

Father Inire as Dionysus

The Urth list — 139 messages, 14 voices, 21 Oct 2011

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6076>

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Lee Berman — 21 Oct 2011, 12:40

Consider the flowery, grandiose language used by Inire in the letter Rudesind brings to Severian. Does it remind you of another character's writing and speech? Hint: someone who seems to know a great deal about the past and future history of Urth and has rather miraculous powers of persuasion and anatomical transformation. A character who does not possess a saint name but, like Inire, one from Greco-Roman mythology.

Jeff Wilson: Juturna?

Argh! No, I meant Talos.

The end of RttW makes it pretty clear that The Outsider (and, through an ambiguous father-son connection, Typhon) are meant to be tracked in some manner with the Earth god Dionysus.

The Thracian worship of Dionysus involved casting him as "Dionysus Bassareus" or Dionysus the Fox. The Bacchanalic revelers in that case tended to wear fox skins in contrast to the Pan/Faunus goatskins worn by other Mediterranean Dionysus worshippers.

We are told Talos is fox-like and that he is a "homunculus" grown/created by Baldanders. But obviously Baldanders didn't use his own DNA to create him. What was the source material? And why does a doctor know so much about Commonwealth politics, mythology, eschatology and genesis and cosmic history (not to mention Severian's mother)?

In past posts, I've noted how Inire's name connects to Dionysus through Inuus/Faunus/Pan. I've mentioned how the name of the Green Man connects to Dionysus through the pagan/wiccan Great God Pan.

It shouldn't matter but I'm starting to think I should change the name of my model from the Father Inire theory to the Dionysus theory. It isn't really that Father Inire is everywhere. Inire himself is an appearance of a Dionysian analog god of Urth/Briah who really can be found everywhere (including Long/Short Sun).

FWIW, I used to be mystified by the dream appearance of Thecla's father as a large, bull-headed figure. No longer. This Orphic Hymn sums it up nicely.

Hymn to Dionysus Bassareus Triennalis

COME, blessed Dionysius, various nam'd,
Bull-fac'd, begot from Thunder, Bacchus fam'd.
Bassarion God, of universal might,
Whom swords, and blood, and sacred rage delight:
In heav'n rejoicing, mad, loud-sounding God, 5
Furious inspirer, bearer of the rod:
By Gods rever'd, who dwell'st with human kind,
Propitious come, with much-rejoicing mind.

David Stockhoff — 21 Oct 2011, 14:39 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 10/21/2011 8:40 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

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Wait! What does Talos know about Sev's mother?

Dr Crane always reminded me of Dr Talos. Both seem to know everything.

Gerry Quinn — 21 Oct 2011, 15:51 · in reply to Lee Berman

From: Lee Berman

The end of RttW makes it pretty clear that The Outsider (and, through an ambiguous father-son connection, Typhon) are meant to be tracked in some manner with the Earth god Dionysus.

I don't think the Dionysus references indicate anything more than his stature as a pagan god on ancient Urth (and Earth). Gods evolve as theology evolves. Dionysus was real (and so are Pas and the others), but the True God, of whom the Outsider is an aspect, is realer. That's how I read Wolfe's extra-textual observations on these matters.

- Gerry Quinn

António Pedro Marques — 21 Oct 2011, 16:45 · in reply to David Stockhoff

David Stockhoff wrote (21-10-2011 15:39):

On 10/21/2011 8:40 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

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Dr Crane always reminded me of Dr Talos. Both seem to know everything.

That's cause they're both Dr. You have to know a lot to be a Dr.

Well, this looks like as good a place as any other to ask one simple question.

Aside from Dorcas-is-Severian's-grandmother (which as I have said doesn't even look that 'Wolfean' a 'puzzle' to me), have all those years of discussion produced anything concrete regarding any of the mysteries in any of the books? I mean - something which isn't pointed out and yet after someone uncovers it, everybody agrees it must be so? (Rajan-is-Silk is, I think, pointed out several times.)

Lee Berman — 21 Oct 2011, 17:08 · follows António Pedro Marques

David Stockhoff: However, I'm getting at why Severian would not tell us that Hethor and your other suspects are Inire. Does he not see? Or is he hiding it? If he is hiding it, why---which of the three reasons for a

dishonest memoir applies?

Thanks for that question. A couple hours ago I would have answered that it seems most likely that Severian is deliberately hiding the knowledge and I would have discussed some possible reasons. (What are "the three reasons for a dishonest memoir"? Sorry if I missed that being posted).

But your question led me to some new insight, which I will share very soon. Perhaps with a bit more time to ponder, and knowing specifically what the "three reasons" are.

That's an interesting distinction in the context of Briah. Is there a Xian precedent for it? (Life = eternal life, or eternal growth?)

I may not be enough of a Xian scholar to answer that. But it is my observation that in many religions, including ancient Greek and Teutonic and Judeo-Christianity (and even their literary inspirations such as LOTR), human mortality is a gift disguised as a curse.

We humans don't want to die and we envy the immortal gods. But as a race, we benefit from our mortality. Our short lives are connected to our great fertility, which is something the gods never have. They are bored and they cannot evolve. We can, because we have lots of children and while we die, the kids quickly grow up and have their own.

I think size IS related to this and I think Wolfe recognizes it. One ubiquitous feature of the pagan gods is that their true size is titanic. They must find a way to create a miniturized human form if they are going to walk among us and interact.

Wait! What does Talos know about Sev's mother?

Well, this relies on a few things. One is that the oval faced, olive-skinned maid who plays Holy Katharine is Catherine, Severian's mother. Another is an understanding that the oval- faced, olive skinned woman that Severian sees on the Path of Air is Catherine.

Given those things, it becomes clear (to me, anyway) that Dr. Talos, in writing his play, knows that Catherine is Severian's mother. He writes in the play that the Contessa Carina (form of Catherine) is on the Road of Air being observed by a young man who looks like Severian. This Contessa is served by three maids all of who have beheaded saint names (Lybe, Solange and Kynaburga). And of course the maid Catherine is associated with beheading. And "maids" might be suspected to be a euphemism for khaibits "(credit to Dave Tallman for the original observations here).

(p.s. I can see the Dr. Crane similarity)

David Stockhoff — 21 Oct 2011, 19:20 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 10/21/2011 1:08 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

David Stockhoff: However, I'm getting at why Severian would not tell us that Hethor and your other suspects are Inire. Does he not see? Or is he hiding it? If he is hiding it, why---which of the three reasons for a dishonest memoir applies?

Thanks for that question. A couple hours ago I would have answered that it seems most likely that Severian is deliberately hiding the knowledge and I would have discussed some possible reasons. (What are "the three reasons for a dishonest memoir"? Sorry if I missed that being posted).

My three reasons (for Severian) are: (1) pretending to be an orphan (2) maintaining a moral status just above rapist/motherfucker/serial killer (3) discreetly sidestepping that he has been "set up," in both senses. Since Inire may be at the center of a web stretching from Ascians to Autarch to Vodalarii, he at least played a role in #3 and thus is relegated to the background.

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Yes, and especially see Fairies, who are forever seeking humans to steal and make their King (i.e., consort to their Queen), who lives a year in bliss, then dies (see *There Are Doors*). Lots of background for racial breeding theories there.

I think size IS related to this and I think Wolfe recognizes it. One ubiquitous feature of the pagan gods is that their true size is titanic. They must find a way to create a miniturized human form if they are going to walk among us and interact.

An excellent metaphor!

Wait! What does Talos know about Sev's mother?

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Holy crap.

So Catherine is alive?

Andrew Mason — 21 Oct 2011, 21:15 · follows David Stockhoff

Lee Berman wrote;

Consider the flowery, grandiose language used by Inire in the letter Rudesind brings to Severian. Does it remind you of another character's writing and speech? Hint: someone who seems to know a great deal about the past and future history of Urth and has rather miraculous powers of persuasion and anatomical transformation. A character who does not possess a saint name but, like Inire, one from Greco-Roman mythology.

Jeff Wilson: Juturna?

Argh! No, I meant Talos.

Well, that wouldn't help the particular pattern I was hoping to find, of a distinctive Inire appearance in each book, since Talos is in every book. (Which is rather striking, actually; not many characters, apart from Severian himself, are. Dorcas, counting her brief cameo at the end of COTA. Not sure if there's anyone else.)

The end of RttW makes it pretty clear that The Outsider (and, through an ambiguous father-son connection, Typhon) are meant to be tracked in some manner with the Earth god Dionysus.

Well, you know what I think about that.

What was the source material? And

why does a doctor know so much about Commonwealth politics, mythology, eschatology and genesis and cosmic history (not to mention Severian's mother)?

He knows about Carina, who either is Severian's mother or is somehow symbolically linked with her - I don't see that he has to know that she is Severian's mother. Regarding his knowledge in general, sometimes I wonder if he has read the Book of the New Sun (Wolfe's, not Canog's). (Or, more rationally, has read Severian's narrative, which, cast on the seas of time, finally came to a place where Talos could find it. He says that his play is based on the _lost_ Book of the New Sun: Canog's doesn't seem to be lost, if Thecla could order it up from the library.)

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 21 Oct 2011, 21:28 · in reply to Andrew Mason

Andrew Mason wrote:

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He-He-Hethor?

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Lee Berman — 22 Oct 2011, 14:48 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

why does a doctor know so much about Commonwealth politics, mythology, eschatology and genesis and cosmic history (not to mention Severian's mother)?

Andrew Mason: He knows about Carina, who either is Severian's mother or is somehow symbolically linked with her - I don't see that he has to know that she is Severian's mother....Regarding his knowledge in

general, sometimes I wonder if he has read the Book of the New Sun

I'm not following this. How does a doctor, created and bred solely to minister to Baldanders, know of the Contessa Carina? He lives in a remote place. He is not supposed to be privy to the lives of exultants nor the politics of the House Absolute and Carina is not found in Severian's writings (except, of course as a contribution from Talos, himself).

Talos' play contains cosmic knowledge of the past and future of a type known only to a very few others such as Malrubius and Cyriaca's mysterious uncle. I cannot ignore the source of this knowledge for each of these characters as an important literary clue to the subtext of the story.

FWIW, I note that, like Catherine, Cyriaca is a dark-haired, oval-faced failed Pelerine. I don't think her connection to a cosmically knowledgeable uncle is a coincidence. His status as a dealer in rare books would seem to link him to the curators like Ultan, Rudesind and the boss guy at the Botanic Garden. The curators are, surely, linked to Father Inire.

Cyriaca seems to have spent long hours alone as a young woman with this uncle. If he is Father Inire, that is grounds for a little moment of "hmmm..." A moment similar to Severian's "hmm..." on meeting the boatman, Maxellindis' "uncle".

Jeff Wilson — 22 Oct 2011, 15:25 · in reply to Lee Berman

On Sat, October 22, 2011 09:48, Lee Berman wrote:

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minister to Baldanders, know of the Contessa Carina? He lives in a remote

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as an important literary clue to the subtext of the story.

Talos' cosmic knowledge could easily have come from FB&O's wisdom-spreading audiences with Baldanders. His society knowledge can as easily have come from his association with the upper classes as a popular traveling entertainer, and perhaps as a keen eavesdropper endowed with foxlike senses.

Jeff Wilson - <jwilson at clueland.com >

A&M Texarkana Computational Intelligence Lab

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

Jerry Friedman — 22 Oct 2011, 16:34 · in reply to Lee Berman

From: Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com>

why does a doctor know so much about Commonwealth politics, mythology, eschatology and genesis and cosmic history (not to mention Severian's mother)?

Andrew Mason: He knows about Carina, who either is Severian's mother or is somehow symbolically linked with her - I don't see that he has to know that she is Severian's mother....Regarding his knowledge in general, sometimes I wonder if he has read the Book of the New Sun

I'm not following this. HOW does a doctor, created and bred solely to minister to Baldanders, know of the Contessa Carina? He lives in a remote place.

He's traveled a good deal.

He is not supposed to be privy to the lives of exultants nor the politics of the House Absolute

Are we told something about Dr. Talos's knowledge of those subjects?

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(except, of? course as a contribution from Talos, himself).

Talos' play contains cosmic knowlege of the past and future of a type known only to a very few others such as Malrubius and Cyriaca's mysterious uncle. I cannot ignore the source of this knowledge for each of these characters as an important literary clue to the subtext of the story.

...

Famulimus says that Baldanders "hoards up past lore". I see no obstacle to Dr. T.'s knowing this lore too. He must know the medical parts. As for Cyriaca's uncle, there's no reason to ignore her statement that his knowledge came from books, specifically one that hadn't been opened for a chiliad, he thought.

Jerry Friedman

Lee Berman — 22 Oct 2011, 16:37 · follows Jerry Friedman

Jeff Wilson: Talos' cosmic knowledge could easily have come from FB&O's wisdom-spreading audiences with Baldanders. His society knowledge can as easily have come from his association with the upper classes as a popular traveling entertainer, and perhaps as a keen eavesdropper endowed with foxlike senses.

Great post Jeff. Yes, it could have.

Here's the thing for me- We have the mystery of Dr. Talos' knowledge. It is a mystery because it is not explained and I think we are supposed to figure it out. We have competing theories: 1. he is a keen eavesdropper and 2. He is really a version of the mysterious Father Inire.

