androgyne, although Severian mistook him for one when they first met. He is neuter. Those are quite different things.

Is there a lot of other androgyny in BotNS? Hardly. A woman with a deep voice or a man from the future with a high-pitched voice are hardly indicators. There are two cacogens of different species who have made their hoimes on Urth; one is male and the other is female - and that's supposed to be a pointer to androgyny? I could walk down a street of any city today and spot more androgyny than this lot.

Where is the evidence for a Dionysus-like demiurge anyway? Presumably every cosmic cycle was created by the same entity, including that of Urth and our own if it is different. This entity is known on Urth as the Increate or the Pancreator. No special characteristics are ascribed to him; in particular there is no suggestion in the text of androgyny.

The BotLS has a new pantheon. Apart from the gods of Mainframe, we have the Outsider, whom it seems clear is identified by Wolfe as the god of Christianity under another name. [In the lists of characters, we can even find the three aspects of the Trinity delineated.] It's also suggested that Ah Lah is an alternative name for the Outsider. It can hardly be doubted that Increate and Pancreator are also alternate names.

You could perhaps find a suggestion of androgyny in Silk hearing the Outsider talking in two voices, a man's and a woman's - but I think he suggests that in fact he has more voices than two. Top candidates for symbols of androgyny on the Whorl appear to be Incus and Titi - but it is hard to argue that their presence indicates anything more than an attempt at a naturalistic spectrum of characters.

In RttW Dionysus is referenced, and Silk agrees that he may also be the Outsider. But why not - this is known to be the case for Allah and the Increate! Although wine is involved, the symbology invoked/evoked by Silk on Blue appear more Christian than Dionysian.

Finally, why link Dionysus to the concept of a demiurge? Are they classically identified? Is the universe of Urth especially Dionysian in aspect? I don't see anything especially Dionysian about it at all.

- Gerry Quinn

Son of Witz — 01 Feb 2011, 00:07 · in reply to Adam Thornton

On Jan 31, 2011, at 2:31 PM, Adam Thornton <adam at io.com> wrote:

On Jan 31, 2011, at 4:28 PM, Son of Witz wrote:

I think bad fantasy art keeps more people away from the genre than bad fantasy films or books. I wouldn't touch D&D once I thought the art was corny. Now I wish I'd practiced dragons and shit a bit more.

Huh. D&D art is certainly a mixed bag...but David Trampier was astonishingly talented. Erol Otus did an awful lot of hallucinatory fever-dream paintings that I like too. Jim Holloway, if you're looking for slightly-cartoonish figures with a lot of eye-pleasing motion, is good. Jeff Dee usually wasn't bad.

Sure, Sturgeon's Law still applies...but a lot of the Golden Age (say, 1977 to 1984) D&D art was really well done.

Adam

I don't mean to disparage any particular artist. Even Greats like Hildebrant rubbed me the wrong way when I was a teenager. It has more to do with my biases than the art. I don't even know David Trampier. Just googled, and I like it, but at fifteen I would have thought it corny & cliché. It's odd that I appreciate this stuff more as an adult, but that has mostly to do with getting over myself, I think.

Lee Berman — 01 Feb 2011, 02:13 · follows Son of Witz

Marc Aramini: but imagine my shock when I found my own name there brought up as someone who is "full of poo" and "writes like a crazy person".

Heh. Funny actually. Well, someone in here dubbed one of my ideas "Worst Ever". The question one might ask is: "what are the theories these critics base their own superiority upon?"

Reminds me of a Johnny Depp line from Pirates of the Caribbean:

Commodore: "YOU are, without doubt, the worst pirate I ever heard of!"

Cap'n Jack Sparrow: "Ah, yes...but you HAVE heard of me"

Lee Berman — 01 Feb 2011, 03:20 · follows Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn: The autarch is **not** an androgyne, although Severian mistook him for one when they first met. He is neuter. Those are quite different things.

Been checking under the old Appian robes, eh wot? He's been "unmanned". Are you SURE he wasn't endowed with some ovaries in the process? Definitions of "androgynous" and include "ambiguous in gender". Moreover, even if Severian used the wrong word I think you'll need to explain why Wolfe has Severian use that word. Mistaken or not, once used, the concept has been invoked for the reader.

Is there a lot of other androgyny in BotNS? Hardly.

Hm. I think I came up with 8-10 examples previously. How many are needed to be "a lot"? I guess it is all what you are used to. That seems like a lot to me. What other books are you comparing it to?

I could walk down a street of any city today and spot more androgyny than this lot.

Oh you are comparing to the real world. Well, I'd say your statement depends on which street, or which bar you happen to be doing your spotting. As I said, it is all what you are used to. But you are just arguing to argue here. It wouldn't be Gerry if there weren't a sneering line tossed in there somewhere ;-).

Where is the evidence for a Dionysus-like demiurge anyway?

Not where you can see it, obviously. But you have denied there is any mythological gnostic basis to the mysteries in Wolfe's work so this is not surprising.

Presumably every cosmic cycle was created by the same entity, including that of Urth and our own if it is different. This entity is known on Urth as the Increate or the Pancreator. No special characteristics are ascribed to him; in particular there is no suggestion in the text of androgyny.

Unless you know where to look. You may think of God as an incorporeal, distant being who never gets personally involved in human affairs but not everyone does and in the mythological past almost everyone assumed there were godly appearances on earth in human form. I think this happens in BotNS.

It's also suggested that Ah Lah is an alternative name for the Outsider. It can hardly be doubted that Increate and Pancreator are also alternate names.

Correct. However the name "Jahweh" or even "God" is suspiciously absent. Present is the suggestion that

The Outsider is the God of Wine, Son of Thyone. Can't get a more direct reference to Dionysus than that.

And you correctly deduce that he and the Pancreator are one and the same. I'm not so sure about the

Increate who was "not created". But Pancreator and demiurge are synonymous enough for me.

Using these terms independently as though the Increate and Pancreator might not be the same being suggests to me that BotNS is set in a gnostic universe. In such a place, the true spiritual God and the pancreator of all the material substance we see are not the same thing.

Moreover, we find Dionysian associations, androgyny, witches, snakes, bull, green man etc. in BotNS. If you don't see any transubstantial meaning to them, it is fine to restrict one's self to the plowman's interpretation. It is a crackling good story read at face value. Who cares if there are a few stupid dreams and stories with mythological symbolism. We can ignore them, as we can ignore our own dreams.

Finally, why link Dionysus to the concept of a demiurge? Are they classically identified?

Yes, they are. You can Google "Dionysus" and "demiurge" and "Plato" and "Zoroastrianism" and "Great God Pan" and "The Green Man" and "Nietzsche" etc. as easily as I have done. It is just a matter of wanting to.

Is the universe of Urth especially Dionysian in aspect? I don't see anything especially Dionysian about it at all.

That's because you are not trying very hard to see it from that perspective. In fact, you are trying very hard not to see it. Such efforts do not go unrewarded. If you were more easy-going you'd just ignore it. But the effort is noted.

Anyway, you have apparently missed a substantial number of posts in the past few months identifying not only the Dionysian aspects of BotNS but also the Apollonian counterparts. Very interesting philosophical and literary concepts these Apollonian and Dionysian themes. You should check them out. (in fact, Gerry, you personally would seem to lean very heavily toward one side of this spectrum; guess which one).

Lee Berman — 01 Feb 2011, 03:25 · follows Lee Berman

Gerry Quinn- Unfortunately it encountered Severian, an indestructible hero you have frequently likened to Hercules.

If you are able to recognize Severian as an indestructible hero, of mixed genealogy, with a missing twin, with superhuman power, who was set upon various superhuman tasks, who slew many monsters, to finally die and be reborn as a demi-god...

..hey, why quibble over a little alzado?

Gerry Quinn — 01 Feb 2011, 22:01 · in reply to Lee Berman

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

Gerry Quinn:

Is there a lot of other androgyny in BotNS? Hardly.

Hm. I think I came up with 8-10 examples previously. How many are needed to be "a lot"? I

guess it is all what you are used to. That seems like a lot to me. What other books are you comparing it to?

Here's your list of "examples":

Didn't you ever wonder why Typhon had an erection in front of Severian and demanded tribute of both sexy males and females and why Dorcas and Jolenta got it on and why the green man's voice is so feminine...why Agia has a low voice, why Thecla has a masculine gait and enjoys wearing men's clothing, why the Autarch is rendered androgynous (when a simple vasectomy would do), why Severian is forever conjoined with a female and is mistaken for a female on at least three occasions, why Tzadkiel is both male and female

Typhon, Dorcas and Jolenta are not androgynous in any normal sense of the word; they are presented as distinctly masculine and feminine, even if they sometimes like a little variety in their partners.

There's a plant-man whose voice is high-pitched, and a heterosexual woman whose voice happens to be low. Right... In this universe we have David Beckham and Marlene Dietrich, to name but two. It is hardly a novel phenomenon.

Has Thecla a masculine gait? Surely the opportunities for taking a stroll in the dungeons of the Torturers are limited? On one occasion Severian is mistaken for a woman when walking around in the dark after the Thecla persona takes over - that hardly suggests a masculine gait.

Oh, and in Severian's dream she found herself wearing his clothes and "rather enjoyed it". Such things are hardly unheard of, and there's no suggestion that during her life in the House Absolute she was known for cross-dressing

The Autarch looks androgynous because he's been neutered.

Severian is forever conjoined with numerous individuals of both sexes. He is mistaken for female on occasion when a particular female persona has taken over.

An alien/angel has male and female aspects. Tzadkiel is just about the only legitimate example of androgyny in this entire collection! But angels are often presented as androgynous. We don't go from that to a presumption that the deity commanding them must be one traditionally associated with androgyny.

One could probably find twenty more references which could be arbitrarily stretched into having some connection with an extremely broad definition of androgyny.

They still wouldn't present evidence for leaping to the

cosmological conclusion that the creator of Urth's universe must be a "Dionysus-like demiurge". Indeed, inasmuch as Urth appears to be somewhat fallen, one would expect that conditions there would tend to be in opposition to the nature of the Pancreator, rather than a pointer to them!

I could walk down a street of any city today and spot more androgyny than this lot.