If this was the real world, I think #1 is the better explanation. It is plain and simple and thus better via Occam's principle. But this is a work of fantastical fiction and for me, the fantastical #2 solution to a mystery is simply more fun.

Wolfe gives us the mystery of a flying cathedral and later gives us the pedestrian answer that it is simply a big tent flying like a hot air balloon. So there are pedestrian answers to some mysteries. It's just that he provides the answer to that one. The mysteries we are supposed to figure out for ourselves ought to have cool, interesting solutions, I think. If we are willing to put the thought into solving his mysteries wouldn't he want to reward us rather than provide a yawn?

David Stockhoff — 22 Oct 2011, 20:19 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 10/22/2011 10:48 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

FWIW, I note that, like Catherine, Cyriaca is a dark-haired, oval-faced

failed Pelerine. I don't think her connection to a cosmically knowlegeable

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to link him to the curators like Ultan, Rudesind and the boss guy at the

Botanic Garden. The curators are, surely, linked to Father Inire.

(1) Anyone who deals in rare books knows the Librarians. There are very few Librarians; therefore, anyone who deals in rare books knows Ultan. Anyone who knows Ultan may know his boss Inire. Inire most certainly deals in very, very rare books. Therefore, Cyriaca's uncle knows Inire, at least.

Ultan is so tall I can't imagine Cyriaca being related to him. Inire is so unimaginable (dark? small? old?), I can't imagine Cyriaca being related to him. So I'm stumped, but there is definitely something there.

(2) One way out may be that Inire is the "uncle" of every little girl who knows him. Inire knows all the little girls at court; therefore, Inire is the "uncle" of every little girl at court. Cyriaca was a little girl at court; therefore, Inire is her uncle.

David Stockhoff — 22 Oct 2011, 20:56 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 10/22/2011 12:37 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

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fiction and for me, the fantastical #2 solution to a mystery is simply more fun.

Here's a theory that is neither pedestrian nor fantastical, but based on the story and what we know of its characters. Talos has the task of scraping up cash for Baldanders. He writes and directs plays and is therefore incredibly literate. He probably reads extremely fast, being unnatural and unusually intelligent. He knows his audience. He travels and listens.

What sort of information does this leave out? Perhaps some military-type information, certain arcane technologies, battle tactics. But certainly all religion, philosophy, history, etc.

To me, the bigger key is the Book itself. The bit about Carina does seem circular in origin, since there doesn't seem to be any reason for anyone outside the story to know Catherine without knowing Severian is her son. Why would anyone know that?

Well, certain people know---certain people at the House Absolute. And these people deal in rare books.

Does anyone think it unlikely that Ultan lends Talos books by the hundreds?

Jeff Wilson — 22 Oct 2011, 23:06 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 10/22/2011 11:37 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

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Some of the provided answers are pretty spectacular - the citadel towers are actually rocket ships, the giant cataphracts are a mix of mountain-carving construction machinery and flying combat mecha!

And so, I don't consider "mundane" answers like, "Dr Talos spies on his public" to be disappointing because not everything can be spectacular - and Dr Talos is in the business of putting on a show of spectacle, so it's well in character for him to be doing "regular" stuff like a stage magician. The mundania in NEW SUN is all the more remarkable for being present on Urth as it is on our archaic Earth, and that's an important theme; some things don't really change, like human nature and human solutions to that nature's shortcomings.

What about Hildegrin's business card? Is it too yawny to think that there remains a printing industry in Nessus? Or does he dig up crates of them, then fling a bottle into the sea with a note letting the Green Man know where to bury the next batch in the previous chiliad?

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

Lee Berman — 23 Oct 2011, 01:27 · follows Jeff Wilson

David Stockhoff: Ultan is so tall I can't imagine Cyriaca being related to him. Inire is so unimaginable (dark? small? old?), I can't imagine Cyriaca being related to him. So I'm stumped, but there is definitely something there.

Yes, but if the Inire as Dionysus idea is correct, we can't rely on "normal" expectations for human size and reproduction considerations. Consider the example of Semele, mother of Dionysus. She was killed because she forced her lover, Zeus, to appear to her in his true form.

Consider the lessons we are given about shapeshifters in Foila's story and Zak on the ship. They can appear in various forms and sizes. But there is always something (and not always the same thing for all incarnations) to mark them. It could be a gold ring or brown, bird-like features. It could be a hairy, monkey-ish appearance or the mysterious clues that allows Severian to recognize the giant handsome guy and the even bigger angel creatures as Zak/Tzadkiel.

If the appearance of Inire represent pinched off pieces of a larger being, why can't they be of different sizes and shapes, as we see in the Tzadkiel example? (and if these god/angel/demon creatures were originally of human origin, it helps explain the DNA problem, as someone else noted). And the shapeshifter clues are multiple- small bent and twisted and/or monkey-like and/or having obscured face/eyes and/or a creative artistic bent, and/or red hair etc. The identity mark for Father Inire is a constellation of traits not just one.

One way out may be that Inire is the "uncle" of every little girl who knows him. Inire knows all the little girls at court; therefore, Inire is the "uncle" of every little girl at court.

I do agree with this scenario. But it ignores the creepy undertones of the Thecla and Domnina story. Wolfe openly blends British literature and Greek mythology in The Boy Called Frog. Why not the same with Father Inire, blending Lewis Carroll with the Greek gods (and fallen angels) who just can't seem to stop their lechery toward young human maidens?

Anyone who deals in rare books knows the Librarians. There are very few Librarians; therefore, anyone who deals in rare books knows Ultan. Anyone who knows Ultan may know his boss Inire. Inire most certainly deals in very, very rare books. Therefore, Cyriaca's uncle knows Inire, at least.

Yes, and Dr. Talos could have overheard conversations of Baldanders with B, F and O. Etc. I am not arguing that these sorts of explanations are impossible or improbable or unlikely as Gerry might say.

I guess it's just that I can't really consider them real explanations. They have been devised not previously to explain mysteries but solely as counter-arguments against Father Inire-Dionysus. Maybe they are a way of saying the knowledge of Dr. Talos and Cyriaca's uncle just aren't mysterious.

But to me they are. And given a choice between a collection of unrelated post hoc arguments to explain each mystery away or one kinda cool (for me) theory which explains these and many other mysteries and ties the whole Sun series together, I hope it can be seen why Father Inire theory retains its appeal to me.

Jeff Wilson: What about Hildegren's business card? Is it too yawny to think that there remains a printing industry in Nessus? Or does he dig up crates of them, then fling a bottle into the sea with a note letting the Green Man know where to bury the next batch in the previous chiliad?

I don't consider Hildegren's business card to be a mystery. Do you? As stated previously, I think fantastic answers are the appropriate and necessary reward for solving mysteries for which we are not given the answers. I don't find this post helpful or amusing but I suppose I can give it a B for snark factor.

David Stockhoff — 23 Oct 2011, 01:49 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 10/22/2011 9:27 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

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This makes a lot of sense, but it also strikes me as just too deep. Too religious; too revelatory; too steeped in "lore."

I think with mythology one runs the risk of seeing patterns everywhere, because mythologies are webs. Wolfe knows this and takes advantage of it, but usually he selects threads. Inire as a mass of contradictory traits is a brilliant idea. But it's huge! Can the text support it?

One way out may be that Inire is the "uncle" of every little girl who knows him. Inire knows all the little girls at court; therefore, Inire is the "uncle" of every little girl at court.

I do agree with this scenario. But it ignores the creepy undertones of the Thecla and Domnina story. Wolfe openly blends British literature and Greek mythology in *The Boy Called Frog*. Why not the same with Father Inire, blending Lewis Carroll with the Greek gods (and fallen angels) who just can't seem to stop their lechery toward young human maidens?

Oh, I don't ignore that at all. There are uncles and then there are "uncles." Make of it what you will!

Anyone who deals in rare books knows the Librarians. There are very few Librarians; therefore, anyone who deals in rare books knows Ultan. Anyone who knows Ultan may know his boss Inire. Inire most certainly deals in very, very rare books. Therefore, Cyriaca's uncle knows Inire,

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hoc arguments to explain each mystery away or one kinda cool (for me) theory

which explain these and many other mysteries and ties the whole Sun series

together, I hope it can be seen why Father Inire theory retains its appeal to me.

Certainly. But even mysterious explanations need to acknowledge and be grounded in the everyday likelihoods that Wolfe also builds into his stories. There just cannot be so many top-notch rare book dealers in Nessus that a very knowledgeable one can remain anonymous.

BTW, it occurs to me that Appian is another dealer in rare books: it is he who displays the human leather-bound book to Severian. He may be a better candidate for uncle to Cyriaca; after all, she may have no idea she is the Autarch. And he would know firsthand all those stories.

Lee Berman — 23 Oct 2011, 02:20 · follows David Stockhoff

This post is for David Stockhoff to whom I promised an answer to his question on what benefit Severian might have for keeping Father Inire in such difficult to penetrate disguises.

I think this question was carried on the assumption that Severian hoping to hide his and his family's incestuous nature was sufficient grounds to keep his family members hidden, to various degrees of difficulty.

I could answer the question about Father Inire in similar terms. As a Greek god analog he is incestuous by nature. It is he who brings the embarrassing curse of incest to Severian's family and keeping him in disguise is sort of a reflex. Mentioning him as royal vizier is okay but admitting he is Dorcas' husband, Cyriaca's uncle and certain others would be too revealing in the incest department.

I could also answer that he is a cacogen, a sort of being which is held in some disgust in the Commonwealth. Perhaps Severian doesn't want to disgust his readers by admitting any closer association than necessary.

Those answers are okay, though not completely satisfying. But a recent insight suggested there

may be more to it, if we consider another level of literary interpretation. Together, the two levels might be a good answer.

David, in the past we've had discussions about the literary theme of "God is to universe as author is to story". And we I think we agreed that a religious scholar like Wolfe is insightful enough to consider that an author is more properly considered as a demiurge than god.

Actually I'd like to digress and add to that discussion for a paragraph or two. The demiurge is the all-powerful creator of the material world and all that is in it. Where the demiurge is incomplete is that he lacks participation in the spirit. (and free will is a component of the spirit, so a demiurge cannot fully control a conscious human being).

So, in literature, the author is the demiurge. He can control anything and everything in his story except for one thing. The spiritual component of a story, which is the reader. The author can influence but cannot control how each of his readers chooses to understand and interpret his stories.

Anyway, there is a famous anecdote that I can't fully place just now. It was in some lecture where some person of note in the lupine universe surprised Wolfe with the question, "can we assume that the name of Number 5 and Maitre is Gene Wolfe?" Caught by surprise, Wolfe blurted out "yes!". But this admission of metafiction and veiled autobiography is not something Wolfe is prone to admit. That may be the only example.

It isn't something new for analysts to suggest Gene Wolfe puts himself into his stories. Number 5, Weer, Severian, Ouen and Horn (not sure about Silkhorn) are oft noted candidates.

We have discussed how Father Inire can be seen as a demiurgical figure to the Commonwealth as Tzadkiel is to his ship, as Typhon-Pas is to the Whorl and how The Outsider is to the universe of Briah.

Wolfe has stated that Severian can be considered an aspect of The Outsider. If Wolfe recognizes his role as demiurge in creating the Sun series, is it possible he has put himself into the story AS The Outsider? This recognizes Severian as an aspect of himself but also makes Father Inire (and Typhon and Tzadkiel the Angel of Judgement) as aspects of himself.

Could this be the reason Severian is so reticent about Father Inire? Does Wolfe make him do this to hide (but also provide a clue) that Gene Wolfe is lurking in various disguises throughout this story. Afterall, creating such human-form agents to accomplish their goals in the world is something that demiurges are prone to do.

António Pedro Marques — 23 Oct 2011, 02:43 · in reply to Lee Berman

No dia 23/10/2011, às 03:20, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com> escreveu:

Wolfe has stated that Severian can be considered an aspect of The Outsider. If Wolfe recognizes his role as demiurge in creating the Sun series, is it possible he has put himself into the story AS The Outsider?

Wolfe has said the Outsider is a spiritual god. That - substantiated by what we see of the Outsider - doesn't strike me as demiurge-like.

This recognizes Severian as an aspect of himself but also makes Father Inire (and Typhon and Tzadkiel the Angel of Judgement) as aspects of himself.

Could this be the reason Severian is so reticent about Father Inire? Does Wolfe make him do this to hide (but also provide a clue) that Gene Wolfe is lurking in various disguises throughout this story. Afterall, creating such human-form agents to accomplish their goals in the world is something that

demiurges are prone to do.

'FI is GW' sounds terrific.

Jerry Friedman — 23 Oct 2011, 04:18 · in reply to David Stockhoff

From: David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net>

.> On 10/22/2011 12:37 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

Here's the thing for me- We have the mystery of Dr. Talos'

knowledge. It is

a mystery because it is not explained and I think we are supposed to figure

it out. We have competing theories: 1. he is a keen eavesdropper and 2. He

is really a version of the mysterious Father Inire.

Seems to me some of it is explained straightforwardly (as I thought I posted earlier today, but I don't see the post). Famulimus says Baldanders "hoards up past lore" (SotL, Ch. XXXIII), as we might have expected given his medical knowledge. There's no obvious reason to keep any of it from his faithful doctor, servant, dogsbody (foxbody?), and playwright.

Only some of it, though.

If this was the real world, I think #1 is the better explanation. It is plain

and simple and thus better via Occam's principle. But this is a work of fantastical

fiction and for me, the fantastical #2 solution to a mystery is simply more fun.

For some of it, I just see no mystery.

Here's a theory that is neither pedestrian nor fantastical, but based on the story and what we know of its characters. Talos has the task of scraping up cash for Baldanders. He writes and directs plays and is therefore incredibly literate. He probably reads extremely fast, being unnatural and unusually intelligent. He knows his audience. He travels and listens.

That too.

What sort of information does this leave out? Perhaps some military-type information, certain arcane technologies, battle tactics. But certainly all religion, philosophy, history, etc.

To me, the bigger key is the Book itself. The bit about Carina does seem circular in origin, since there doesn't seem to be any reason for anyone outside the story to know Catherine without knowing Severian is her son. Why would anyone know that?

Well, certain people know---certain people at the House Absolute. And these people deal in rare books.

Does anyone think it unlikely that Ultan lends Talos books by the hundreds?

Well, Talos doesn't have a Nessus address (that we know of). But he has some sources of ancient information, quite likely books.

Indeed, though, the question of why Carina's narration in /E. & G./ matches a scene in UotNS is

mysterious, like other echoes between the play and future events. It may mean Dr. T. has some uncanny source of knowledge. There's plenty of time travel in the books to provide one possible explanation without the need (or possibility?) of any commitment to who the time traveler is. Another possibility is that Dr. Talos doesn't know anything; instead the woman in UotNS knows about the play, or somebody else does and sets up the scene. Another is unconscious prescience, like Severian's dream of the puppet fight. As Talos himself tells us, stories in the future can inspire those in the past. I'm not seeing other possibilities at the moment, but maybe some people will (or have).

Jerry Friedman

David Stockhoff — 23 Oct 2011, 13:56 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 10/22/2011 10:20 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

This post is for David Stockhoff to whom I promised an answer

to his question on what benefit Severian might have for keeping

Father Inire in such difficult to penetrate disguises.

thanks!

I think this question was carried on the assumption that Severian

hoping to hide his and his family's incestuous nature was sufficient

grounds to keep his family members hidden, to various degrees of

difficulty.

If the incest extends beyond Dorcas, which was an accidental instance, yes.

I could answer the question about Father Inire in similar terms. As

a Greek god analog he is incestuous by nature. It is he who brings

the embarrassing curse of incest to Severian's family and keeping him

in disguise is sort of a reflex. Mentioning him as royal vizier is okay

but admitting he is Dorcas' husband, Cyriaca's uncle and certain others

would be too revealing in the incest department.

I could also answer that he is a cacogen, a sort of being which is held

in some disgust in the Commonwealth. Perhaps Severian doesn't want to

disgust his readers by admitting any closer association than necessary.

I hadn't noted any disgust for Inire, but it's possible.

Those answers are okay, though not completely satisfying. But a recent insight

suggested there may be more to it, if we consider another level of literary

interpretation. Together, the two levels might be a good answer.

David, in the past we've had discussions about the literary theme of "God is to universe as author is to story". And we I think we agreed that a religious scholar like Wolfe is insightful enough to consider that an author is more properly considered as a demiurge than god.

Actually I'd like to digress and add to that discussion for a paragraph or two. The demiurge is the all-powerful creator of the material world and all that is in it. Where the demiurge is incomplete is that he lacks participation in the spirit. (and free will is a component of the spirit, so a demiurge cannot fully control a conscious human being).

So, in literature, the author is the demiurge. He can control anything and everything in his story except for one thing. The spiritual component of a story, which is the reader. The author can influence but cannot control how each of his readers chooses to understand and interpret his stories.

So far so good. I can also imagine further punning along the lines of the writer's idea's incestuously merging and intertwining throughout many novels.

Anyway, there is a famous anecdote that I can't fully place just now. It was in some lecture where some person of note in the lupine universe surprised Wolfe with the question, "can we assume that the name of Number 5 and Maitre is Gene Wolfe?" Caught by surprise, Wolfe blurted out "yes!". But this admission of metafiction and veiled autobiography is not something Wolfe is prone to admit. That may be the only example.

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Wolfe has stated that Severian can be considered an aspect of The Outsider. If Wolfe recognizes his role as demiurge in creating the Sun series, is it possible he has put himself into the story AS The Outsider? This recognizes Severian as an aspect of himself but also makes Father Inire (and Typhon and Tzadkiel the Angel of Judgement) as aspects of himself.

Could this be the reason Severian is so reticent about Father Inire? Does Wolfe make him do this to hide (but also provide a clue) that Gene Wolfe is lurking in various disguises throughout this story. Afterall, creating such human-form agents to accomplish their goals in the world is something that demiurges are prone to do.

I thought I saw where you were going---that Wolfe is Inire (and perhaps Tzadkiel in UotNS). But despite valid connections one can make between demiurge and Increate, I can't see Wolfe seeing himself as the Outsider, for the reason you gave: that an author is a demiurge, not a god. So I'm confused there.

If the demiurge has created a box in which he keeps pets dressed up as one character or another, it is not the demiurge who is likely to break in to free them---these are separate roles. (I say this while admitting that the Outsider cannot actually "be" God because God is above all creations, but since he has no face or dialog, he's as close as Wolfe can reasonably get.)

Going with Inire-as-Wolfe, my response must be that it actually explains the reticence and mystery about Inire all by itself, making further explanations unnecessary. It does lead one to look for instances where Inire has fiddled with things behind the scenes, which of course is what Inire does. And while Severian himself may simply be consciously unaware that Inire has these connections, as Autarch he must have some idea.

Going further: I could add a fourth "reason" for Severian to not mention things that he must know as Autarch---which is that in his acquired memories he knows so much that it would overpower any narrative. To tell his story he must push those memories aside and speak as himself.

Still, the Autarchs must not know everything about Severian, or else Severian himself would know everything about himself. This presents further problems. Either Inire knows more than the Autarchs (quite likely) or Severian actually knows (rather than suspects or fears) the answers to all the things we puzzle over and deliberately hides them. Fine. But then we must believe he hides them badly.

And round and round we go.

Incidentally, part of the inspiration for the Autarchy may come from the fact that Byzantine emperors chose potential successors as their chief advisers (though I'm not sure whether they adopted heirs as the Romans did). Conversely, they also chose their chief advisers to succeed them. This ensured continuity whether the throne was inherited or not.

My point is that Inire does not fit into this scheme. He's more like a Grand Vizier at the head of an eternal bureaucracy such as the Ottomans had. Further, the Ottoman sultans frequently appointed loyal "aliens" (Jews, Christians, Europeans) as their viziers. Inire fits this model more neatly.

Andrew Mason — 23 Oct 2011, 18:14 · follows David Stockhoff

Lee Berman wrote: >

Andrew Mason: He knows about Carina, who either is Severian's mother or is somehow symbolically linked with her - I don't see that he has to know that she is Severian's mother....Regarding his knowledge in general, sometimes I wonder if he has read the Book of the New Sun

I'm not following this. How does a doctor, created and bred solely to minister to Baldanders, know of the Contessa Carina? He lives in a remote place. ?He is not supposed to be privy to the lives of exultants nor the politics of the House Absolute and Carina is not found in Severian's writings (except, of ?course as a contribution from Talos, himself).

Talos predicts, in a way that is uncannily accurate (though also strangely skewed) the events of the last day of Urth. He places a prophet, a giant, a demon at the House Absolute; he tells of a man and a woman descending from the sky; of a bell ringing; and of a woman who, while being escorted along the path of air, sees a man looking in at the windows. All this happened.

I can see two possible explanations for this. One is, as Jerry Friedman suggested, prescience; he thinks he is making it up, but his story reflects the future, as *_Frankenstein_* reflects Baldanders and the stories in *_Wonders of Urth and Sky_* reflect the life of Severian. The other is that he has read the *_Book of the New Sun_*. Well, he says he has - the speculative bit of my proposal is that this is not Canog's book, which would presumably give only a brief outline of these events, but Severian's. All the events are detailed in *_The Urth of the New Sun_*, so if he has read it, he knows about them.

Of course, this would not tell him that the woman's name is Carina. But we don't know that her name *_is_* Carina; he may have added this name because of its symbolic resonances.

David Stockhoff — 23 Oct 2011, 19:55 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

On 10/23/2011 12:18 AM, Jerry Friedman wrote:

Well, Talos doesn't have a Nessus address (that we know of). But he has some sources of ancient information, quite likely books.

Indeed, though, the question of why Carina's narration in */E.& G./* matches a scene in *UotNS* is mysterious, like other echoes between the play and future events. It may mean Dr. T. has some uncanny source of knowledge. There's plenty of time travel in the books to provide one possible explanation without the need (or possibility?) of any commitment to who the time traveler is. Another possibility is that Dr. Talos doesn't know anything; instead the woman in *UotNS* knows about the

play, or somebody else does and sets up the scene. Another is unconscious prescience, like Severian's dream of the puppet fight. As Talos himself tells us, stories in the future can inspire those in the past. I'm not seeing other possibilities at the moment, but maybe some people will (or have).

I'm betting there were delivery vans full of books running back and forth all the time!

Seriously, I think it's likely that we are to imagine Sev's book in Ultan's library---there are enough hints that this library is like Borges' infinite library, and it had to go somewhere. If that is possible, then it's a very small leap to the information it contains being available. However, as you say there are other pathways.

Jeff Wilson — 23 Oct 2011, 20:11 · in reply to David Stockhoff

On 10/22/2011 3:56 PM, David Stockhoff wrote:

Does anyone think it unlikely that Ultan lends Talos books by the hundreds?

Talos could be a voracious if infrequent patron perhaps, but it would be beyond impractical and inadvisable for an itinerant actor to check out cartloads of rare volumes.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at clueland.com

Computational Intelligence Laboratory - Texas A&M Texarkana

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

David Stockhoff — 24 Oct 2011, 02:04 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On 10/23/2011 4:11 PM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

On 10/22/2011 3:56 PM, David Stockhoff wrote:

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Exactly. He and Baldanders did not always travel.

Lee Berman — 24 Oct 2011, 02:41 · follows David Stockhoff

Antonio Pedro Marques: 'FI is GW' sounds terrific.

David Stockhoff: I can't see Wolfe seeing himself as the Outsider

...Going with Inire-as-Wolfe, my response must be that it actually explains the reticence and mystery about Inire all by itself, making further explanations unnecessary.

A fair and helpful suggestion for a refinement of my idea from you guys. Thanks.

Since Wolfe probably hadn't decided to use the name Tzadkiel and very likely hadn't conceived of The Outsider while writing the first four books of BotNS, I think it is very reasonable to narrow the focus of a meta-fictive inclusion of Gene Wolfe as author/demiurge to Father Inire.

Andrew Mason: 'Abraxas' does seem to be a gnostic word, but apparently it's

unclear whether it is a name of the Archon or of the true God, so it's uncertain what we should.

I think it is more important to focus on how that word is used in the text first. The Cumaean uses it to refer to someone who would seem to be her associate but one who may be more wise or knowledgeable than she, at least in some areas.

UotNS rather explicitly pairs Father Inire and The Cumaean. I don't see what other possible character she could be referring to other than Inire with the term Abraxas. (Abaia maybe? he is

just too distant and formless I think)

Only with the assumption she means Father Inire, does the earthly definition of Abraxas becomes useful, imho. Most Judeo-Christian interpret The Abraxas as an evil demon. Yes, some gnostic, pagan sects worshipped him as a true god, which was also true for various other demons and fallen angels. The earthly Abraxas might even be characterized as a demiurgical figure.

For me, this is just one of numerous clues Wolfe gives us on how we should be interpreting the mysterious Father Inire character.

Lee Berman — 24 Oct 2011, 03:24 · follows Lee Berman

David Stockhoff:>> Does anyone think it unlikely that Ultan lends Talos books by the hundreds? Talos could be a voracious if infrequent patron perhaps

Exactly. He and Baldanders did not always travel.

Borski suggests Ultan is a version of Father Inire because of the obscured eyes. I find more significance in the fact that Severian sees the face of the dead woman in the necropolis in Ultan's face.

Anyway, if this were correct (and I think we can all agree the whole curator guild is associated with Father Inire, be it art, botanic gardens or books), we wouldn't need to invent non-textual familiarity between Ultan and Dr. Talos and Cyriaca's uncle. Not if they all ARE Father Inire. ;-)

In the past I've likened BotNS as a labyrinth. And Severian keeps meeting new and old acquaintances with each corner he turns. I'm only suggesting that in a labyrinth you are more likely to meet an old character again than in an open system. I think nobody doubts Wolfe has disguised characters in many of his works, not just this one. Why be parsimonious with the idea?

p.s. Oh this reminds me of another unanswered question from David. "So, Catherine is alive?", or something like that.