Oh you are comparing to the real world. Well, I'd say your statement depends on which street, or which bar you happen to be doing your spotting. As I said, it is all what you are used to.

But you are just arguing to argue here. It wouldn't be Gerry if there weren't a sneering line tossed in there somewhere ;-).

I'm not arguing for the sake of arguing, and I am not sneering. I'm making the point that any thousand page book with the slightest pretensions to naturalism is probably going to include a good few examples of the sort of thing you are stretching into examples of androgyny.

It's telling that you avoid the most obvious examples of androgyny in the Solar cycle such as Titi and Incus. Should we conclude from their existence that the creator of their Whorl is androgynous? Or should we conclude that the human species of the Whorl contains variety comparable to that of our own?

Presumably every cosmic cycle was created by the same entity, including that of Urth and our own if it is different. This entity is known on Urth as the Increate or the Pancreator. No special characteristics are ascribed to him; in particular there is no suggestion in the text of androgyny.

Unless you know where to look. You may think of God as an incorporeal, distant being who never gets personally involved in human affairs but not everyone does and in the mythological past almost everyone assumed there were godly appearances on earth in human form. I think this happens in BotNS.

So what character are you proposing is really Dionysus?

It's also suggested that Ah Lah is an alternative name for the Outsider. It can hardly be doubted that Increate and Pancreator are also alternate names.

Correct. However the name "Jahweh" or even "God" is suspiciously absent. Present is the suggestion that The Outsider is the God of Wine, Son of Thyone. Can't get a more direct reference to Dionysus than that.

And you correctly deduce that he and the Pancreator are one and the same. I'm not so sure about the

Increate who was "not created". But Pancreator and demiurge are synonymous enough for me.

As I pointed out, the definitions of the Outsider in BotLS character lists spell out characteristics of the three Persons of the Trinity. There are multiple other Christian references. 'Pancreator' and 'demiurge' are synonymous only in terms of the meaning "creator of the universe" - that fact invokes no specific Gnostic interpretation whatsoever.

Using these terms independently as though the Increate and Pancreator might not be the same being suggests

to me that BotNS is set in a gnostic universe. In such a place, the true spiritual God and the pancreator of all the material substance we see are not the same thing.

Your argument depends on the notion that a single deity goes by different names; you cannot now turn around and assert that the fact of different names suggests multiple deities.

Moreover, we find Dionysian associations, androgyny, witches, snakes, bull, green man etc. in BotNS. If you don't see any transubstantial meaning to them, it is fine to restrict one's self to the plowman's interpretation. It is a crackling good story read at face value. Who cares if there are a few stupid dreams and stories with mythological symbolism. We can ignore them, as we can ignore our own dreams.

You can find as many random associations as you want to just about anything, Daleks or whatever. It's not "ignoring them" to question whether they are some sort of Secret Key to understanding the work. [As it happens, Severian himself has been given knowledge that he calls the Key to the Universe. Hint: it's not androgyny.]

Finally, why link Dionysus to the concept of a demiurge? Are they classically identified?

Yes, they are. You can Google "Dionysus" and "demiurge" and "Plato" and "Zoroastrianism" and "Great God Pan" and "The Green Man" and "Nietzsche" etc. as easily as I have done. It is just a matter of wanting to.

Not an answer. In fact looking up juxtapositions of Dionysius and demiurge leads to a terrible mass of babble. Can you point to one decent reference that Dionysus and demiurge were classically identified?

Is the universe of Urth especially Dionysian in aspect? I don't see anything especially Dionysian about it at all.

That's because you are not trying very hard to see it from that perspective. In fact, you are trying very hard not to see it. Such efforts do not go unrewarded. If you were more easy-going you'd just ignore it. But the effort is noted.

What then, in your mind, is especially Dionysian about it?

Anyway, you have apparently missed a substantial number of posts in the past few months identifying not only the Dionysian aspects of BotNS but also the Apollonian counterparts. Very interesting philosophical and literary concepts these Apollonian and Dionysian themes. You should check them out. (in fact, Gerry, you personally would seem to lean very heavily toward one side of this spectrum; guess which one).

Presumably your hypothesis of a "Dionysus-like demiurge" implies that the universe of BotNS tends more to the Dionysian than the Apollonian side compared to ours. I ask again - what aspects of it do you see as reflecting this?

- Gerry Quinn

Lee Berman wrote:

Presumably every cosmic cycle was created by the same entity, including that of Urth and our own if it is different. ?This entity is known on Urth as the Increate or the Pancreator. ?No special characteristics are ascribed to him; in particular there is no suggestion in the text of androgyny.

Unless you know where to look. You may think of God as an incorporeal, distant being who never gets personally involved in human affairs but not everyone does and in the mythological past almost everyone assumed there were godly appearances on earth in human form. I think this happens in BotNS.

Christianity certainly holds that there have been divine appearances in human form. Such appearances are referred to in the _Sun_ cycle, at least in Silk's visions, if nowhere else. I don't see any contradiction with the idea that the creator of every cycle is the same.

It's also suggested that Ah Lah is an alternative name for the Outsider. ?It can hardly be doubted that Increate and Pancreator are also alternate names.

Correct. However the name "Jahweh" or even "God" is suspiciously absent.

It would be odd to use 'God' as a _name_ for the creator in a world where it is assumed (at least in popular religion) that there are many gods. The Outsider is called 'the God of gods', and both Silk and Severian claim that there is only one real God. As for 'Jahveh', that name is traditionally treated as unspeakable.

Present is the suggestion that

The Outsider is the God of Wine, Son of Thyone. Can't get a more direct reference to Dionysus than that.

True. However, there are precedents (C.S. Lewis and Wole Soyinka, at least) for identifying Dionysus with the Christian God. That his identity as god of wine is emphasised is significant; he has other aspects which it would be harder to interpret in Christian terms, but as god of wine it is not unreasonable to associate him with a God who is reputed to have turned water into wine, and who is regularly celebrated in a ritual involving wine, through which his followers attain communion with him (all of which are referred to in the _Sun_ cycle).

And you correctly deduce that he and the Pancreator are one and the same. I'm not so sure about the Increate who was "not created". But Pancreator and demiurge are synonymous enough for me.

In the original, Platonic sense of 'demiurge', in which it simply means 'maker', undoubtedly the terms are similar. But the Christian God can also be called a demiurge in that sense. I don't see any reason to identify the Pancreator with a demiurge in the more specific gnostic sense.

Long Sun seems to me to be, among other things, an allegory of gnosticism; but in that the figure who corresponds to the demiurge is not the Outsider but Pas. The Outsider stands in that story in the place of the true God, who is outside the world and hidden from it.

The cycle contains clear, massive and pervasive references to the Christian God. There are quotations from scripture (Joseph's dream, the sign from the belly of the fish, the vision of Elijah). There are rituals of Christian inspiration - not only the eucharist, but the paschal candle and the Angelus. There is the use of the cross as a symbol, with definite implications that it is in origin the Outsider's symbol. There are saints like Katharine and Barbara. (Wolfe's discussion of Holy Katharine in _Castle of the Otter_ makes it clear that he does identify her with the - perhaps mythical - Christian saint of that name.) There visions derived from the life of Jesus. (I'm not saying that Jesus is literally present within that cycle of the universe; I am suspending judgement on that. But he is symbolically present; if the visions are in fact of another person, that person is being symbolically identified with Jesus.)

Wolfe has said both that Severian is a Christian figure and that he is a form of the Outsider.

The cycle unquestionably contains many references to pagan traditions, including, probably, gnostic ones. But I don't see that as a reason for thinking of the whole universe as a gnostic one; the Christian imagery seems clearly dominant to me.

Roy C. Lackey — 02 Feb 2011, 05:44 · in reply to Andrew Mason

Andrew Mason wrote:

It would be odd to use 'God' as a _name_ for the creator in a world where it is assumed (at least in popular religion) that there are many gods. The Outsider is called 'the God of gods', and both Silk and Severian claim that there is only one real God. <

Said Severian to BF&O, in the tomb of Apu-Punchau:

"Once I believed you three were gods, and then that the Hierarchs were still greater gods. So the autochthons believed me a god, and feared I would plunge into the western sea leaving them in night with winter always. But only the Increate is God, kindling reality and blowing it out. All the rest of us, even Tzadkiel, can only wield the forces he's created." (URTH, 353)

Barbatus to Severian:

"A moment since we spoke of him who makes. Among your folk the simple call him God, and you, the lettered, name him Increate." (355)

-Roy

Lee Berman — 02 Feb 2011, 23:17 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Andrew Mason:Christianity certainly holds that there have been divine appearances in human form.

Interesting. I was not aware of that (perhaps not being a Christian). Who did God appear as?

It would be odd to use 'God' as a _name_ for the creator in a world where it is assumed (at least in popular religion) that there are many gods.

Well, I am a bit more focused on BotNS, and as Roy nicely points out, there is a use of "God" in that story. But it is associated with the Increate, not the Pancreator. And I think it is significant that these two are not necessarily the same in BotNS as they might be in modern Christianity.

As for 'Jahveh', that name is traditionally treated as unspeakable.

Nobody is more aware of that than me. I spent many years dutifully reading Hebrew prayers and Torah with the abbreviation (rendered in English) "YH" as "Adonai"(our Lord) without knowing why nor being offered an explanation. I first heard the name "Yaweh" as god of the Jews in a comparative religion portion of public school 6th grade history. Quite a light went on, I can assure you.

But most Christians aren't so anal about it, and some are quite willing to use the "Jehovah" version of it out loud. Wolfe is willing to use a version of it in listing the maker of Terminus Est-Jovinian.

However, there are precedents (C.S. Lewis and Wole Soyinka, at least) for identifying Dionysus with the Christian God. That his identity as god of wine is emphasised is significant; he has other aspects which it would be harder to interpret in Christian terms,

In the original, Platonic sense of 'demiurge', in which it simply means 'maker', undoubtedly the terms are similar. But the Christian God can also be called a demiurge in that sense. I don't see any reason to identify the Pancreator with a demiurge in the more specific gnostic sense.

I am not an expert on such things. But my current understanding is that many have felt the "God" of the Old Testament (the genocidal one) was a Pancreator/demiurge divorced in some manner from the true God or Increate. That Pancreator/demiurge might be some version of Dionysus.

I think, furthermore, that some think that part of the coming of Jesus Christ was a conciliation and joining of Pancreator and Increate. God certainly has seemed to treat humanity better since the coming of Jesus. No Godsent plagues or floods or mandation of genocidal warfare anymore. They are all human products now, I guess.

I have no personal opinion on such matters, of course. But all I can do is report that I get the feeling that in BotNS/Briah. Wolfe has created a universe in which Pancreator and Increate were never reconciled/unified. Thus, despite their advanced technology they remain spiritually backwards- plagued by polytheism, monsters, possession, witches, etc. All the things our world was plagued by before Jesus Christ set things (mostly) right.

Perhaps each universe gets its own Pancreator (but Increate is above all?) I dunno. But I don't see the same religious rules working in Briah as for our own universe.

James Wynn — 03 Feb 2011, 00:21 · in reply to Lee Berman

Andrew Mason:Christianity certainly holds that there have been divine appearances in human form.

Interesting. I was not aware of that (perhaps not being a Christian). Who did God appear as?

Abraham met with God and two angels who told him about the birth of Isaac and the destruction of Sodom.

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"Increate" means "not created". "Pancreator" means "creator of all". It seems logically inconsistent that these could be separate persons.

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Hmmm...that's interesting. Is it understood among Jews that YHWH is a Hebrew form of Jove?

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Son of Witz — 03 Feb 2011, 01:12 · in reply to James Wynn

On Feb 2, 2011, at 4:21 PM, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:

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"Increate" means "not created". "Pancreator" means "creator of all". It seems logically inconsistent that these could be separate persons.

I have understood them to mean the same thing. The Uncreated Creator of All made the Creation.

Adam Thornton — 03 Feb 2011, 03:02 · in reply to Son of Witz

On Feb 2, 2011, at 7:12 PM, Son of Witz wrote:

On Feb 2, 2011, at 4:21 PM, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:

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What he said. "Increate" is like "Prime Mover"--there is only one such thing, and it is the ultimate cause of all other things.

Adam

Jeff Wilson — 03 Feb 2011, 03:15 · in reply to James Wynn

On 2/2/2011 6:21 PM, James Wynn wrote:

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Interesting. I was not aware of that (perhaps not being a Christian). Who did God appear as?

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Hmmm...that's interesting. Is it understood among Jews that YHWH is a Hebrew form of Jove?

Isn't the dating reversed on that?

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

Jeff Wilson — 03 Feb 2011, 03:26 · in reply to Adam Thornton

On 2/2/2011 9:02 PM, Adam Thornton wrote:

On Feb 2, 2011, at 7:12 PM, Son of Witz wrote:

On Feb 2, 2011, at 4:21 PM, James Wynn<crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:

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I don't think this agrees with trinitarian doctrine; all three Persons are uncreated, but the Father is the maker of heaven and earth. The Son and the Holy Spirit inform and influence but don't seem to directly create.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
Computational Intelligence Laboratory - Texas A&M Texarkana
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James Wynn — 03 Feb 2011, 03:35 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

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I don't think this agrees with trinitarian doctrine; all three Persons are uncreated, but the Father is the maker of heaven and earth. The Son and the Holy Spirit inform and influence but don't seem to directly create.

No. I don't think this is probably the case. John 1 says:

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was with God in the beginning. All things were made by him and without him nothing was made that was made."

Jehovah Witnesses read this as "All things were made by God", but it appears that most scholars agree with Augustinian and Arian theology and read it as "All things were made by Word".

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 03 Feb 2011, 05:16 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On Wed, Feb 2, 2011 at 7:26 PM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:

I don't think this agrees with trinitarian doctrine; all three Persons are uncreated, but the Father is the maker of heaven and earth. The Son and the Holy Spirit inform and influence but don't seem to directly create.

I'm not sure what the role of the HS is in creation, but John's Gospel makes clear the role of the Son (the Word): "Through him were all things created."

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Jeff Wilson — 03 Feb 2011, 06:18 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On 2/2/2011 11:16 PM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

On Wed, Feb 2, 2011 at 7:26 PM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:

I don't think this agrees with trinitarian doctrine; all three Persons are uncreated, but the Father is the maker of heaven and earth. The Son and the Holy Spirit inform and influence but don't seem to directly create.

I'm not sure what the role of the HS is in creation, but John's Gospel makes clear the role of the Son (the Word): "Through him were all things created."

Yes; as The Word, He says the way it is going to be. However, by definition, all Christians affirm that the Father is the one who Makes when they say the Creed.

I suppose this could be a product of the ambiguity between "everything maker" and "all ruler". I would agree that the Logos rules all is the intent of the Scriptures; perhaps the Father and Son jointly inaugurate creation, with the Maker speaking the Logos. I can't locate my interlinear just now to verify, but it could explain the plural "elohim" in use.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com

Computational Intelligence Laboratory - Texas A&M Texarkana

< <http://www.tamut.edu/CIL> >

Lee Berman — 03 Feb 2011, 08:20 · follows Jeff Wilson

James Wynn- Hmmm...that's interesting. Is it understood among Jews that YHWH is a Hebrew form of Jove?

My religious education ended around the time I was 14. I suspect serious students of Judaism eventually get into the mysticism of the name YHWH. As mentioned, that word was never, ever

once brought up in my religious education. I might have asked once why "Our Lord" was rendered as an unpronounceable two letters and was told "just say 'Adonai'". So I did. From then on I questioned it as much as I questioned what "allegiance" means in our USA Pledge of Allegiance.

A basic tenet of Judaism (as I think Jeff alludes to) is that Jews were the first to recognize God and monotheism and are his chosen people. There is no way in heck younger Jews are going to be made aware that there might be parallel or even earlier recognitions of the one true God by other peoples.

"Increate" means "not created". "Pancreator" means "creator of all". It seems logically inconsistent that these could be separate persons.

Well, I am only a novice in these areas, but my understanding among those who believe in separate beings is that God/Increate is a being of pure spirit while the Demiurge created all the material things we see. Maybe God created the raw material but the demiurge shaped it? I dunno. The Dionysus concept appears earlier than the Greek pantheon and then after it and has persisted in minority form ever since. I know there are pagan sorts who believe he will ascend to his foremost place again after this temporary Apollonian, paternalistic phase of Judeo-Christian-Muslim dominance has faded. (connecting Jahweh with Jove/Jupiter/Zeus as a once again temporary Father god who will fade before the more balanced lord of opposites, male/female dark/light Dionysus, Great God Pan, whatever.

Wolfe uses the terms Increate, Pancreator AND Demiurge in BotNS. I can understand why modern

Christians would assume these are meant to be exactly the same thing but I can't be sure of that.

He has said his Christian beliefs are not exactly traditional. He has said he has some belief that the gods of mythology are real in some sense. He has said he wanted to explore what the world would

be like if there was no Jesus. Putting these together, I get the sense that Briah is a place with no Jesus..well, no Christ anyway. So it retains some of the problems and fantastically interesting story

possibilities of our own pre-Christian earth.

Gerry Quinn — 03 Feb 2011, 12:06 · in reply to Son of Witz

From: "Son of Witz" <Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org>

On Feb 2, 2011, at 4:21 PM, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:

Lee Berman:

Well, I am a bit more focused on BotNS, and as Roy nicely points out, there is a use of "God"

in that story. But it is associated with the Increate, not the

Pancreator. And I think it is

significant that these two are not necessarily the same in BotNS as they might be in modern

Christianity.

"Increate" means "not created". "Pancreator" means "creator of all". It seems logically inconsistent that these could be separate persons.

I have understood them to mean the same thing. The Uncreated Creator of All made the Creation.

I don't think it is impossible that there could be a religion in which they are different - but I don't see any indication that this is so. The two names seem to be used in identical contexts, and are

never contrasted by any speaker.

Imagine a book about our world in which the names 'God' and 'Satan' were used. We would soon notice that these referred to different entities, at least according to the conceptions of the public at large. Nothing like this is apparent in BotNS.

- Gerry Quinn

Lee Berman — 03 Feb 2011, 13:24 · follows Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn: Imagine a book about our world in which the names 'God' and 'Satan' were used. We would soon notice that these referred to different entities, at least according to the conceptions of the public at large. Nothing like this is apparent in BotNS.

I never noticed a difference in previous readings. But then I wasn't looking for them. I did notice the word "Demiurge" used in a similar context which I found to be a head-scratcher. I think that would be a good future project- finding if Increate and Pancreator are used in slightly different contexts in BotNS.

Somebody was suggesting the craziness of the idea that each Wolfean universe might have a separate creator. But my sense of how things are put together in the Sun series actually seems to suggest that very thing.

Just checked Wikipedia for "Manvantara" and found this:

Each Manvantara is created and ruled by a specific Manu, who in turn is created by Brahma, the Creator himself. Manu creates the world, and all its species during that period of time, each Manvantara lasts the lifetime of a Manu, upon whose death, Brahma creates another Manu to continue the cycle of Creation or Shristi....

....After that the creator, Brahma starts his cycle of creation all over again, in an endless cycle of creation followed by Destruction for which Shiva, Hindu God of destruction, and also renewal, is invoked towards the end of each such cycle [5].

Of course Wolfe could have borrowed the word "manvantara" without meaning it to hold much of the Hindu meaning of the word. But having independently come to the conclusion that Briah has a separate demiurge that created it, distinct from our own universe, I find it difficult to dismiss the congruence. I can see Brahma=Increate and Manu=demiurge in BotNS.

Not sure if "Pancreator" works better for Brahma or the Manu of a particular universe. Perhaps that future project will shed light on that.

James Wynn — 03 Feb 2011, 15:26 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Yes; as The Word, He says the way it is going to be. However, by definition, all Christians affirm that the Father is the one who Makes when they say the Creed. I suppose this could be a product of the ambiguity between "everything maker" and "all ruler". I would agree that the Logos rules all is the intent of the Scriptures; perhaps the Father and Son jointly inaugurate creation, with the Maker speaking the Logos. I can't locate my interlinear just now to verify, but it could explain the plural "elohim" in use.