That is a pretty damn difficult question. I think Dr. Talos' play suggests that Catherine is a khaibit for the Contessa Carina. I think it would be easy to guess that is a job one might run away from. (I do have a theory on why Severian sees her being escorted by soldiers on the Path of Air on the day of the Flood. But it is pretty fantastical).

Anyway, if we take the clues regarding Carina's maids rather literally, perhaps there were three of these khaibits made. But maybe it was more. What their real names are I don't know but there is more than one and more than two bits of evidence that khaibits take their name as variations on the name of their mistress/DNA source.

Anyway, there seems to be a live Catherine maid available every year for the beheading ceremony. Dave Tallman thinks Severian really beheads his own mother, based on the heaviness of the "balsa wood" sword Severian wields. Could this be an earlier test of Severian's power?

On the other hand, I am quite sure that the dead woman dug up by Vodalus is also a version of Catherine. It combination of clues, the dark hair, the pale gown, the livid face and an overly

detailed description of Allowin's necklace. Also, Catherine was unfaithful to SOMEBODY with her sexual encounter with Ouen. And what was dark-haired, oval faced, failed Pelerine Cyriaca's sentence for adultery? Strangulation.

Other clues are the aforementioned image of her face in that of Ultan's. Also, it would seem that Vodalus and his crew are not risking their lives and wasting precious alzabo to have their ceremony for eating just anyone. Thecla was important. But perhaps not as important as eating the mother of the Conciliator/New Sun (which Vodalus may or may not know about. But SOMEBODY in power knows about it).

Ryan Dunn — 24 Oct 2011, 05:58 · in reply to Lee Berman

On Oct 23, 2011, at 11:24 PM, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:

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- Might this suggest that Ultan is Severian's grandfather on the maternal side (Catherine's father), while the boatman is his grandfather on the paternal side (Ouen's father)? Sorry if this has already been discussed.

To that end, if there is significance to knowing that Ultan is his grandfather, would it be significant to know the identity of the boatman? Or is just being a shopkeeper and lost soul without his lover enough of an identity?

...ryan

larry miller — 24 Oct 2011, 11:46 · in reply to Lee Berman

Thats an interesting theory that Catherine may be the woman dug up by Vodalus. If she indeed inhabited the Atrium of Time as some suggest she could have easily have died after her appearances as St Katherine and been buried in the past. Perhaps she was being led to her death on the Path of Air? I also would love to hear your theory on this, no matter how fantastical.

On 10/23/11, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:

David Stockhoff:>> Does anyone think it unlikely that Ultan lends Talos books by the hundreds? Talos could be a voracious if infrequent patron perhaps

Exactly. He and Baldanders did not always travel.

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Catherine is a khaibit for the Contessa Carina. I think it would be easy to guess that is a job one might run away from. (I do have a theory on why Severian

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there were three of these khaibits made. But maybe it was more. What their real

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Anyway, there seems to be a live Catherine maid available every year for the beheading ceremony. Dave Tallman thinks Severian really beheads his own mother,

based on the heaviness of the "balsa wood" sword Severian wields. Could this be

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Other clues are the aforementioned image of her face in that of Ultan's. Also,

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precious alzabo to have their ceremony for eating just anyone. Thecla was important.

But perhaps not as important as eating the mother of the Conciliator/New Sun (which

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Gerry Quinn — 24 Oct 2011, 12:40 · in reply to Lee Berman

From: Lee Berman

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They're not so fussy. It looks like they'll eat anyone, at a pinch, even if some of them have preferences:

"Going far this time? Going to drown yourself again?" (This from the man at the back of our party, a mere disembodied voice in the dark.)

"By Erebus, I'm going to sink so far you won't see me until winter."

A voice I recognized as belonging to the armiger asked, "Have any of you seen her yet?" The others had sounded merely boastful, but there was hunger of a kind I had never heard before behind his simple words. He might have been some lost traveler asking about his home.

"No, Waldgrave."

(Another voice.) "Alcmund says a good one, not old or too young."

"Not another tribade, I hope."

"I don't . . ."

One might consider it as paralleling Severian's sexual encounters with a wide spectrum of Commonwealth society, and later his absorption of the minds of previous Autarchs. The diabolical communion of the Vodalarri is still, indeed, a sort of communion. Evil is good perverted.

- Gerry Quinn

Andrew Mason — 24 Oct 2011, 13:41 · follows Gerry Quinn

Lee Berman wrote:

Andrew Mason: 'Abraxas' does seem to be a gnostic word, but apparently it's unclear whether it is a name of the Archon or of the true God, so it's uncertain what we should.

I think it is more important to focus on how that word is used in the text first.

The Cumaean uses it to refer to someone who would seem to be her associate but

one who may be more wise or knowledgeable than she, at least in some areas.

Having checked the passage, it seems to me that Merryn, who is the one who actually uses the name, is most naturally read as referring to a divine or somehow spiritual being: 'Those who, like the Mother, have learned to enter the same state while waking live surrounded by their own lives, even as the Abraxas perceives all of time as an eternal instant' (something frequently said about God).

Now, it's interesting that just a few pages earlier we get what I think is the only actual use of the word 'gnostic' in the cycle, where Severian says that the wall of the Witches' Tower were decorated with gnostic designs. I had previously taken this to mean just something like 'esoteric', but perhaps we are meant to conclude that the witches do preserve something like gnosticism in the first-millennium sense; this would not be altogether surprising when we consider that the bear-handlers seem to be Mithraists. So it seems likely to me that the use of the name 'Abraxas' here is meant to reveal something specifically about the witches.

David Stockhoff — 24 Oct 2011, 14:33 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 10/23/2011 11:24 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

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The khaibits are clearly central to the first couple of books but introduce problems as well as solutions. Cyriaca's sentence is suggestive as well. But

(1) Who cares whom a khaibit has sex with? Can a khaibit be adulterous? Or can khaibits somehow stand in for their mistresses' crimes? (And if Cyriaca is an important someone's niece, why wouldn't she have one?)

(2) Are we to associate beheading with strangulation? Or simply to note that adultery is a capital crime among the exultants? For a married Contessa to dally with a waiter could certainly be a serious crime.

David Stockhoff — 24 Oct 2011, 14:35 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

On 10/24/2011 8:40 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

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

Other clues are the aforementioned image of her face in that of Ultan's. Also, it would seem that Vodalus and his crew are not risking their lives and wasting precious alzado to have their ceremony for eating just anyone. Thecla was important. But perhaps not as important as eating the mother of the Conciliator/New Sun (which Vodalus may or may not know about. But SOMEBODY in power knows about it).

They're not so fussy. It looks like they'll eat anyone, at a pinch, even if some of them have preferences:

"Going far this time? Going to drown yourself again?" (This from the man at the back of our party, a mere disembodied voice in the dark.)

"By Erebus, I'm going to sink so far you won't see me until winter."

A voice I recognized as belonging to the armiger asked, "Have any of you seen her yet?" The others had sounded merely boastful, but there was hunger of a kind I had never heard before behind his simple words. He might have been some lost traveler asking about his home.

"No, Waldgrave."

(Another voice.) "Alcund says a good one, not old or too young."

"Not another tribade, I hope."

"I don't . . ."

One might consider it as paralleling Severian's sexual encounters with a wide spectrum of Commonwealth society, and later his absorption of the minds of previous Autarchs. The diabolical communion of the Vodalarii is still, indeed, a sort of communion. Evil is good perverted.

- Gerry Quinn

I have a hunch Vodalus picks his meals very carefully. His followers may not care so much.

António Pedro Marques — 24 Oct 2011, 15:08 · in reply to David Stockhoff

David Stockhoff wrote (24-10-2011 15:35):

I have a hunch Vodalus picks his meals very carefully. His followers may not care so much.

He professes it's a quest for knowledge, so he should be going out for whoever possessed some bit of knowledge. Otoh, the folk in the necropolis seem to stand guard for their families, which would suggest indiscriminate preying on the part of the outlaws.

Lee Berman — 24 Oct 2011, 15:20 · follows António Pedro Marques

Andrew Mason: Having checked the passage, it seems to me that Merryn , who is the one who actually uses the name, is most naturally read as referring to a divine or somehow spiritual being: 'Those who, like the Mother, have learned to enter the same state while waking live surrounded by their own lives, even as the Abraxas perceives all of time as an eternal instant' (something frequently said about God).

Yes there is that Merryn quote. But my own memory was of a quote where the Cumaeian is asked something or she wonders something and mutters, "perhaps the Abraxas will know" or something like that. I don't have my books with me and I can't find the quote online. Apologies if I've relied too heavily on my faulty memory.

Now, it's interesting that just a few pages earlier we get what I think is the only actual use of the word 'gnostic' in the cycle, where Severian says that the wall of the Witches' Tower were decorated with gnostic designs....it seems likely to me that the use of the name 'Abraxas' here is meant to reveal something specifically about the witches.

I agree but with the stipulation that there is a connection between Father Inire and witches. There is the blunt and open association Severian makes between Inire and The Cumaeian. Also there is Hildegren who links Vodalus to the Witches. And Vodalus connects to Father Inire because he (as Jungle Guide shaman) is part of Vodalus' party. And another term for a shaman is "witch doctor". Just as Wolfe believes in the reality of pagan gods, he also (stated in a quote) believes in the reality of witches who are acolytes of those dark powers.

In parallel to the gnostic symbols marking the Witches Tower, I think, are the teratoid (monster) symbols marking Father Inire's mirror chamber. I think this mirror-monster association makes the connection to Hethor extra clear.

David Stockhoff — 24 Oct 2011, 15:22 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

On 10/24/2011 11:08 AM, António Pedro Marques wrote:
David Stockhoff wrote (24-10-2011 15:35):

I have a hunch Vodalus picks his meals very carefully. His followers may not care so much.

He professes it's a quest for knowledge, so he should be going out for whoever possessed some bit of knowledge. Otoh, the folk in the necropolis seem to stand guard for their families, which would suggest indiscriminate preying on the part of the outlaws.

Right. And class and the potential for inside intelligence might be part of the criteria. But he got Thecla, possible daughter of Catherine and Theo. Where was her family?

Lee Berman — 24 Oct 2011, 15:40 · follows David Stockhoff

Ryan Dunn: Might this suggest that Ultan is Severian's grandfather on the maternal side (Catherine's father), while the boatman is his grandfather on the paternal side (Ouen's father)? Sorry if this has already been discussed.

To that end, if there is significance to knowing that Ultan is his grandfather, would it be significant to know the identity of the boatman? Or is just being a shopkeeper and lost soul without his lover enough of an identity?

I might be more inclined to agree that Dorcas' husband is just some guy if it weren't for the fact that there are two other old boatmen who also like to talk about undines. The old boatman's association with young teen Dorcas seems to parallel the questionable nature of Maxellindis' uncle to young teen Maxellindis.

That particular issue of Ultan has not been discussed much, nor recently. But yes. If Ultan is a version of Father Inire it probably places him as both maternal and paternal grandfather to Severian. Ultan is surely presented as a kindly, benign character. But as has been discussed with David Stockhoff, there are some things Ultan says which seem to associate him with satanic ritual (not to mention his look of greedy hunger in discussing the eating of the dead).

That stuff about Ultan is to be expected if he is Father Inire, who is associated with pagan gods, fallen angels, gnostic demons, witchcraft etc. Not that these things are inherently "bad". They are just dark. The dark which comes before the light.

Gerry Quinn — 24 Oct 2011, 15:43 · in reply to David Stockhoff

From: David Stockhoff

Right. And class and the potential for inside intelligence might be part of the criteria. But he got Thecla, possible daughter of Catherine and Theo. Where was her family?

Right there at the dinner table.

- Gerry Quinn

David Stockhoff — 24 Oct 2011, 15:48 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 10/24/2011 11:20 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

In parallel to the gnostic symbols marking the Witches Tower, I think, are the teratoid (monster) symbols marking Father Inire's mirror chamber. I think this mirror-monster association makes the connection to Hethor extra clear.

I agree, except that to me the connection is mostly related to to what all these people do (witches, sorcerers, etc.).

I think one can divide up characters' significance in only a few ways: who they are (which in Wolfe goes right down to the DNA), who they know, what they know, what they want, and what they are willing to do to get it. (Legal status does not usually come up as a central feature; rather, like a name, it can change.)

Hethor is a sorcerer and a sailor. It is no surprise that he has picked up some knowledge of the kind Inire is master of. This comparison is something Wolfe uses to impart a sense of scale and depth: the sticks that children play with are like the swords knights wield, and so on. The Heirodules are to the Increate as we are to the gods, etc.

In Briah, the stars and planets themselves---and travel between them---are realms of gnostic knowledge and as such a key to wisdom (the truth about creation and about ourselves). Outer space is akin to Faerie. Hethor has been to Elfland and stolen a few scraps; Inire is the Elfking.

Something like that. Inire doesn't need to fake a stutter and follow Sev around to keep track of him. Rather, he is the super-Hethor. In this way we receive a hint of his powers.

Recall however that it is Appian who reveals the mirrors to Severian. Inire uses him so he can hide in the background.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 24 Oct 2011, 15:54 · in reply to David Stockhoff

David Stockhoff wrote:

... at the end of an excellent post...

Recall however that it is Appian who reveals the mirrors to Severian. Inire uses him so he can hide in the background.