It is an error (within Augustinian theology) to think of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as though they were different persons comprising a single entity...like Potto, Lemur, and Loris comprising

the Ayuntamiento (I'm not saying you are making this mistake. I'm actually not sure.). Jesus said "I and the Father are one" and "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father". When the introduction of the Gospel of John says "The Word was with God and the Word was God" I think the implication is that it is irrelevant whether you say "The Father made the World" or "The Son made the World". The two are equivalent in that sense and either statement is true.

You bring up an interesting point, however. Creeds and laws are indicators of controversies within a sect or society. I wonder what issue the First Council of Nicea was dealing with when they settle on "The Father Almighty, Maker of all things" and "The Son of God...by whom all things were made."

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Son of Witz — 03 Feb 2011, 19:59 · in reply to Lee Berman

Man Lee, put Re: in your subject headers already. There is SURELY a pref in your program.

On Feb 3, 2011, at 12:20 AM, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:

"Increate" means "not created". "Pancreator" means "creator of all". It seems logically inconsistent that these could be separate persons.

Well, I am only a novice in these areas, but my understanding among those who believe in separate beings is that God/Increate is a being of pure spirit while the Demiurge created all the material things we see. Maybe God created the raw material but the demiurge shaped it? I dunno.

I need to go back and see where Demiurge is used. IIRC it is something Thecla says. Anyone else?

Demiurgos is a false or half creator.

So, in a Gnostic worldview, YHVH is a entity distinctly separate from the Godhead. That is, there is a true, uncreated prime mover, but that isn't the god of Abraham. The Demiurgos is deluded, thinking itself the most-high, but it is the living abortion of Sophia. This is a problematic heresy from the official view, of course, because, then "who the F is YHVH and how did he dupe us?". But gnostics then have the Logos issuing from the true Godhead as a saviour for those trapped in the demiurge's creation.

So, when a character uses Demiurge, they most likely do NOT mean to equate it with Pancreator or Increate, because, theologically, if one uses the term, it implies understanding the difference in ontological levels.

James Wynn — 03 Feb 2011, 20:45 · in reply to Son of Witz

"Increate" means "not created". "Pancreator" means "creator of all". It seems logically inconsistent that these could be separate persons.

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It is easy to think of "demiurge" as meaning "half-creator" because we often use "demi" to mean "something less than" or as synonymous with "semi" or "hemi". But actually it means only "skilled worker" or "craftsman". It comes from the Socratic Dialogues. Of course, with the new understanding that Plato was a Pythagorean, perhaps its roots even drawn from there. Anyway, the God of Genesis or the Logos of the Gospel of John could be properly called a "demiurge".

Among CERTAIN Christian Gnostics, the demiurge is something of a bad guy and something separate from the Increate/Pancreator. He is a created being who made the world. Manicheanism is seen as the name brand of such philosophies. However, in many (most?) Gnostic philosophies--even Christian ones--this is not the case. In fact, in a lot of them, the world was made by multiple demiurges called archons.

So the question is, was Wolfe riffing off one of the particular "anti-Semitic" Gnosticisms or another more generic brand?

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Lee Berman — 04 Feb 2011, 13:20 · follows James Wynn

James Wynn: It is easy to think of "demiurge" as meaning "half-creator" because we often use "demi" to mean "something less than" or as synonymous with "semi" or "hemi". But actually it means only "skilled worker" or "craftsman".

Yes, it was this definition, plus the Short Sun's explicit association of The Outsider with Dionysus (Pan) that steered me toward Father Inire as a focus for this entity in BotNS.

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Being from a Western culture, my limited knowledge of gnosticism was focused on Judeo-Christian Platonic versions before this Wolfe stuff started creeping into my consciousness. My current sense is that gnosticism was quite further reaching, roughly encompassing Alexander's empire from India to Europe and originating as an amalgam of the beliefs held among the divergent people in this area. Thus the Greek/Judeo-Christian version might be considered a minority (though the spread of Christianity seems to have carried a version on its underbelly).

So the question is, was Wolfe riffing off one of the particular "anti-Semitic" Gnosticisms or another more generic brand?

I think we can get clues from the word choices of Wolfe. As previously mentioned, the "manvantaras" and their mini-creators might fit the picture. The Kabbalic terms Abaddon, Yesod and Briah and Tzadkiel bring us back to the Judeo-Christian realm with heaven, hell, demons and angels. The Cumaean's reference to "The Abraxas" comes from Egyptian/Coptic traditions and may be the origin of the "Seventeen Stones" of Cadroe and Megatherians.

The idea of mini-demiurges or archons running around, getting things done seems to parallel Pan's ability to multiply himself into a horde of assistants. Could be the basis for Father Inire (and Abaia/The Mother/Scylla) able to do something similar. And why the Autarch attempts to copy this ability in inferior, human form, while Tzadkiel seems to do so in superior (faster, more flexible) form.

Wikipedia has a pretty informative, organized article on gnosticism.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gnosticism>

Marc Aramini — 06 Feb 2011, 23:53 · in reply to Lee Berman

Just writing to grumble that the comments are closed on this article on SF at the cusp of breaking into consideration for the Booker Prize. Someone mentions Wolfe in the comments in pretty simplistic terms and my blood boiled when I couldn't comment. just thought I would share, since I can't post there to respond.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2011/feb/02/science-fiction-literary-canon>

This twaddle here made my stomach churn:

"resurgence 27 says

4 February 2011 1:36AM

quote from somebody else here:

"If a SF author wrote as well as Kelman or Banville they would win the Booker. It's as simple as that."

Exactly! Are there terrific works of sci-fi and fantasy out there? Yes. But even the best of them cannot stand toe to toe with the best of literary fiction. The writers of the former tend to be so drunk on ideas, concepts and general razzle-dazzle that love of, and attention to, language for its own sake is lost. I love Gene Wolfe and James Blish, for instance -- love, love, love -- but are either of them half the writer that Peter Carey or Marilynne Robinson is? No."

Half the writer Peter Carey or Marilynne Robinson is??!!!!!! ARGHGHGHGHGGH what insufferable asinine nonsense. Wanted to respond, read *Latro in the Mist* twice, read Herodotus, see the sublime use of language, the interesting use of subject material, the reason for *Latro's* depression and the manumission scene, read Wolfe's beautiful characterization, his intelligent reassignment of tropes, who else can do that? Ever? If Wolfe were liberal he would probably be more popular but to say he isn't half the writer Peter Carey or MARILYNNE ROBINSON is made my blood pressure go up. More like ten times the writer either are.

I see a name on these lists of awarded authors sometimes, and I think back to his attempted defense of Wolfe in that cretinous cancer boy incident a few years ago, were I felt like he was

outgunned and couldn't even express why Wolfe was great. Must get my tylenol and pepto.

Of all the asinine tripe.

Lane Haygood — 07 Feb 2011, 00:38 · in reply to Marc Aramini

Literary fiction is entitled to its pretensions. That is, after all, what distinguishes one made up story from another sufficient to call it "literary."

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 6, 2011, at 5:53 PM, Marc Aramini <marcaramini at yahoo.com> wrote:

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Of all the asinine tripe.

Marc Aramini — 07 Feb 2011, 01:04 · in reply to Lane Haygood

--- On Sun, 2/6/11, Lane Haygood <lhaygood at gmail.com> wrote:

From: Lane Haygood <lhaygood at gmail.com>

Subject: Re: (urth) grumble at wolfe comment made attached to guardian article

To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>

Date: Sunday, February 6, 2011, 4:38 PM

Literary fiction is entitled to its pretensions. That is, after all, what distinguishes one made up story from another sufficient to call it "literary."

I guess. But then you know there are these grants and stuff, like Vollman getting 50,000 tax free for five years, for, as you said, creating a made up story. Just reeks of ... injustice? I don't know. But those pretensions are so ... repetitive and boring? The best SF is sometimes pretentious in novel and interesting ways.

Lee Berman — 07 Feb 2011, 02:11 · follows Marc Aramini

Marc Aramini: Half the writer Peter Carey or Marilynne Robinson is?!!!!!! ARGHGHGHGHGHH

Heh. I thought equating Wolfe with James Blish was the real insult ;-).

Lane Haygood — 07 Feb 2011, 02:44 · in reply to Marc Aramini

SF to me has no significant differences from "literary" fiction. Sure, there are stylistic conventions and structural differences, but those are there in the difference between a frame story and first-person narrative, for example. Each "genre," so to speak, may contain different story structures, literary techniques, etc. And plenty of genre fiction is uninteresting schlock... but so is your average perusal of the literary fiction section. Good writers are good writers are good writers, no matter what they write.

And I'm reminded of the Wolfe quote that what we call "sf" is what was once called "literature." For instance, if Homer were to write "The Odyssey" today, it would be called epic quest fantasy. The same for the Kalevala or the Eddas, which were Tolkien's primary influences.

And yeah, it is unjust that sf, for entirely political reasons, gets short shrift from prize committees and critics and other image conscious types. On the other hand, their approval of what I read was never requested, nor is it important to me, although I will continue to tell anyone who will listen that there are truly wonderful writers working in sf (Wolfe, Le Guin, Bakker, Lynch, etc.).

LH

On Sun, Feb 6, 2011 at 7:04 PM, Marc Aramini <marcaramini at yahoo.com> wrote:

--- On Sun, 2/6/11, Lane Haygood <lhaygood at gmail.com> wrote:

From: Lane Haygood <lhaygood at gmail.com>

Subject: Re: (urth) grumble at wolfe comment made attached to guardian article

Marc Aramini — 07 Feb 2011, 02:50 · in reply to Lee Berman

--- On Sun, 2/6/11, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:

Heh. I thought equating Wolfe with James Blish was the real insult ;-). ???

Yeah, that too. His examples are just off the wall to me all around. Picking out probably the most lyrical SF guy, comparing him to a guy who was never regarded for prose but for a few okay "idea" SF stories, and then saying they can't stand toe to toe with lit that is a thousand

times more banal than anything Wolfe could produce even asleep kind of just threw me for a loop. If he had never read Wolfe I could forgive it, but its like he just read Operation Ares or something. Wolfe has so many poignant quotes in every medium imaginable I just can't imagine you would use his name as an example of how the genre doesn't match up in quality.

Even simple meditations in Wolfe are often given a veneer of depth that I find sorely lacking in the form fiction literary novel. Regular literature seems so flat and obvious after re-reading Wolfe's best stuff a few times. And he rarely falls into the trap of Clute's Appleseed: some interesting referential and verbal pyrotechnics atop a story so shallow re-reading might possibly be a waste of time. I do feel like Appleseed might have been the triumph of weirdness over substance to some degree, something Harrison's Light avoided, yet even a pretty good (IMO) work of SF like Light seems a bit flat to me in direct comparison with Wolfe. Davidson, Lafferty, and Ellison are all great great writers, too, if a bit different than Wolfe, and the lack of effort given to their study when mostly repetitive dull drivel receives literary accolades and awards always buggered my mind.

I would never argue that Sterne's Tristram Shandy and Dostoyevsky and Faulkner and Nabokov and Mishima weren't great, but Wolfe certainly belongs in their echelon, without a doubt. How many boring papers does there really have to be about Pamela? Fielding already wrote everything worth writing about it in Shamela. There was a list a few years ago that was something like 1001 books to read before you die, and it had multiple books by douglas adams, peake, ballard, updike, even that novel about masturbation Portnoy's complaint, but not ONE wolfe book. It didn't have Shakespeare either, but come on, that just isn't right.

James Wynn — 07 Feb 2011, 16:46 · in reply to Lane Haygood

It's worth noting that as far back as the 1970s Wolfe said that the only significant market for Short Stories anymore was in the SF genre (you'd have to include Fantasy and Horror in that category I think). Certainly this is true for stories that /experiment/ with the *art* of storytelling. I just picked up the 'Swords & Dark Magic' anthology this weekend and was reminded of the number and variety of anthologies in the SF&F section each year--compared to those in the "Literary Fiction" section.

The high-schoolish, careful observances of labels and clubby borders is a sign of an art in decay--as anyone who has closely observed the nature of poetry publishing can tell you.

u+16b9

PS: As an aside, I recall someone who frequently writes for "genre" while maintaining the respect of "literary" markets. I recently read Neil Gaiman's (ed.) "Stories" anthology and have decided that if I never read another Joyce Carol Oats story, that will probably be just fine.

On 2/6/2011 8:44 PM, Lane Haygood wrote:

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LH

James Wynn — 07 Feb 2011, 17:41 · in reply to Son of Witz

"I never understood any kind of border patrol when it comes to music. ~ Bob Dylan

On 2/7/2011 11:42 AM, Son of Witz wrote:

I'm definitely with Lane on this.

It's the same with musical sub-genres. Just play good music, I don't care how you need to categorize it for the marketplace.

These preceived categories indicate nothing about the intrinsic quality of the work.

I'm reading a James Ellroy "Crime Novel" right now. Bah! The thing scorches!

~witz

On Feb 6, 2011, at 6:44 PM, Lane Haygood <lhaygood at gmail.com <mailto:lhaygood at gmail.com>> wrote:

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> Subject: Re: (urth) grumble at wolfe comment made attached to
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From: Lane Haygood <lhaygood at gmail.com>

Subject: Re: (urth) grumble at wolfe comment made attached to guardian article

David Duffy — 07 Feb 2011, 22:17 · in reply to James Wynn

On Mon, 7 Feb 2011, James Wynn wrote:

PS: As an aside, I recall someone who frequently writes for "genre" while maintaining the respect of "literary" markets. I recently read Neil Gaiman's (ed.) "Stories" anthology and have decided that if I never read another Joyce Carol Oats story, that will probably be just fine.

Perhaps, but Mysteries of Winterthurn and A Bloodsmoor Romance are great SF novels, the latter is pretty well steampunk. My only remaining specific memory of ABR: officials think an electric bed sounds too comfortable a method of execution, and refuse to buy it.

Cheers, David Duffy.

James Wynn — 07 Feb 2011, 22:31 · in reply to David Duffy

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I'll accept your opinion of her novels. I really only know her from her short stories..genre and literary. I recognize her technical ability, but I consistently have walked away from her stories feeling unbuzzed. It's like listening to a John Cage symphony. "Fossil-Figures" was just the final straw.

u+16b9

hammstu at sbcglobal.net — 07 Feb 2011, 23:03 · in reply to James Wynn

I knew John Cage....used to go Mushroom hunting with he and merce cunningham....the prepared piano pieces? Hauntingly beautiful when played by someone who knows what they are doing...imho

Sent from my BlackBerry? smartphone with SprintSpeed

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

From: James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com>

Sender: urth-bounces at lists.urth.netDate: Mon, 07 Feb 2011 16:31:10

To: The Urth Mailing List<urth at lists.urth.net>

Reply-To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>

Subject: Re: (urth) grumble at wolfe comment made attached to guardianarticle

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u+16b9

Daniel Petersen — 07 Feb 2011, 23:10 · in reply to James Wynn

Can't resist chiming in with the chorus - crap writing is crap writing and good writing is good writing and genres have zero to do with this. Similar to what some others are saying here, Gene Wolfe has nearly ruined a lot of perfectly decent fiction for me as most things pale and lose their lustre in comparison to his best stuff. To my mind his greatest works artistically sits side

by side with more accepted classics of modern fiction that I respect and admire - say, Lord of the Flies, Old Man and the Sea, The Pearl, Cormac McCarthy's novels, Flannery O'Connor's short stories, etc. I totally understand that people don't like certain subject matter and themes (e.g. I despise Jane Austen's material), but it's still possible to recognise the genuine excellence or genius of a writer whilst just not being the least bit interested in their work (indeed, a lot of Shakespeare is like that for me).

That's the artistically reasonable courtesy I wish people would extend to excellent writers like Wolfe and Le Guin and others who just happen to largely write material that usually more or less fits into the f./s.f. genre (though so many also partake of other genres and more 'mainstream' themes simultaneously). If your skin crawls at fantastic, speculative themes, so be it. But if one is going to claim to be any kind of judge of literary merit, then one must look past such personal preferences when considering whether a writer is a good craftsman.

One more flourish to crown this rant: I myself have written (lyrics) for a few decades and aspire to write fiction and other prose, and I study English Literature and the art of writing, and I am simply a devoted lover of exquisite CRAFT when it comes to prose style, the talent and skill to simply write the pants off nearly everyone else sentence by sentence and paragraph by paragraph with the unfaltering brilliance of one's prose. And I hereby tender my considered testimony as an artist and student of writing that GENE WOLFE IS IN A VERY SMALL LEAGUE OF ALMOST MIRACULOUSLY GOOD WRITERS OF INIMITABLE PROSE. Open just about any book by him to just about any page and read for no more than a page or so and one finds his writing sincerely a literary *meal* for the literarily hungry. Do I rhapsodise and hyperbolise? Perhaps some. But not too much, I think.

DOJP

James Wynn — 07 Feb 2011, 23:23 · in reply to hammstu at sbcglobal.net

Mr. Hamm, honestly, when I wrote that analogy, I KNEW it would pull you from the woodwork. And, yet, it fit. I listen to much of his stuff and say, "He seems to know what he's doing. I just don't want to hear him do it."

Wow, mushroom hunting. What a stereotypical activity to do with John Cage! It's like saying "I fought bulls with Hemmingway" or "I entered a frog jumping competition with Mark Twain."

;-D

On 2/7/2011 5:03 PM, hammstu at sbcglobal.net wrote:

I knew John Cage....used to go Mushroom hunting with he and merce cunningham....the prepared piano pieces? Hauntingly beautiful when played by someone who knows what they are doing...imho
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From: James Wynn<crushtv at gmail.com>

Sender: urth-bounces at lists.urth.netDate: Mon, 07 Feb 2011 16:31:10

hammstu at sbcglobal.net — 07 Feb 2011, 23:33 · in reply to James Wynn

Ha...! Not THOSE kind of mushrooms... Who was it who said that Richard Wagners' music is "Better than it sounds" —

If you all want to stretch your ears try to find a copy of "New Sound Forms for Piano"..J Cage, conlan Nancarrow's pieces for player piano and Ben Johnsons' pieces for micro-tonal piano...just make sure that there are no young, impressionable children in the room.

...Then listen to anything by Arvo Part to calm down.....

So...how DID Quetzal get aboard the Whorl????

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From: James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com>

Sender: urth-bounces at lists.urth.netDate: Mon, 07 Feb 2011 17:23:16

To: The Urth Mailing List<urth at lists.urth.net>

Reply-To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>

Subject: Re: (urth) grumble at wolfe comment made attached to guardianarticle

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u+16b9

Adam Thornton — 08 Feb 2011, 00:11 · in reply to James Wynn

On Feb 7, 2011, at 5:23 PM, James Wynn wrote:

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I listen to much of his stuff and say, "He seems to know what he's doing. I just don't want to hear him do it."

Wow, mushroom hunting. What a stereotypical activity to do with John Cage! It's like saying "I fought bulls with Hemmingway" or "I entered a frog jumping competition with Mark Twain."

If he got annoying, could you ask him to sing 4'33" to you?

Adam

Son of Witz — 08 Feb 2011, 00:23 · in reply to hammstu at sbcglobal.net

On Feb 7, 2011, at 3:33 PM, hammstu at sbcglobal.net wrote:

...Then listen to anything by Arvo Part to calm down.....

The one I have gets me a bit edgy. So haunting, with sustained tension. Kanon Pokajenen. Amazing and beautiful, but, wow...

James Wynn — 08 Feb 2011, 06:19 · in reply to hammstu at sbcglobal.net

On 2/7/2011 5:33 PM, hammstu at sbcglobal.net wrote:

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Oh no! I thought Cage's hobby of collecting wild mushrooms one of those well-known facts about him. Maybe not so much. Perhaps that's just one more piece of loose trivia in my attic. The writer Francis Shaeffer claimed it was a minor philosophical quandary for Cage since if he chose to hunt mushrooms the way he deliberately composed music, he would soon be a dead man. Okay. I'll check out the pieces you mentioned.