OK, a couple of people have taken to referring to the Old Autarch as Appian. Is there any actual evidence for this? I have the impression that Appian is a more historical figure.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

David Stockhoff — 24 Oct 2011, 16:06 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

On 10/24/2011 11:43 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: David Stockhoff <mailto:dstockhoff at verizon.net>

Right. And class and the potential for inside intelligence might be part

of the criteria. But he got Thecla, possible daughter of Catherine and Theo. Where was her family?

Right there at the dinner table.

Aha. Very good. But that would make them Vodalarii. Thea is, but the rest?

David Stockhoff — 24 Oct 2011, 16:09 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On 10/24/2011 11:54 AM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

David Stockhoff wrote:

... at the end of an excellent post...

Recall however that it is Appian who reveals the mirrors to Severian. Inire uses him so he can hide in the background.

OK, a couple of people have taken to referring to the Old Autarch as Appian. Is there any actual evidence for this? I have the impression that Appian is a more historical figure.

Lexicon Urthus says so, but I don't recall the revealing passage. Appian was apprentice to the honey steward Paeon. He ruled for a long time, being young, according to LU.

David Stockhoff — 24 Oct 2011, 16:30 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 10/24/2011 11:40 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

I might be more inclined to agree that Dorcas' husband is just some guy if it weren't for the fact that there are two other old boatmen who also like to talk about undines. The old boatman's association with young teen Dorcas seems to parallel the questionable nature of Maxellindis' uncle to young teen Maxellindis.

Maxellindis's uncle says he sleeps in his boat. LU says Ca's husband sleeps in a rented room. So they are clearly different people. But old boatmen do seem to be a motif.

For a boatman to be Charon, there should be a death or a return close by. Hmmm...

That particular issue of Ultan has not been discussed much, nor recently. But yes. If Ultan is a version of Father Inire it probably places him as both maternal and paternal grandfather to Severian. Ultan is surely presented as a kindly, benign character. But as has been discussed with David Stockhoff, there are some things Ultan says which seem to associate him with satanic ritual (not to mention his look of greedy hunger in discussing the eating of the dead).

I want to note that since Ultan is blind, he lacks the self-restraint of facial expression most people have. So his grimace of hunger for knowledge is suggestive but perhaps should not be taken to mean he actually eats dead people for their knowledge. The people whose brains he wants to eat are long, long gone.

That stuff about Ultan is to be expected if he is Father Inire, who is associated with pagan gods, fallen angels, gnostic demons, witchcraft etc. Not that these things are inherently "bad". They are just dark. The dark which comes before the light.

What connects Ultan to Inire here? His hunger for knowledge? Or the means he may use to get it?

Gerry Quinn — 24 Oct 2011, 16:40 · in reply to David Stockhoff

From: David Stockhoff

On 10/24/2011 11:43 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: David Stockhoff <mailto:dstockhoff at verizon.net>

Right. And class and the potential for inside intelligence might be part

of the criteria. But he got Thecla, possible daughter of Catherine and Theo. Where was her family?

Right there at the dinner table.

Aha. Very good. But that would make them Vodalarii. Thea is, but the rest?

It may be that those sent to the torturers are meant to stay buried where the torturers put them.

- Gerry Quinn

António Pedro Marques — 24 Oct 2011, 17:06 · in reply to David Stockhoff

David Stockhoff wrote (24-10-2011 17:09):

On 10/24/2011 11:54 AM, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:

David Stockhoff wrote:

... at the end of an excellent post...

Recall however that is it Appian who reveals the mirrors to Severian. Inire uses him so he can hide in the background.

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Lexicon Urthus says so, but I don't recall the revealing passage. Appian was apprentice to the honey steward Paeon. He ruled for a long time, being young, according to LU.

lirc, it was put to rest that the Old Autarch was *not* the Appian mentioned in the text; however, 'Appian' has become such a traditional name for him, that as a matter of List Lore I think it can prevail (the name, not the identification - so we have two Appians, the one in the text and the Old Autarch). *lirc*.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 24 Oct 2011, 17:09 · in reply to David Stockhoff

David Stockhoff wrote:

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

OK, a couple of people have taken to referring to the Old Autarch as Appian. Is there any actual evidence for this? I have the impression that Appian is a more historical figure.

Lexicon Urthus says so, but I don't recall the revealing passage. Appian was apprentice to the honey steward Paeon. He ruled for a long time, being young, according to LU.

With all due respect to Michael Andre-Driussi, I do not take LU as an authority, just a useful reference. If someone has their copy handy, can you cite the passage in question?

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

António Pedro Marques — 24 Oct 2011, 17:12 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn wrote (24-10-2011 17:40):

From: David Stockhoff <mailto:dstockhoff at verizon.net>

> On 10/24/2011 11:43 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

> > *From:* David Stockhoff <mailto:dstockhoff at verizon.net>

> > > Right. And class and the potential for inside intelligence might be

> > part

> > > of the criteria. But he got Thecla, possible daughter of Catherine and

> > > Theo. Where was her family?

> > Right there at the dinner table.

> Aha. Very good. But that would make them Vodalarii. Thea is, but the rest?

It may be that those sent to the torturers are meant to stay buried where the torturers put them.

Istr there was mention of how the bodies were handled. Weren't they given over to the family? (I that that isn't it, but...)

David Stockhoff — 24 Oct 2011, 17:13 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On 10/24/2011 1:09 PM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

David Stockhoff wrote:

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

OK, a couple of people have taken to referring to the Old Autarch as Appian. Is there any actual evidence for this? I have the impression that Appian is a more historical figure.

Lexicon Urthus says so, but I don't recall the revealing passage. Appian was apprentice to the honey steward Paeon. He ruled for a long time, being young, according to LU.

With all due respect to Michael Andre-Driussi, I do not take LU as an authority, just a useful reference. If someone has their copy handy, can you cite the passage in question?

It seems to be from the story The Cat. Not BotNS.

Lee Berman — 24 Oct 2011, 17:16 · follows David Stockhoff

Antonio Pedro Marques: He professes it's a quest for knowledge, so he should be going out for whoever possessed some bit of knowledge.

I believe it is the Old Autarch who tells Severian that Thecla was chosen for her loyalty to Vodalus as a means to bind his followers more tightly to him. I tend to think Vodalus as an expendable pawn of higher powers (easily replaced by Agia with the help of...Hethor) who doesn't really know that the true importance of his dinner choices (and all else that he does) relates to Severian as a nascent New Sun.

Otoh, the folk in the necropolis seem to stand guard for their families, which would suggest indiscriminate preying on the part of the outlaws.

Perhaps. But perhaps there many are other ghouls lurking in Nessus other than Vodalus. We are only concerned with the choices of Vodalus here and he seems very selective to me.

I think the pikemen who confront Vodalus fulfill Wolfe's desire to portray Vodalus as the opposite of these simple, modest folk as well as create a nice torch and pitchfork mob scene, another nod to Mary Shelley and Frankenstein.

David Stockhoff: Lexicon Urthus says so, but I don't recall the revealing passage.
Appian was apprentice to the honey steward Paeon. He ruled for a long time, being young, according to LU.

I think the name Appian comes not from BotNS but from the short story The Cat. Borski perhaps rightly noted that Appian could be an appropriate name for a guy who is/was a beekeeper (though Apian would be the more proper spelling for that).

David Stockhoff — 24 Oct 2011, 17:21 · in reply to David Stockhoff

On 10/23/2011 9:56 AM, David Stockhoff wrote:

Going further: I could add a fourth "reason" for Severian to not mention things that he must know as Autarch---which is that in his acquired memories he knows so much that it would overpower any narrative. To tell his story he must push those memories aside and speak as himself.

Still, the Autarchs must not know everything about Severian, or else Severian himself would know everything about himself. This present further problems. Either Inire knows more than the Autarchs (quite likely) or Severian actually knows (rather than suspects or fears) the answers to all the things we puzzle over and deliberately hides them. Fine. But then we must believe he hides them badly.

Looking through the text, I just realized that one of the first things Sev does upon gaining the old Autarch's memories is to go question Ouen with very specific questions.

So, just to answer myself (I'm sure everyone else is way ahead of me here), either the Autarch DID know the identity of Severian's mother and passed it to Sev, indicating that the Autarch was in on the plot (or knew its characters) ...

... or Sev just did a lot of thinking while he was alone in the mountains.

David Stockhoff — 24 Oct 2011, 17:25 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 10/24/2011 1:16 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

I believe it is the Old Autarch who tells Severian that Thecla was chosen

for her loyalty to Vodalus as a means to bind his followers more tightly to him. I tend to think Vodalus as an expendable pawn of higher powers (easily replaced by Agia with the help of...Hethor) who doesn't really know that the true importance of his dinner choices (and all else that he does) relates to Severian as a nascent New Sun

Here's a thought.

Old Autarch + Inire vs Vodalus + Inire

New Autarch + Inire vs Agia and Hethor

(1) The Vodalarii no longer need Inire's personal attention now that Sev is here

(2) Hethor is a lesser Inire, as Agia is a lesser Vodalus.

António Pedro Marques — 24 Oct 2011, 17:42 · in reply to David Stockhoff

David Stockhoff wrote (24-10-2011 18:25):

On 10/24/2011 1:16 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

I believe it is the Old Autarch who tells Severian that Thecla was chosen for her loyalty to Vodalus as a means to bind his followers more tightly to him. I tend to think Vodalus as an expendable pawn of higher powers (easily replaced by Agia with the help of...Hethor) who doesn't really know that the true importance of his dinner choices (and all else that he does) relates to Severian as a nascent New Sun

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(2) Hethor is a lesser Inire, as Agia is a lesser Vodalus.

Why isn't Hethor the same individual as Inire?

David Stockhoff — 24 Oct 2011, 18:00 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

On 10/24/2011 1:09 PM, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:

David Stockhoff wrote:

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:

OK, a couple of people have taken to referring to the Old Autarch as Appian. Is there any actual evidence for this? I have the impression that Appian is a more historical figure.

Lexicon Urthus says so, but I don't recall the revealing passage. Appian was apprentice to the honey steward Paeon. He ruled for a long time, being young, according to LU.

With all due respect to Michael Andre-Driussi, I do not take LU as an authority, just a useful reference. If someone has their copy handy, can you cite the passage in question?

Here's one:

"I was a servant once . . . That is why they hate me" (IV, chap. 25, 176).

David Stockhoff — 24 Oct 2011, 18:02 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

On 10/24/2011 1:42 PM, António Pedro Marques wrote:

David Stockhoff wrote (24-10-2011 18:25):

On 10/24/2011 1:16 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

I believe it is the Old Autarch who tells Severian that Thecla was chosen for her loyalty to Vodalus as a means to bind his followers more tightly to him. I tend to think Vodalus as an expendable pawn of higher powers (easily replaced by Agia with the help of...Hethor) who doesn't really know that the true importance of his dinner choices (and all else that he does) relates to Severian as a nascent New Sun

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Why isn't Hethor the same individual as Inire?

None of this is meant to suggest that he is not.

However, I don't think he is and have made several comments to that effect over a few days.

Never mind that it would make Inire either very busy or very numerous. or both.

Sergei SOLOVIEV — 24 Oct 2011, 18:03 · in reply to David Stockhoff

I like more this view - it makes sense if you remember how often Hethor is referred to as an "old sailor", how he is afraid to be recognized by Jonas. There are small details that speak a lot about his past on the spaceships (his "khaibit" or whatever that was killed by other crew). He has an access to high technology (his "mirrors") but on lesser level than Inire.

It makes no sense to build his human biography by such bits and scrapes if in fact he would be Inire.

I think that Wolfe likes a lot to make the different personages to mirror each other in some imperfect way. There is a sort of hierarchy (more imperfect - less imperfect). It fits very well the (Christian) concept that Evil is a distorted Good. For example, the boatman loves dead Dorcas. Hethor has no love, and is more deeply mired in evil. Still, he is strongly attracted by Agia, and maybe not completely lost. Anyway, much worse cases are possible.

Thea and Thecla are similar in some respects and different in others.

Could not be the "way of air" just using flyers?

Sergei

David Stockhoff wrote:

On 10/24/2011 1:16 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

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Sergei SOLOVIEV — 24 Oct 2011, 18:13 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

António Pedro Marques wrote:

David Stockhoff wrote (24-10-2011 18:25):

On 10/24/2011 1:16 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

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David Stockhoff — 24 Oct 2011, 18:24 · in reply to Sergei SOLOVIEV

On 10/24/2011 2:03 PM, Sergei SOLOVIEV wrote:

I think that Wolfe likes a lot to make the different personages to mirror each

other in some imperfect way. There is a sort of hierarchy (more imperfect -

less imperfect). It fits very well the (Christian) concept that Evil is a distorted Good.

For example, the boatman loves dead Dorcas. Hethor has no love, and is more deeply mired in evil. Still, he is strongly attracted by Agia,

and maybe not completely lost. Anyway, much worse cases are possible.

Thea and Thecla are similar in some respects and different in others.

Definitely. This technique was use by none other than Shakespeare. Pick up any play, pick a character, and start looking for a counterpart. He/she will be there somewhere, even if not entirely an equal. Every Prince has a bastard brother.