So...how DID Quetzal get aboard the Whorl????

The question is bigger than that. In order for there to be a Quetzal, there had to first be a human encounter with a wild inhuma. It is arguable (although some refuse to credit it as possible) that sentient inhumi would make a flight to the Whorl in the same manner that they assaulted Blue. But it is not possible (I think) that a wild inhuma would that.

It has always seemed obvious to me that some of the Cargo had to have made an expeditionary landing at Green shortly after the arrival at the Short Sun. And I believe one of those was Tussah. I used to think maybe Hyacinth had made such a trip as well, and that was how she knew colonists were not in for a pleasant surprise. Now I think something else, but surely there was such an expedition. If the Neighbors are to be believed then they manipulated that expeditionary landing as well as others. Since that would be difficult for alien-appearing Neighbors, that manipulation must have been done by the Rajan himself.

It is plainly evident that the Rajan can Time-travel, but is there any evidence that the Rajan went back that far in time? Yes, because he is in the the Grandmother's Tale in "In Green's Jungles". Furthermore, we know Marble/Moly/Magnesia went with him back to the Whorl, and I think we see her, in Dream-Travel, in "Nightside of the Long Sun" as Teasel's mother, Dahlia who was a student at the palaestra around 20 years before Silk arrived: Teasel is 13. Her mother would have been Marble's student when she was 13. If one supposes she had Teasel 7 years after being Marble's student that's 20 years. Of course, chems don't sleep so the Dream-travel would have had to occur at the very moment of her final break-down.

Why is Dahlia Marble in Dream-travel?

1) Marble twice references that used to look like Dahlia or Teasel:

"I used to have a face like yours. I would say like Dahlia's, but she was before your time. Like Teasel's or Nettle's, and there were things in it, little bits of alnico, that let me really smile or frown when I moved them with the coils behind my faceplate. But all that's gone except for the coils." ~ Calde of the Long Sun

"I was the maid, the sibyls' maid, when the first bios moved into the city. I got our cenoby ready for them, and in those days I used to look like--like Dahlia, I nearly said, sib, but you never knew

Dahlia. Like Teasel, a little." She laughed nervously. "Can you imagine me looking like Teasel? But I did, then." ~ Exodus from the Long Sun

Twice = an important clue although we can argue about what.

2) Teasel's mother is unnamed, but her father, Martin, is not. However, teasels and dahlias are both astrerids which implies the two are closely related. And, of course, Teasel and Dahlia are similar in appearance.

3) Teasel is twice said to belong to Marble:

"Her name's Teasel, and she's one of Marble's bunch." Maytera Rose sniffed again. ~ Nightside of the Long Sun

"Teasel's one of Maytera Marble's, very likely the best of them." ~ Calde of the Long Sun

4) Marble's real name is "Magnesia", and, except for silica, magnesia is the most common element found in asteroids. And a dahlia is an asterid.

we are told about her appearing in the form of Teasel and Dahlia.

That is, Maytera Marble said she used to look just like Teasel and Dahlia: Magnesia = major element in asteriods = Asterids = Teasel and Dahlia

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From: James Wynn<crushtv at gmail.com>

Sender:urth-bounces at lists.urth.netDate: Mon, 07 Feb 2011 17:23:16

Jeff Wilson — 08 Feb 2011, 06:33 · in reply to hammstu at sbcglobal.net

On 2/7/2011 5:33 PM, hammstu at sbcglobal.net wrote:

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That was Twain; his trip to Bayreuth:

<http://www.twainquotes.com/Travel1891/Dec1891.html>

If you all want to stretch your ears try to find a copy of "New Sound Forms for Piano"..J Cage, conlan Nancarrow's pieces for player piano

Oh lord! I'm from Nancarrow's home town, but it's not bias that makes me say, unlike Cage at least Nancarrow's music has music in it. Quite a lot in fact!

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com

Computational Intelligence Laboratory - Texas A&M Texarkana

< <http://www.tamut.edu/CIL> >

James Wynn — 08 Feb 2011, 07:46 · in reply to James Wynn

I just remembered that it is difficult for Dahlia to be Teasel's mother because Mint encounters her (and an old man whom I presume to be Hammerstone) at the end of Exodus. That's not

really a show-stopper anymore than Severian encountering Apu-Punchau is a show-stopper, since they're Time-travelers. But it is cumbersome. Still, it's better than saying that Teasel is Marble as well. Especially since Teasel /seems/ to have a mother and father.

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The question is bigger than that. In order for there to be a Quetzal, there had to first be a human encounter with a wild inhuma. It is arguable (although some refuse to credit it as possible) that sentient inhumi would make a flight to the Whorl in the same manner that they assaulted Blue. But it is not possible (I think) that a wild inhuma would that.

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Daniel Petersen — 08 Feb 2011, 08:24 · in reply to James Wynn

Francis Schaeffer mentioned on a Gene Wolfe website. Cool. Schaeffer's commentary on Cage was the first thing I thought of when you mentioned picking mushrooms with him.

DOJP

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Sent from my BlackBerry? smartphone with SprintSpeed

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

From: James Wynn<crushtv at gmail.com>

Sender: urth-bounces at lists.urth.netDate: Mon, 07 Feb 2011 16:31:10

Gerry Quinn — 08 Feb 2011, 09:24 · in reply to hammstu at sbcglobal.net

From: <hammstu at sbcglobal.net>

So...how DID Quetzal get aboard the Whorl????

The Neighbours brought inhumis to the Whorl. We are told in Chapter 11 of _Return to the Whorl_:

Then, "Sometime back like you I go, mysire?"

"Back to Viron, you mean, Vadsig?"

"To Viron, yes, mysire. Also to Grotestad. To go to the Long Sun Whorl I would like. Always of it

you talk, and cook, and my old master and mistress. In Grotestad they were born, mysire, but never it I have seen."

I told her it was possible she would.

"There the Vanished People went?"

I nodded.

"To greet us it was?"

"You might put it so, though they were sensible enough to find out a good deal about us - and infect us with inhumí -"

- Gerry Quinn

James Wynn — 08 Feb 2011, 17:50 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

This quote only says the Neighbors were infected humanity with inhumí. It doesn't say they brought them on the Whorl. That's one way they could have done it--if beings who can dream-travel would have their own spaceships and if the Whorl would allow an alien spacecraft to dock. This quote could be also interpreted as "They supported the Plan of Pas to bring humanity to Green." This quote is a gold coin in the bucket--it tells us about the Neighbor's motives--it doesn't explain how and when they accomplished it. Anyone got any more evidence?

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Gerry Quinn — 08 Feb 2011, 18:08 · in reply to James Wynn

From: "James Wynn" <crushtv at gmail.com>

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It *does* say the Neighbours went to the Whorl. "There" in "There the Vanished People went?" is the Whorl.

I've added a bit more to the quoted text for more context. It seems to make it pretty clear that they did indeed visit the Whorl and left inhumis among the people there.

How else could Quetzal have gotten there?

You have suggested that there was a landing on Green shortly after the Whorl arrived in the system. Such a landing is certainly possible, although there is no textual evidence for it. But even if there were such a landing, it seems implausible that they would bring Quetzal back - and even more implausible that everyone would completely forget about the event while Quetzal somehow became an augur and rose through the ranks of the local church!

By the way, Silk can dream travel and at the end of _Return_ he is looking for a spaceship. As for the Vanished People, maybe they landed on the surface and bored their way in.

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"Bad thing!"

"Before they ventured to greet even a few of us.

"Bad it was," Vadsig agreed with Oreb. "To leave inhumis among us?" I shook my head. "It was a small price to pay for two whorls, and it enabled the Neighbors to gauge much more accurately the differences between our race and their own."

Marc Aramini — 08 Feb 2011, 18:08 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

--- On Tue, 2/8/11, Gerry Quinn <gerryq at indigo.ie> wrote:

So...how DID Quetzal get aboard the Whorl????

This passage is important but it is contradictory, at the very end of RTTW: p 384-395

""I was was thinking about the whorl you described ... about the whorl we visited ... We of the People" {says Juganu}

"the bird said "Not man. People? Never! No Whorl," and I knew it was Scylla. "No there. Good! Bad things!"

Juganu sat up. "We were there! They brought us! We're everywhere!"

Here, Scylla in Oreb says that there were no inhumis on old Urth, and Juganu says they were

there, some "they" brought them.

The inhumis could have been in their liana like state, morbidly dead state, unable to breed in the insufficient warmth of Urth, but still lingering latently, and loaded on the whorl with other seeds or shrubbery.

In Calde of the Long Sun it tells how Quetzal's "parent tree" got planted in the whorl.

epiphany p 19 ""in order that she would climb his tree, Patera. The man likewise. Their story's not over because they haven't climbed down."

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Marc Aramini — 08 Feb 2011, 18:18 · in reply to Marc Aramini

sorry for all the typos in the quotes. Should look back before hitting send. Anyway, even though it is conceivable to me that some "they" (vanished gods?) brought the inhumis to old Urth as Juganu says, I think it more likely that the whorl has just been in orbit a very very long time, because I don't see how Quetzal could have come to sentience under the conditions of the Whorl without sufficient heat and breeding grounds from Green (which is, of course, much warmer than Old Urth and capable of supporting all kinds of fecund tree monstrosities).

I still favor the idea that the inhumis are pretty much all that's left of humans, that in a morlock and eloi evolutionary scheme they are the lower of the branches, the parasitic vines on the more noble trees. But you know, not many like that schema so it doesn't have to be utilized to figure out how Quetzal got there, I don't think.

--- On Tue, 2/8/11, Marc Aramini <marcaramini at yahoo.com> wrote:

So...how DID Quetzal get aboard the Whorl????

Stuart Hamm — 08 Feb 2011, 18:19 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

forgive me...I thought the dilemma was that if Quetzal got on board the whorl when only when it was in orbit, 40 years would not be enough time for him to become so ingrained in the society and rise to his position of power...

???????? ? ?

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? ??

--- On Tue, 2/8/11, Gerry Quinn <gerryq at indigo.ie> wrote:

From: Gerry Quinn <gerryq at indigo.ie>

Subject: Re: (urth) grumble at wolfe comment made attached to guardianarticle

To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>

Date: Tuesday, February 8, 2011, 10:08 AM

From: "James Wynn" <crushtv at gmail.com>

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them on the Whorl. That's one way they could have done it--if beings who can dream-travel would have their own spaceships and if the Whorl would allow an alien spacecraft to dock. This quote could be also interpreted as "They supported the Plan of Pas to bring humanity to Green." This quote is a gold coin in the bucket--it tells us about the Neighbor's motives--it doesn't explain how and when they accomplished it. Anyone got any more evidence?

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António Pedro Marques — 08 Feb 2011, 19:04 · in reply to James Wynn

Someone wrote (08-02-2011 17:50):

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Curious... the two whorl city names we do know how to parse both mean 'Big City'.

James Wynn — 08 Feb 2011, 19:08 · in reply to Stuart Hamm

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In fact, "infecting" humanity with inhumani could well mean adding such humanish inhumani to Urth's population. When you don't jump to conclusions about what a text means (I'm not saying /you/ have, Marc), all sorts of troubling scenarios present themselves.

But the question is, did Juganu meet any inhumani on Urth? He seemed very sure about it.

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The tamarind tree was planted only 20 years previously. But Quetzal has been around for 40 years at least.

u+16b9

Lee Berman — 08 Feb 2011, 19:10 · follows James Wynn

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I'm with Marc in finding evidence that Inhumis were present on the Whorl from the beginning in some form or another. I never like the sort of theory which relies on a "maybe they drilled through the hull" kind of thing.

Gerry Quinn — 08 Feb 2011, 19:16 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

From: "António Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>
Someone wrote (08-02-2011 17:50):

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There's also Urbs, which I suppose just means 'city'. And 'Viron' might come from 'environment' (c.f. Brian Aldiss's 'Total Environment').

Methinks Typhon's planners had the imagination typical of bureaucrats...

- Gerry Quinn

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 08 Feb 2011, 19:23 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

For what it's worth, "Viron" is a Finnish word that refers to Estonia...

On Tue, Feb 8, 2011 at 11:16 AM, Gerry Quinn <gerryq at indigo.ie> wrote:

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I'm with Marc in finding evidence that Inhumis were present on the Whorl from the beginning in some form or another. I never like the sort of theory which relies on a "maybe they drilled through the hull" kind of thing.

Maybe they used a laser. The fact is, we are told they visited and left inhumis.

As for inhumis being on the Whorl from the beginning - apart from any evidential issues, the obvious question is why? Coals to Newcastle, no?

- Gerry Quinn

Marc Aramini — 08 Feb 2011, 19:35 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

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'cuz green is urth.

Oh, sorry. Couldn't help myself.

Let's put that aside for a bit.

Why aren't there any Vanished People in the Whorl? Just dropping off the vine kids?

Roy C. Lackey — 08 Feb 2011, 19:36 · in reply to James Wynn

Gerry Quinn quoted and wrote:

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Quite so. The inhumis were introduced into the LSW by the Neighbors. Windcloud was one of them:

"I was one of those who boarded your whorl when it neared our sun. In the _Whorl_, I made the acquaintance of many of your race, and I have known others since, on both the whorls we once called ours." (RTTW, 232)

-Roy

Marc Aramini — 08 Feb 2011, 19:41 · in reply to Marc Aramini

Seriously though sometimes I do wonder if Wolfe retconned those notules into inhumis. Not many similarities but I never understood their presence on Urth, or why they were that one creature's wings like some kind of gestalt organism at the end of UoTNS.

James Wynn — 08 Feb 2011, 19:47 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On 2/8/2011 1:23 PM, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:
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<http://www.urth.org/whorlmap/viron.htm>

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 08 Feb 2011, 19:56 · in reply to James Wynn

Thanks -- I had actually forgotten that that page even existed. Good stuff.

On Tue, Feb 8, 2011 at 11:47 AM, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:
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Stuart Hamm — 08 Feb 2011, 20:25 · in reply to James Wynn

What a great bunch of insights...thanks y'all...AND John Cage and Harpo Marx references...awesome

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Date: Tuesday, February 8, 2011, 11:08 AM
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u+16b9

Lee Berman — 08 Feb 2011, 20:48 · follows Stuart Hamm

Marc Aramini: 'cuz green is urth. Oh, sorry. Couldn't help myself.

Heh, heh. And why should you? ;-)

Why aren't there any Vanished People in the Whorl?

Perhaps there are. Maybe in electronic form? I think it would please James if creatures with windy names were associated with Typhon/Pas.

My interpretation of Juganu's words is that the conflict/symbiosis between Neighbors and Inhumi has been going on for a long time and has been carried to various other worlds giving rise to mythological stories on Urth and even Earth. Apollonian and Dionysian (light and dark) contrasts go back to the origins of the universes.

I do wonder if Wolfe retconned those notules into inhumi. Not many similarities but I never understood their presence on Urth, or why they were that one creature's wings

Even more so for Shadow Children, perhaps

I think the calling the wings "notules" could be metaphoric at one level. But the presence of dark things that suck the light out of bright, shiny things has a real mytho-religious meaning and is a repeating theme throughout BotNS. Plus there is something funny going on in BotNS with "blood bats".

Roy C. Lackey- The inhumis were introduced into the LSW by the Neighbors.
Windcloud was one of them:

"I was one of those who boarded your whorl when it neared our sun. In the
Whorl, I made the acquaintance of many of your race, and I have known
others since, on both the whorls we once called ours."

Sure, that could be the answer. Better than boring through the hull, anyway. Still, there are some problems. First, how long ago was this Neighbor visit to the Whorl? I agree with Stu there is a question of how long was the infiltration and establishment by Quetzal. It seems pretty long. How long has the Whorl been in orbit?

Second, if the Neighbors were on the Whorl in recent times, why isn't that discussed in Long Sun? The presence of Quetzal suggests certainly they made an appearance in Viron. At least loquacious Lemur or somebody should have made mention of the appearance of a creature with an indeterminate number of legs, heads, bodies, whatever. What form did the Neighbors (and Inhumis) take during this infection? Who were the "many" acquaintances and why did we not hear from them?

Gerry Quinn — 08 Feb 2011, 21:35 · in reply to Lee Berman

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

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anyway.

How do you mean "better than boring through the hull?" Windcloud said he was on the Whorl - he doesn't say how he and his team got in.

Maybe they obtained access by way of a lander or surface infrastructure associated with one - or maybe they just bored a hole and popped up in the tunnels. All we know is they got in somehow. Given that their mission (as we know from elsewhere) was to introduce inhumis, secrecy would probably have been paramount. In particular, it seems certain that they avoided contact with the Crew (in fact, perhaps they knew nothing of the Crew).

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Pas died thirty years before the events of BotNS, but it's conceivable that the Whorl was in-system for some significant time before that. Perhaps while the Gods warred, the Crew stood

by rather than initiate exploration missions etc.

According to Windcloud, the Neighbours infiltrated the Whorl before it reached the system.

Fifty years seems feasible.

Second, if the Neighbors were on the Whorl in recent times, why isn't that discussed in Long Sun? The presence of Quetzal suggests certainly they made an appearance in Viron. At least loquacious Lemur or somebody should have made mention of the appearance of a creature with an indeterminate number of legs, heads, bodies, whatever. What form did the Neighbors (and Inhumis) take during this infection? Who were the "many" acquaintances and why did we not hear from them?

Lemur evidently knew nothing of the inhumis as such (though he knew one personally). Rumours of their existence were pretty vague - and they were preying on humans, while the Neighbours presumably brought their own food.

We don't have any evidence from BotLS of the Neighbours talking to anyone - it's possible Wolfe simply didn't think to put it in. Still, many people saw various mysterious visions on BotLS, and perhaps rumours of strange eight-limbed beings would have been lost among the various ghosat stories and suchlike...

- Gerry Quinn

David Stockhoff — 09 Feb 2011, 00:06 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 2/8/2011 3:48 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

Why aren't there any Vanished People in the Whorl?

Perhaps there are. Maybe in electronic form? I think it would please James if creatures with windy names were associated with Typhon/Pas.

My interpretation of Juganu's words is that the conflict/symbiosis between Neighbors and Inhumis has been going on for a long time and has been carried to various other worlds giving rise to mythological stories on Urth and even Earth. Apollonian and Dionysian (light and dark) contrasts go back to the origins of the universes.

Roy C. Lackey- The inhumis were introduced into the LSW by the Neighbors. Windcloud was one of them:

"I was one of those who boarded your whorl when it neared our sun. In the _Whorl_, I made the acquaintance of many of your race, and I have known others since, on both the whorls we once called ours."

Sure, that could be the answer. Better than boring through the hull, anyway. Still, there are some problems. First, how long ago was this Neighbor visit to the Whorl? I agree with Stu there is a question of how long was the infiltration and establishment by Quetzal. It seems pretty long. How long has the Whorl been in orbit?

Second, if the Neighbors were on the Whorl in recent times, why isn't that discussed in Long Sun? The presence of Quetzal suggests certainly they made an appearance in Viron. At least loquacious Lemur or somebody should have made mention of the appearance of a creature with an indeterminate number of legs, heads,

bodies, whatever. What form did the Neighbors (and Inhumans) take during this infection? Who were the "many" acquaintances and why did we not hear from them?

The Whorl is a large place. Like Tzadkiel's Ship, it seems almost to contain a universe, not a small planet. It has a cargo full of sheep, as well as bays of clones and embryos to shepherd them.

It also has a crew or crews in the form of people like the flyers, correct? Is it unreasonable to assume that certain tribes aboard the LSW, especially those housed near its fore and aft ends and/or closer to its skin, are people the Neighbors might prefer to contact, avoiding the sheep themselves? Such people are accustomed to knowing things they do not share with the sheep, but once the Neighbors made themselves generally known in the towns there would be no going back.

The timing of the LSW's arrival seems to encompass important events: (1) detection by the Neighbors and their boarding/insertion of Quetzal (2) the beginning of the Whorl's breakdown leading to its evacuation. I don't think several decades is a long time for a large spaceship/asteroid to orbit a sun before these things happen, in a universe where there is no Lt. Uhura to announce incoming alien starships to Captain Kirk. This isn't Rendezvous with Rama.