Could not be the "way of air" just using flyers?

Severian does ride one to/from Typhon's Citadel, making such a Path more than figurative.

António Pedro Marques — 24 Oct 2011, 18:26 · in reply to Sergei SOLOVIEV

Sergei SOLOVIEV wrote (24-10-2011 19:13):

Ant?nio Pedro Marques wrote:

David Stockhoff wrote (24-10-2011 18:25):

On 10/24/2011 1:16 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

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Why isn't Hethor the same individual as Inire?

If he is the same, why waste all these efforts making his biography as a "sailor" (on spaceships)? Invent all his small hates, sadism etc? Make him very human in this? Would Wolfe waste his time as an author?

Notice that's precisely what's missing from FI's biography.

How come, waste? I didn't ask whether H's curriculum was fictive. Why can't it be FI's backstory?

By the way, no human emotions are attributed to any of the explicitly alien personages in BoTNS. Would not making this in case of Hethor break the rule (IF he is Inire, who is an alien).

Maybe. And do we know for certain FI is an alien?

This is an example of
what I call conceptual inconsistency of many theories I see at this list.

What is? Inconsistent with what, if it's an isolated datum? What theory?

What with people looking for FI in various places, I merely wondered why not Hethor.

David Stockhoff — 24 Oct 2011, 18:26 · in reply to Sergei SOLOVIEV

On 10/24/2011 2:13 PM, Sergei SOLOVIEV wrote:
By the way, no human emotions are attributed to any of the explicitly alien personages in BoTNS. Would not making this in case of Hethor break the rule (IF he is Inire, who is an alien).

Excellent point. I believe we can all agree on these facts.

António Pedro Marques — 24 Oct 2011, 18:35 · in reply to David Stockhoff

David Stockhoff wrote (24-10-2011 19:26):

On 10/24/2011 2:13 PM, Sergei SOLOVIEV wrote:
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Excellent point. I believe we can all agree on these facts.

Well, if Hethor having human emotions rules out his being FI, then everyone else has been ruled out of being FI as well, isn't it?

Sergei SOLOVIEV — 24 Oct 2011, 18:46 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

I think it is mentioned several times in BoTNS that FI is an alien. Of course you need not trust there "rumours" inside the book.

Each time we meet Hethor his character is immediately recognizable.
All that is told about the behaviour and manners of FI (and we may include "The Cat") is quite different. How the idea that they are the same helps the story?

Sergei

António Pedro Marques wrote:
Sergei SOLOVIEV wrote (24-10-2011 19:13):
António Pedro Marques wrote:
David Stockhoff wrote (24-10-2011 18:25):
On 10/24/2011 1:16 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

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(2) Hethor is a lesser Inire, as Agia is a lesser Vodalus.

Why isn't Hethor the same individual as Inire?

If he is the same, why waste all these efforts making his biography as a "sailor" (on spaceships)? Invent all his small hates, sadism etc? Make him very human in this? Would Wolfe waste his time as an author?

Notice that's precisely what's missing from FI's biography.

How come, waste? I didn't ask whether H's curriculum was fictive. Why can't it be FI's backstory?

By the way, no human emotions are attributed to any of the explicitly alien personages in BoTNS. Would not making this in case of Hethor break the rule (IF he is Inire, who is an alien).

Maybe. And do we know for certain FI is an alien?

This is an example of what I call conceptual inconsistency of many theories I see at this list.

What is? Inconsistent with what, if it's an isolated datum? What theory?

What with people looking for FI in various places, I merely wondered why not Hethor.

David Stockhoff — 24 Oct 2011, 18:47 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

On 10/24/2011 2:35 PM, António Pedro Marques wrote:
David Stockhoff wrote (24-10-2011 19:26):

On 10/24/2011 2:13 PM, Sergei SOLOVIEV wrote:

By the way, no human emotions are attributed to any of the explicitly alien personages in BoTNS. Would not making this in case of Hethor break the rule (IF he is Inire, who is an alien).

Excellent point. I believe we can all agree on these facts.

Well, if Hethor having human emotions rules out his being FI, then everyone else has been ruled out of being FI as well, isn't it?

I'm not sure of the whole list of suspects, but I agree that that probably follows. Cas's husband, Fechin, Hethor.

Sergei SOLOVIEV — 24 Oct 2011, 18:48 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

Why? We know nothing about the emotions of the shaman, for example.

Sergei

António Pedro Marques wrote:

David Stockhoff wrote (24-10-2011 19:26):

On 10/24/2011 2:13 PM, Sergei SOLOVIEV wrote:

By the way, no human emotions are attributed to any of the explicitly alien personages in BoTNS. Would not making this in case of Hethor break the rule (IF he is Inire, who is an alien).

Excellent point. I believe we can all agree on these facts.

Well, if Hethor having human emotions rules out his being FI, then everyone else has been ruled out of being FI as well, isn't it?

Lee Berman — 24 Oct 2011, 18:56 · follows Sergei SOLOVIEV

Sergei Soloviev: Could not be the "way of air" just using flyers?

No, the Path of Air (Road of Air in Dr. Talos' play) is a specific area of the House Absolute. It is described as a....the architectural term escapes me now...a sort of breezeway bordered by archways. Severian views the woman who may be his mother from one of the archways both in the play and in his own story at the end of UotNS.

I like more this view - it makes sense if you remember how often Hethor is referred to as an "old sailor", how he is afraid to be recognized by Jonas. There are small details that speak a lot about his past on the spaceships (his "khaibit" or whatever that was killed by other crew). He has an access to high technology (his "mirrors") but on lesser level than Inire.

Yes, all of Hethor's stories (even Severian's dreams of him) are surely important (wolfe isn't just throwing surreal meaningless fluff at us, is he? Severian sees people/beings who resemble both Jonas and Hethor on Tzadkiel's ship. Why is Hethor's mirror mastery less than Father Inire's? Hethor produces some pretty impressive monsters. All we see Inire do is produce a silver fish. Jonas uses the mirrors to get back..where? Where else do the clues point to but Tzadkiel's ship?

It makes no sense to build his human biography by such bits and scrapes if in fact he would be Inire.

Actually it makes a lot of sense. Because we completely lack any biography for Father Inire. This fills in that gap. Is Hethor really so inferior to Father Inire?

Inire has been vizier and the power behind the throne of the Commonwealth for a thousand years. But Hethor's stories suggest he was a sailor, a cook, the bosun, First Mate on Tzadkiel's ship. Then he participated in a mutiny, lost his poppet, his paracoita sex doll, and was banished from the Ship. (to Urth I think, to become Father Inire).I'm not sure

second-in-command to Tzadkiel is a lesser post than vizier to the Commonwealth. Perhaps the opposite.

Both Hethor and Inire seem to share a fascination for young women, however.

A fascination shared by Biblical demons. And of course Hethor's relationship to Tzadkiel mirrors that of Lucifer to God. And, as I've suggested previously, there are clues that identify Father Inire as a fallen angel/hierodule. Who was it who said he'd rather reign in hell than serve in heaven?

António Pedro Marques — 24 Oct 2011, 18:58 · in reply to Sergei SOLOVIEV

Sergei SOLOVIEV wrote (24-10-2011 19:46):

I think it is mentioned several times in BoTNS that FI is an alien. Of course you need not trust there "rumours" inside the book.

I recall one such explicit mention of it (something about his longevity being abnormal compared to 'his kind').

Each time we meet Hethor his character is immediately recognizable. All that is told about the behaviour and manners of FI (and we may include "The Cat") is quite different. How the idea that they are the same helps the story?

How does it help it any less than any of the other identifications?

António Pedro Marques wrote:

Sergei SOLOVIEV wrote (24-10-2011 19:13):

António Pedro Marques wrote:

David Stockhoff wrote (24-10-2011 18:25):

On 10/24/2011 1:16 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

I believe it is the Old Autarch who tells Severian that Thecla was chosen for her loyalty to Vodalus as a means to bind his followers more tightly to him. I tend to think Vodalus as an expendable pawn of higher powers (easily replaced by Agia with the help of...Hethor) who doesn't really know that the true importance of his dinner choices (and all else that he does) relates to Severian as a nascent New Sun

Here's a thought.

Old Autarch + Inire vs Vodalus + Inire

New Autarch + Inire vs Agia and Hethor

(1) The Vodalarii no longer need Inire's personal attention now that Sev is here

(2) Hethor is a lesser Inire, as Agia is a lesser Vodalus.

Why isn't Hethor the same individual as Inire?

If he is the same, why waste all these efforts making his biography as a "sailor" (on spaceships)? Invent all his small hates, sadism etc? Make him very human in this? Would Wolfe waste his time as an author?

Notice that's precisely what's missing from FI's biography.

How come, waste? I didn't ask whether H's curriculum was fictive. Why can't it be FI's backstory?

By the way, no human emotions are attributed to any of the explicitly alien personages in BoTNS. Would not making this in case of Hethor break the rule (IF he is Inire, who is an alien).

Maybe. And do we know for certain FI is an alien?

This is an example of what I call conceptual inconsistency of many theories I see at this list.

What is? Inconsistent with what, if it's an isolated datum? What theory?

What with people looking for FI in various places, I merely wondered why not Hethor.

Gerry Quinn — 24 Oct 2011, 18:59 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

From: António Pedro Marques

Sergei SOLOVIEV wrote (24-10-2011 19:13):

By the way, no human emotions are attributed to any of the explicitly alien personages in BoTNS. Would not making this in case of Hethor break the rule (IF he is Inire, who is an alien).

Inire does have some characteristic habits and behaviours, though — he's not utterly inhuman in the emotional sense. And Odilo in "The Cat" certainly believes Inire has emotions that he (Odilo) understands

Maybe. And do we know for certain FI is an alien?

If I remember rightly, Severian refers to him living much longer than "others of his short lived kind", suggesting that Severian considers him to be an anomalously long-lived Hierodule. He also says he "has made his home here" meaning Urth. Maybe he's a full Hiero, or at any rate something more than the average Hierodule?

- Gerry Quinn

Lee Berman — 24 Oct 2011, 19:11 · follows Gerry Quinn

Sergei Soloviev: I think it is mentioned several times in BoTNS that FI is an alien.

Oh, that actually makes me kind of sad. If robots (not just Jonas but also Sidero) can have human emotions, why can't aliens? Especially, as some have suggested, these aliens are evolved forms of humans who went out into space many millennia ago.

Of course you need not trust there "rumours" inside the book.

Can't you? Remember these are not really "rumours" just as the dreams in Wolfe's books are not really dreams. They are consciously created story elements with a purpose.

Each time we meet Hethor his character is immediately recognizable.

I think it is important to remember that in all the appearances of Hethor

(save one) he is fawning and sycophantic toward Severian, wishing to serve him and calling him Master. He seems especially adoring of Severian's torturer skills. (the only exception is toward the end of CotA in his final appearance where he simply appears clutching Agia's breasts). I think there is a lot more to this Hethor character than you are giving him credit for.

Perhaps we should remember that Tzadkiel claims that he was, in a previous creation, an acolyte of Severian's. Doesn't that suggest that we should be able to spot Tzadkiel as a worshipper of Severian earlier in the story? Or later if he is an acolyte of Severian as Conciliator. Actually, I think he can be found in both places.

Was it Ryan who asked, "how deep does this rabbit hole really go?"

Lee Berman — 24 Oct 2011, 19:26 · follows Lee Berman

Gerry Quinn: If I remember rightly, Severian refers to him living much longer than "others of his short lived kind", suggesting that Severian considers him to be an anomalously long-lived Hierodule.

Yes, he seems to have sacrificed superhuman youth, beauty and height for long life. Likewise for The Cumaean.

He also says he "has made his home here" meaning Urth.

Yes. In contrast to the other, nice-looking hierodules who make appearances on Urth but would rather hover their ship over Baldanders' castle rather than find Urthly lodgings.

Maybe he's a full Hiero, or at any rate something more than the average Hierodule?

Something less, I think. But when you've fallen from heaven, what else are you going to do but hang out on earth and use what power you've got to influence things to be the way you prefer them to be. Plenty of cuties on earth too- Europa, Semele, Pandora, Lilith, Dorcas, Agia.. Heh, I think there was a movie called "Earth Women are Easy".

David Stockhoff — 24 Oct 2011, 19:31 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 10/24/2011 2:56 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

Actually it makes a lot of sense. Because we completely lack any biography for Father Inire. This fills in that gap. Is Hethor really so inferior to Father Inire?

Inire has been vizier and the power behind the throne of the Commonwealth for a thousand years. But Hethor's stories suggest he was a sailor, a cook, the bosun, First Mate on Tzadkiel's ship. Then he participated in a mutiny, lost his poppet, his paracoita sex doll, and was banished from the Ship. (to Urth I think, to become Father Inire). I'm not sure second-in-command to Tzadkiel is a lesser post than vizier to the Commonwealth. Perhaps the opposite.

By that very resume, yes, Hethor seems fairly ineffective to me, compared with Inire. Hethor is the very type of a sailor who'll take any job.

However, you have a point about being First Mate on Tzadkiel's ship, if that's the same ship that

banished him. That would make him a kind of Lucifer.