BTW, is there a consensus on the exact relation of the planets Blue and Green? Do they orbit one another as a single system, or do they orbit the sun on opposite sides, as do Earth and Gor?

Stuart Hamm — 09 Feb 2011, 00:57 · in reply to Adam Thornton

last word on Cage...my dad told me about this and here is the Wiki "proof" Submitted for your amusement

<http://classicalconvert.com/2007/07/the-stupidest-music-lawsuit-ever-infringing-on-cages-433/>

Plagiarism of silence...YES!!!!

???????? ? ?

? ??

--- On Mon, 2/7/11, Adam Thornton <adam at io.com> wrote:

From: Adam Thornton <adam at io.com>

Subject: Re: (urth) grumble at wolfe comment made attached to guardianarticle To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net> Date: Monday, February 7, 2011, 4:11 PM

On Feb 7, 2011, at 5:23 PM, James Wynn wrote:

Mr. Hamm, honestly, when I wrote that analogy, I KNEW it would pull you from the woodwork. And, yet, it fit.

I listen to much of his stuff and say, "He seems to know what he's doing. I just don't want to hear him do it."

Wow, mushroom hunting. What a stereotypical activity to do with John Cage! It's like saying "I fought bulls with Hemmingway" or "I entered a frog jumping competition with Mark Twain."

If he got annoying, could you ask him to sing 4'33" to you?

Adam

Jack Smith — 09 Feb 2011, 01:47 · in reply to David Stockhoff

"BTW, is there a consensus on the exact relation of the planets Blue and Green? Do they orbit one another as a single system, or do they orbit the sun on opposite sides, as do Earth and Gor?"

They can't orbit each other or orbit on opposite sides of the sun because Blue and Green are farther apart and then get closer at conjunction.

Conjunction occurs every 6 years (OBW, Ch 7), and Blue's year seems to be about the same as a year on the Whorl.

I'm not sure how Blue and Green move to produce this conjunction. If they are about the same distance from the sun but in different orbital planes, they could at times be closer or more distant but conjunction would occur twice a year. Perhaps Blue's orbit is circular and Green's is more elliptical, resulting in the 6 year interval, but I haven't been able to figure how this would work.

On Tue, Feb 8, 2011 at 7:06 PM, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:

On 2/8/2011 3:48 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

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Perhaps there are. Maybe in electronic form? I think it would please James if creatures with windy names were associated with Typhon/Pas.

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avast! Antivirus: Outbound message clean.
Virus Database (VPS): 110208-0, 02/08/2011
Tested on: 2/8/2011 7:06:26 PM
avast! - copyright (c) 1988-2011 AVAST Software.
<http://www.avast.com>

David Stockhoff — 09 Feb 2011, 02:00 · in reply to Jack Smith

It's a stumper. Perhaps we know more about the planets of FHOC, and this would shed some light on what Wolfe considers possible. ???

On 2/8/2011 8:47 PM, Jack Smith wrote:

"BTW, is there a consensus on the exact relation of the planets Blue and Green? Do they orbit one another as a single system, or do they orbit the sun on opposite sides, as do Earth and Gor?"

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Blue and Green? Do they orbit one another as a single system, or
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Gerry Quinn — 09 Feb 2011, 02:38 · in reply to Jack Smith

It can work if they have circular orbits that are quite close together, so that Green orbits their star in 6/7 of a Blue year. Green will go around the star slightly faster than Blue, so that Blue is falling further and further behind. After 6 Blue years, Blue will have made 6 orbits, while Green will have made 7 and caught up on Blue from behind.

I don't know if two large planets with such similar orbital radii would be stable, but anyway it would fit the conjunction schedule, and Green would be a bit hotter than Blue (their temperatures would also depend on atmospheric composition).

- Gerry Quinn

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

From: Jack Smith

To: The Urth Mailing List

Sent: Wednesday, February 09, 2011 1:47 AM

Subject: Re: (urth) grumble at wolfe comment made attached to guardianarticle

"BTW, is there a consensus on the exact relation of the planets Blue and Green? Do they orbit one another as a single system, or do they orbit the sun on opposite sides, as do Earth and Gor?"

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Jack Smith — 09 Feb 2011, 03:29 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

I like this explanation, but I don't think it would work. For bodies in orbit around a central body, the orbital period is directly proportional to the distance or radius from the central body. So if Green orbits in 6/7 of a Blue year, then Green must be 6/7 of Blue's distance from the sun. If Blue is 90 million miles from the sun, then Green must orbit at 77 million miles radius, which makes Green 13 million miles from Blue at closest approach. But we know that at conjunction the 2 planets are only 35,000 leagues (105,000 miles) apart (In Green's Jungles, ch. 15).

On Tue, Feb 8, 2011 at 9:38 PM, Gerry Quinn <gerryq at indigo.ie> wrote:

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- Gerry Quinn

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From: Jack Smith <jack.smith.1946 at gmail.com>

To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>

Sent: Wednesday, February 09, 2011 1:47 AM

Subject: Re: (urth) grumble at wolfe comment made attached to guardianarticle

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Gerry Quinn — 09 Feb 2011, 03:36 · in reply to Jack Smith

I forgot about that.

But one or both could have an elliptical orbit.

Again, I don't know whether precession would make this unrealistic or not. And 35000 leagues is incredibly, dangerously close for two Earth-sized planets.

But in terms of basic mechanics, a series of conjunctions should be possible (for story purposes, I think it would probably be sufficient if the series lasted a few centuries).

- Gerry Quinn

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To: The Urth Mailing List

Sent: Wednesday, February 09, 2011 3:29 AM

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Jeff Wilson — 09 Feb 2011, 05:33 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

On 2/8/2011 9:36 PM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

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They could be paired in a horseshoe orbit:

<http://curious.astro.cornell.edu/question.php?number=210>

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

Jeff Wilson — 09 Feb 2011, 07:11 · in reply to Jack Smith

On 2/8/2011 9:29 PM, Jack Smith wrote:

I like this explanation, but I don't think it would work. For bodies in orbit around a central body, the orbital period is directly proportional to the distance or radius from the central body.

Orbital period varies with the $3/2$ power of the radius:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orbital_period

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

David Duffy — 09 Feb 2011, 07:15 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On Tue, 8 Feb 2011, Jeff Wilson wrote:

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And

<http://iopscience.iop.org/1538-3881/129/3/1724/204215.text.html>

But these guys keep trying to make them crash into each other ;)

Jack Smith — 09 Feb 2011, 11:04 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Thanks for the link to horseshoe orbits! This might work.

On Wed, Feb 9, 2011 at 12:33 AM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:

On 2/8/2011 9:36 PM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

I forgot about that.

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Gerry Quinn — 09 Feb 2011, 12:26 · in reply to Jack Smith

I think horseshoes are a bit problematic. If you look at Cruithne's orbit, its actual distance from Earth varies on a short scale with a period of one year. Over a longer term, the average distance varies. Since Cruithne's orbital period is one year, there's no room for meaningful six-year conjunctions.

Hence I'm inclined to prefer the simpler concept: Blue has a circular orbit similar to the Earth's, while Green has an elliptical orbit with a period 6/7 that of Blue. Ignoring precession, this can give a conjunction every six years, while they are far apart the rest of the time.

As another possibility, we could imagine that there are dark stars of some kind (black holes or dense dark matter objects, for example) present in the system - these might induce interesting orbital motions in the hadronic planets.

- Gerry Quinn

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They could be paired in a horseshoe orbit:

<http://curious.astro.cornell.edu/question.php?number=210>

David Stockhoff — 09 Feb 2011, 12:32 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Stunning.

So in the case of the asteroid and Earth, it's not that the asteroid turns around, but that it falls behind until Earth catches it. Damn.

105,000 miles is still dangerously close, but this scheme gets the planets closer than a 6/7 orbital distance would.

On 2/9/2011 12:33 AM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

On 2/8/2011 9:36 PM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

I forgot about that.

But one or both could have an elliptical orbit.

Again, I don't know whether precession would make this unrealistic or not. And 35000 leagues is incredibly, dangerously close for two Earth-sized planets.

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Jeff Wilson — 09 Feb 2011, 15:33 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

On 2/9/2011 6:26 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

I think horseshoes are a bit problematic. If you look at Cruithne's orbit, its actual distance from Earth varies on a short scale with a period of one year. Over a longer term, the average distance varies. Since Cruithne's orbital period is one year, there's no room for meaningful six-year conjunctions.

That's because tiny Cruithne is too small to influence Earth in a detectable way. Janus and Epimethius, however, are similar in mass and do their thing in four years.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com

Computational Intelligence Laboratory - Texas A&M Texarkana

< <http://www.tamut.edu/CIL> >

Gerry Quinn — 09 Feb 2011, 15:59 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

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

On 2/9/2011 6:26 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

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their thing in four years.

But their orbital period around Saturn is only 0.7 days... so those four years are equivalent to about 2000 years on Blue!

- Gerry Quinn

Jeff Wilson — 09 Feb 2011, 22:19 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

On 2/9/2011 9:59 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

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

On 2/9/2011 6:26 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

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That may depend heavily on odd power functions, like the orbital period formula earlier; the dual orbit discovery was pre-internet (1978) so I'm having a devil of a time locating anything analytical about it.

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

Gerry Quinn — 09 Feb 2011, 22:52 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

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

On 2/9/2011 9:59 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

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

On 2/9/2011 6:26 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

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I think it's going to be a general property of horseshoe orbits that the period between conjunctions will be very long compared to the orbital period. The reason being that the two objects are essentially in the same orbit, albeit going a little faster or slower at times. So their orbital

speeds cannot differ much, and can only catch up or fall behind over a period of many orbits.

- Gerry Quinn

Jeff Wilson — 09 Feb 2011, 23:03 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

On 2/9/2011 4:52 PM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

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

On 2/9/2011 9:59 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

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On 2/9/2011 6:26 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

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Is there a precis somewhere of what is known astronomically about the B-G system?

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com

Computational Intelligence Laboratory - Texas A&M Texarkana

< <http://www.tamut.edu/CIL> >