David Stockhoff — 24 Oct 2011, 19:33 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 10/24/2011 3:11 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

Perhaps we should remember that Tzadkiel claims that he was, in a previous creation, an acolyte of Severian's. Doesn't that suggest that we should be able to spot Tzadkiel as a worshipper of Severian earlier in the story? Or later if he is an acolyte of Severian as Conciliator. Actually, I think he can be found in both places.

If anything, that suggests to me that Tzadkiel used to be Hethor.

antonio at gmail.com — 24 Oct 2011, 19:43 · in reply to Lee Berman

No dia 2011/10/24, ?s 19:56, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com> escreveu:

Sergei:

It makes no sense to build his human biography by such bits and scrapes
if in fact he would be Inire.

Actually it makes a lot of sense. Because we completely lack any biography
for Father Inire. This fills in that gap.

Precisely.

Both Hethor and Inire seem to share a fascination for young women, however.

Not only that - for some reason, Hethor and FI strike me as creepy in a sexual way more than any other characters, and this in a book filled with sexual creepiness.

David Stockhoff — 24 Oct 2011, 19:48 · in reply to antonio at gmail.com

On 10/24/2011 3:43 PM, antonio at gmail.com wrote:

Actually it makes a lot of sense. Because we completely lack any biography for Father Inire. This fills in that gap.

I thought Inire's resume was quite different and went back 1000 years. So does Hethor's, I guess, with time dilation, but has he been adviser to Autarchs as well?

Gerry Quinn — 24 Oct 2011, 20:08 · in reply to David Stockhoff

From: David Stockhoff

However, you have a point about being First Mate on Tzadkiel's ship, if that's the same ship that banished him. That would make him a kind of Lucifer.

As far as I remember, the only ship Hethor mentions serving on was called the Quasar. It seems that, like Jonas, he came from Urth, and relatively near our own time. Agia recalls:

"He came to sell his clothes, and they were the kind worn on the old ships that sailed beyond the world's rim long ago, and they weren't costumes or forgeries or even tomb-tender old garments that had lain for centuries in the dark, but clothes not far from new. He said his ships — all those ships ? became lost in the blackness between the suns, where the years do not turn. Lost so that even Time cannot find them. [...] His name isn't really Hethor, by the way. He says it's a much

older one, that hardly anyone has heard of now."

- Gerry Quinn

Lee Berman — 24 Oct 2011, 20:11 · follows Gerry Quinn

David Stockhoff- By that very resume, yes, Hethor seems fairly ineffective to me, compared with Inire. Hethor is the very type of a sailor who'll take any job. However, you have a point about being First Mate on Tzadkiel's ship, if that's the same ship that banished him. That would make him a kind of Lucifer.

I take Hethor's rising status of ship's crew jobs as a sign of his ambition. surely an attribute also found in Lucifer.

Perhaps we should remember that Tzadkiel claims that he was, in a previous creation, an acolyte of Severian's. Doesn't that suggest that we should be able to spot Tzadkiel as a worshipper of Severian earlier in the story? Or later if he is an acolyte of Severian as Conciliator. Actually, I think he can be found in both places.

David: If anything, that suggests to me that Tzadkiel used to be Hethor.

Well yes. that's what I meant. But "used to be" invokes a time sequence and cause and effect which may not be applicable to beings such as these. But yes, perhaps Hethor/Inire are linked to Tzadkiel as as Lucifer is an aspect of his creator, God.

Going this far feels pretty freaky, even for me. But it may tie into Wolfe's philosophy that good and evil or dark and light or pagan and Christian or whatever dichotomy you prefer, both sides are the arms of God and serve His will with every action (willingly or not).

Both Hethor and Inire seem to share a fascination for young women, however.

Antonio Pedro Marques: Not only that - for some reason, Hethor and FI strike me as creepy in a sexual way more than any other characters, and this in a book filled with sexual creepiness.

Yes. For me also. Supporting this theme is the likelihood (in my estimation) that Father Inire's name is derived from Inuus, the epithet of Faunus which reflects his sexual nature.

Of course Faunus is stereotypically known for chasing and ravishing young nymphs. But the Inuus epithet reflects a propensity for intercourse with animals. I'm not sure if the mating of a demi-god and human (or alien and human) might qualify as a form of bestiality. But maybe Wolfe thought of this.

Lee Berman — 24 Oct 2011, 20:19 · follows Lee Berman

Gerry Quinn: As far as I remember, the only ship Hethor mentions serving on was called the Quasar.

Yes, as I mentioned in a recent post, it was a fairly common 70's- 80's SF trope for the passageway between universes to be a black hole on one side and a quasar (white fountain) on the other. An appropriate name name for Tzadkiel's ship, no?

It seems that, like Jonas, he came from Urth, and relatively near our own time.

If I remember correctly, Jonas says he got his knowledge of Earth (Lewis Carroll books, Theseus myths) from reading books on his ship. (a ship where "our own time" doesn't have a lot of meaning)

Agia: "His name isn't really Hethor, by the way. He says it's a much older one, that hardly anyone has heard of now."

"Pleased to meet you. Hope you guessed my name"

Sympathy For The Devil- Rolling Stones

David Stockhoff — 24 Oct 2011, 20:26 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

On 10/24/2011 4:08 PM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: David Stockhoff <mailto:dstockhoff at verizon.net>

*> *However, you have a point about being First Mate on Tzadkiel's ship, if

*> *

that's the same ship that banished him. That would make him a kind of

*> *

Lucifer.

As far as I remember, the only ship Hethor mentions serving on was called the Quasar.

It seems that, like Jonas, he came from Urth, and relatively near our own time. Agia recalls:

"He came to sell his clothes, and they were the kind worn on the old ships that sailed beyond the world's rim long ago, and they weren't costumes or forgeries or even tomb-tender old garments that had lain for centuries in the dark, but clothes not far from new. He said his ships — all those ships

? became lost in the blackness between the suns, where the years do not turn.

Lost so that even Time cannot find them.

[..]

His name isn't really Hethor, by the way. He says it's a much older one, that

hardly anyone has heard of now."

I didn't think he held that post for Tzadkiel. However, I wish we knew his old name.

Gene, I bet.

I wonder why all his ships were lost. How did he escape their fate?

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 24 Oct 2011, 20:36 · in reply to Lee Berman

Lee Berman wrote:

But yes, perhaps Hethor/Inire are linked to Tzadkiel as as Lucifer is an aspect of his creator, God.

No.

No, no, no, no, nonononononoNO.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Gerry Quinn — 24 Oct 2011, 20:54 · in reply to Lee Berman

From: Lee Berman

Gerry Quinn:

As far as I remember, the only ship Hethor mentions serving on was called the Quasar.

Yes, as I mentioned in a recent post, it was a fairly common 70's- 80's SF trope for the passageway between universes to be a black hole on one side and a quasar (white fountain) on the other. An appropriate name for Tzadkiel's ship, no?

Tzadkiel's ship is, IIRC, called "The Ship" or perhaps Tzadkiel. But anyway it's not all that appropriate, really. Tzadkiel's ship does not appear as a white fountain when it travels between universes.

It seems that, like Jonas, he came from Urth, and relatively near our own time.

If I remember correctly, Jonas says he got his knowledge of Earth (Lewis Carroll books, Theseus myths) from reading books on his ship. (a ship where "our own time" doesn't have a lot of meaning)

But he came from much closer to our time. He recognises names from that era in the Antechamber. And we learn that Hethor had a similarly old-fashioned name.

Agia: "His name isn't really Hethor, by the way. He says it's a much older one, that hardly anyone has heard of now."

"Pleased to meet you. Hope you guessed my name"

Hethor isn't much of a Lucifer.

And don't forget the clothes he sold in Agia's shop. They weren't Hiero clothes — they were ancient Urth clothes, but preserved by relativistic time dilation. Hethor's ship, like that of Jonas, like all or most of those ancient ships, got lost in time and wound up in the distant future of Urth.

Now I don't rule out Hethor serving on Tzadkiel's ship at some point, and he certainly sailed on many-masted ships with mirror sails. But we don't have any information about his career, really, except that he retired sans pension, sans paracoita.

- Gerry Quinn

António Pedro Marques — 24 Oct 2011, 21:10 · in reply to David Stockhoff

David Stockhoff wrote (24-10-2011 20:48):

On 10/24/2011 3:43 PM, entonio at gmail.com wrote:

Actually it makes a lot of sense. Because we completely lack any biography for Father Inire. This fills in that gap.

I didn't write that, Lee did, though I had said something to the same effect in response to Sergei.

I thought Inire's resume was quite different and went back 1000 years. So does Hethor's, I guess, with time dilation, but has he been adviser to Autarchs as well?

He may have been on the ships before he became advisor. After all, advisors aren't supposed to start out as advisors. But Ceryx is also a good candidate for

proto-Inire. But iirc Ceryx is old.

Thematically, I think there is no need to have both a Hethor and an Inire. That of course doesn't mean there is a need to have a single character.

António Pedro Marques — 24 Oct 2011, 21:11 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn wrote (24-10-2011 21:54):

Now I don't rule out Hethor serving on Tzadkiel's ship at some point, and he certainly sailed on many-masted ships with mirror sails. But we don't have any information about his career, really, except that he retired sans pension, sans paracoita.

And was never the same afterwards!

Andrew Mason — 24 Oct 2011, 21:57 · follows António Pedro Marques

Antonio Pedro Marquez wrote:

lirc, it was put to rest that the Old Autarch was *not* the Appian mentioned in the text; however, 'Appian' has become such a traditional name for him, that as a matter of List Lore I think it can prevail (the name, not the identification - so we have two Appians, the one in the text and the Old Autarch). *lirc*.

Can the custom of calling the sea-monsters 'Megatherians' be sanctified in the same way?

António Pedro Marques — 24 Oct 2011, 22:05 · in reply to Andrew Mason

Andrew Mason wrote (24-10-2011 22:57):

Antonio Pedro Marquez wrote:

lirc, it was put to rest that the Old Autarch was *not* the Appian mentioned in the text; however, 'Appian' has become such a traditional name for him, that as a matter of List Lore I think it can prevail (the name, not the identification - so we have two Appians, the one in the text and the Old Autarch). *lirc*.

Can the custom of calling the sea-monsters 'Megatherians' be sanctified in the same way?

For it to be the same way, it would have to have been settled that the 17 Great Megatherians were not the sea-monsters.

Jeff Wilson — 24 Oct 2011, 22:08 · in reply to Andrew Mason

On Mon, October 24, 2011 16:57, Andrew Mason wrote:

Antonio Pedro Marquez wrote:

lirc, it was put to rest that the Old Autarch was *not* the Appian mentioned in the text; however, 'Appian' has become such a traditional name for him, that as a matter of List Lore I think it can prevail (the name, not the identification - so we have two Appians, the one in the text and the Old Autarch). *lirc*.

When was the old Autarch de-Appianed? I missed that.

Can the custom of calling the sea-monsters 'Megatherians' be sanctified in the same way?

Sure, since they are megatherians, though perhaps not the same people as depicted in *Lives of the Seventeen Megatherians*.

Jeff Wilson - < jwilson at clueland.com >
A&M Texarkana Computational Intelligence Lab
< http://www.tamut.edu/cil >

Lee Berman — 25 Oct 2011, 02:43 · follows Jeff Wilson

Can the custom of calling the sea-monsters 'Megatherians' be sanctified in the same way?

Jeff Wilson: Sure, since they are megatherians, though perhaps not the same people as depicted in *Lives of the Seventeen Megatherians*.

Well, yes, megatherian means "great beast" and Abaia is sometimes referred to as Great Beast Abaia. It seems like one of the easier puzzles to solve.

I don't understand why the book can't be about the sea monsters though. Don't they have lives?

Jeff if you are implying that our myths and legends of ancient gods and monsters were probably inspired by various real kings and mean guys, I agree. However I think Wolfe, while also sort of agreeing, makes his fiction a little more blurred on the lines of myth and reality.

I REALLY think Wolfe uses an animalistic nature to mark the demonic from the angelic (as the Bible also does). We have the great beasts in the ocean, we have Inire and his monkey nature and The Cumaeen and her snakey nature. This is in contrast to Barbatus and Famulimus who wear horrible animal masks but only to disguise their superhuman beauty.

You have to wonder about Tzadkiel though. He displays animalistic trends (meaning the monkey-like Zak, his butterfly wings and the mention of his "larvae"). But he/she also possesses superhuman beauty. An all-in-one god? Angel and demon? Hm.....

David Stockhoff — 25 Oct 2011, 02:52 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 10/24/2011 10:43 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

I REALLY think Wolfe uses an animalistic nature to mark the demonic from the angelic (as the Bible also does). We have the great beasts in the ocean, we have Inire and his monkey nature and The Cumaeen and her snakey nature. This is in contrast to Barbatus and Famulimus who wear horrible animal masks but only to disguise their superhuman beauty.

Perhaps more "daemonic."

You have to wonder about Tzadkiel though. He displays animalistic trends (meaning the monkey-like Zak, his butterfly wings and the mention of his "larvae"). But he/she also possesses superhuman beauty.
An all-in-one god? Angel and demon? Hm.....

IIRC, in Wizard Knight there is an intimation that beyond the lower circles lie the higher circles---that together they form a great circle. And so the low (animals) is mixed with the high (Most High).

Jeff Wilson — 25 Oct 2011, 07:57 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 10/24/2011 9:43 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

I don't understand why the book can't be about the sea monsters though. Don't they have lives?

Jeff if you are implying that our myths and legends of ancient gods and monsters were probably inspired by various real kings and mean guys, I agree. However I think Wolfe, while also sort of agreeing, makes his fiction a little more blurred on the lines of myth and reality.

No, that's right. But since L17M is possibly a book of similar age as the monstrous presences, it's not a sure thing they were sufficiently established in legend at the time of its writing (or more likely, its compilation) to be included. Also, sea monsters are not the sort of thing one immediately thinks of as having a biography-worthy life, and it is only in contemplation of the cosmic truths revealed by the Yesodis directly and via Aquastor Malrubius that we the readers know that they probably do because they are part human.

But suppose the producers of the L17M book really did intend it to include things like the biography of Abaia, how on Urth could they possibly have anything like accurate information? You could more reasonably expect some ancient treatment of the notional life of the Loch Ness Monster was adapted by replacing Nessie with "Abaia" and Loch Ness with "the sea east of Nessus".

I've recently mentioned that we have something like this in our own ancient history: the Caligula who offed himself at the end of a sodomy-soaked snuff ballet can't be the same Caligula recorded as having been assassinated by the Praetorian guard, for obvious reasons. Both stories are attributed to the same person of whom we have mostly objective reasons to believe existed, but one or neither actually was his life.

Of course, in a time-travel book, we really can mix and match myth and reality...

I REALLY think Wolfe uses an animalistic nature to mark the demonic from the angelic

(as the Bible also does).

Er, no. Both sides display animal features at times, particularly notable are the cherubim who support the throne of G-d and have lion, ox, and eagle heads as well as human.

You have to wonder about Tzadkiel though. He displays animalistic trends (meaning

the monkey-like Zak, his butterfly wings and the mention of his "larvae). But he/she

also possesses superhuman beauty. An all-in-one god? Angel and demon? Hm.....

He says he retains the original form of the stock from which his race was made by the vanished Hieros in their likeness. I think this is a comment on man and man's image of himself and his assumed place in the universe, in a similar vein as "What a piece of work is man..."

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

António Pedro Marques — 25 Oct 2011, 08:59 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

I'm reminded of 'I, Cthulhu'.

Sergei SOLOVIEV — 25 Oct 2011, 11:35 · in reply to Lee Berman

Lee, you comment something I didn't say. I didn't discuss whether an alien can or can not have human emotions. I said that in the BoTNS and UoTNS (in the text!) no discernible human emotions are attributed to the personages who are presented as aliens - first of all, Ossipago, Barbatus ... (who are "explicitly" presented as aliens), but also to sea monsters, to walking statues, to Cumaeans - and to Inire, and Tzadkiel - (in its version of Zak as well) - and Apheta -

To the contrary, the emotions of Hethor are aplenty, easily placed by Severian (and easily met in real life), the same in case of boatman and even Fechin (through the story of Casdoe's father). Jonas is a "chem", so, in the context of Wolfe's books, also rather human.

This difference (based on the text, not on our own ideas about aliens) may be used as argument against the theories trying to identify Inire with others.

(continued below)

Lee Berman wrote:

Sergei Soloviev: I think it is mentioned several times in BoTNS that FI is an alien.

Oh, that actually makes me kind of sad. If robots (not just Jonas but also Sidero) can have human emotions, why can't aliens? Especially, as some have suggested, these aliens are evolved forms of humans who went out into space many millennia ago.

Of course you need not trust there "rumours" inside the book.

Can't you? Remember these are not really "rumours" just as the dreams in Wolfe's books are not really dreams. They are consciously created story elements with a purpose.

It was ironic.

Each time we meet Hethor his character is immediately recognizable.

I think it is important to remember that in all the appearances of Hethor (save one) he is fawning and sycophantic toward Severian, wishing to serve him and calling him Master. He seems especially adoring of Severian's torturer skills. (the only exception is toward the end of CotA in his final appearance where he simply appears clutching Agia's breasts). I think there is a lot more to this Hethor character than you are giving him credit for.

Perhaps we should remember that Tzadkiel claims that he was, in a previous creation, an acolyte of Severian's. Doesn't that suggest that we should be able to spot Tzadkiel as a worshipper of Severian earlier in the story? Or later if he is an acolyte of Severian as Conciliator. Actually, I think he can be found in both places.

Was it Ryan who asked, "how deep does this rabbit hole really go?"

All the appearances of Hethor - fawning combined with sadism - it is a psychological (or psychopathic) type existing in real life. Many pages of Wolfe can be easily considered as a part of a realistic story. Trying to identify him with an alien reduces his interest as a human type. For

me, the Wolfe's story is very rich and interesting also by its diversity. Diversity of human types as opposed to diversity of aliens, monsters etc. The theories I don't like reduce this diversity. Your theories become richer - but the story poorer. Just so.

By the way, the "old name" corresponding to Hethor I think is just "Hector". I.e. - reference to Earth and its culture.

Sergei

David Stockhoff — 25 Oct 2011, 12:26 · in reply to Sergei SOLOVIEV

On 10/25/2011 7:35 AM, Sergei SOLOVIEV wrote:

By the way, the "old name" corresponding to Hethor I think is just "Hector".

I.e. - reference to Earth and its culture.

A VERY old name. I wonder if some attributes are shared

Lee Berman — 25 Oct 2011, 14:01 · follows David Stockhoff

David Stockhoff: IIRC, in Wizard Knight there is an intimation that beyond the lower circles lie the higher circles---that together they form a great circle.

And so the low (animals) is mixed with the high (Most High).

That does seem to describe Tzadkiel. The first time we see him, he is a giantic, island- sized angel floating in space. The second time we see him, he is a shapeless, hairy blob. We then see him evolve through multiple stages, back to being a big angel, though never quite as big as an island.

I wonder if there is a version of Tzadkiel even bigger than an island? Well, no point in that for the purpose of the story. Abaia is as big as a mountain and mountains can be a smaller part of islands, so I think Wolfe is using geographical terms to suggest the relationship between these two sorts of beings.

I REALLY think Wolfe uses an animalistic nature to mark the demonic from the angelic (as the Bible also does).

Jeff Wilson: Er, no. Both sides display animal features at times, particularly notable are the cherubim who support the throne of G-d and have lion, ox, and eagle heads as well as human.

Well, I could argue that demons are far more often and graphically described in animal terms but, you are right and I appreciate the correction. I guess even the Bible recognizes the essential kinship between angels and demons, even though they have chosen opposite sides.

He (Tzadkiel) says he retains the original form of the stock from which his race was made by the vanished Hieros in their likeness. I think this is a comment on man and man's image of himself and his assumed place in the universe.

Nice catch! That certainly agrees with the currently being discussed hypothesis that all the beings found in BotNS are originally of human stock. We may note that the Megatherian's large form is not human, but rather as beastie things.

Antonio Pedro Marques: I'm reminded of 'I, Cthulhu'.

Okay! Well Neil Gaiman acknowledges being greatly influenced by Gene Wolfe. And of course both were influenced by Lovecraft.

Sergei Soloviev: I said that in the BoTNS and UoTNS (in the text!) no discernible human emotions are attributed to the personages who are presented as aliens - first of all, Ossipago, Barbatus ... (who are "explicitly" presented as aliens), but also to sea monsters, to walking statues, to Cumaeans - and to Inire, and Tzadkiel - (in its version of Zak as well) - and Apheta -

I disagree. Well, I supposed the walking statues don't show any human emotion and we never see Abaia.

But all the others do seem to have feelings. In many ways they are more "normal" human-like in their

emotions than crazy Hethor. B and F are calm, serene people but I think emotion is shown when they bend

their knee to Severian. Also they always express joy to see him. Inire shows some emotion in the

episode with Domnina and his letter to Severian expresses great joviality. Tzadkiel shows less emotion

with each successive incarnation, but he/she still has some. And as Zak he demonstrates fear, anger and

affection. Apheta is pretty calm and serene like B and F but in contrast she finds Severian to be

disgusting and horrible. Quite beneath her, though she gains enough respect for him by the end of their

encounter to admit her disgust to him.

Jeff Wilson: by the way, the "old name" corresponding to Hethor I think is just "Hector".

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I don't get this. What resemblance does Hethor have to the Trojan Hector who was a brave and noble prince

and warrior? I don't think Wolfe would pick this name just for the heck of it.

(I did find one obscure reference to a Hethor who was sort of a demonic magistrate called an "Astra". his

term started around 50 B.C. and lasted 140 years. Not especially interesting though.

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Gerry Quinn — 25 Oct 2011, 14:26 · in reply to David Stockhoff

From: David Stockhoff

IIRC, in Wizard Knight there is an intimation that beyond the lower circles lie the higher circles---that together they form a great circle.

The Lowest God claimed that. I'm not convinced we are supposed to believe him.

- Gerry Quinn

James Wynn — 25 Oct 2011, 14:46 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

IIRC, the lowest god flees at the end of the conversation and we see his back, so we know he is a liar.

On 10/25/2011 9:26 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: David Stockhoff <mailto:dstockhoff at verizon.net>

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- Gerry Quinn

Marc Aramini — 25 Oct 2011, 15:24 · in reply to James Wynn

--- On Tue, 10/25/11, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:

From: James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com>

Subject: Re: (urth) Father Inire as Dionysus

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

Date: Tuesday, October 25, 2011, 7:46 AM

IIRC, the lowest god flees at the end of the conversation and we see his back, so we know he is a liar.

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From: David Stockhoff

IIRC, in Wizard Knight there is an intimation that beyond the lower circles lie the higher circles---that together they form a great circle.

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- Gerry Quinn

Yeah, what these guys said. The interesting thing about this is that for the Aelf, humans are the next level "gods", so Able is in effect worshipping something that should be serving him with his objectification of Disiri. Is this inversion bad or good? In another spiritual writer I would probably say it's clearly bad, like letting money or lust drive us, but it seems as if almost "any" noble idealization might be worthy in the absence of the Universal.

? Arthr needs to be a better ruler to improve life on the lower plains (the Aelf are serving debased and imperfect gods and this is reflected in their degeneration/unhappiness. That's kind of Able's message, his primary quest on that level of existence: Improving the lives of "subjects" by making a moral change in their god. (Sorry if I spelled those names wrong - been a long time since I looked at Wizard Knight). The low god would actually serve everything, the trickling down of all the bad characteristics, only "believing" that below him was the Most High as a way to make him seem equally important, when indeed he seems to be in the lowest position of creation. Interesting cosmology.

Thomas Bitterman — 25 Oct 2011, 15:37 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

On Mon, Oct 24, 2011 at 4:54 PM, Gerry Quinn <gerry at bindweed.com> wrote:
From: Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com>

Gerry Quinn:

Agia: "His name isn't really Hethor, by the way. He says it's a much older one, that hardly anyone has heard of now."

And don't forget the clothes he sold in Agia's shop. They weren't Hiero clothes — they were ancient Urth clothes, but preserved by relativistic time dilation. Hethor's ship, like that of Jonas, like all or most of those ancient ships, got lost in time and wound up in the distant future of Urth.

His name is Charlton Heston. The "ship that gets lost in time and returns to Earth in the future" is a Planet of the Apes allusion. Charlton is an old name that hardly anyone has heard of now. Hethor sounds enough like Heston without giving away the game. The clothes are a pun on his character's name: Colonel George Taylor. Colonel can designate the second-highest field rank, so first mate fits.

- Gerry Quinn

James Wynn — 25 Oct 2011, 16:13 · in reply to Marc Aramini

On 10/25/2011 10:24 AM, Marc Aramini wrote:

Yeah, what these guys said. The interesting thing about this is that for the Aelf, humans are the next level "gods", so Able is in effect worshipping something that should be serving him with his objectification of Disiri. Is this inversion bad or good? In another spiritual writer I would probably say it's clearly bad, like letting money or lust drive us, but it seems as if almost "any" noble idealization might be worthy in the absence of the Universal.

I believe this is the over-all "lesson" of The Wizard Knight.

At the time Able is resurrected in Parca's Cave, Humanity is in thrall to dragons from the level even below the Aelf. The Aelf in turn are also enslaved by a dragon...the brother of the dragons ruling over Humanity. Because of the degraded lot of humanity, the Aelf hold them in contempt. Everything is topsy-turvy.

Although, Wolfe is not generally an allegorical writer, this aspect IS very allegorical. Each level is a representation of human values. The people of Skai represent ideals related to Honor. The Aelf, at least as far as it touches on Able, represent ideals such as Romantic Love. The dragons that have conquered Aelfrice and Mythgarthr are lower ideals, such as Sexual Appetite and Greed. All these things, the story explains, are good in their place. But if the higher Ideals do not rule over them, they become perverse.

Thus, St. Michael rules over Skai's Valfather--summoning him and causing him to bow before him. He explains to Able that in order to be a knight, he must be able to do the same with Disiri (Romantic Love). If she rules over him she will be a plague, not a virtue--just as the dragons have become.

When Able IS able to summon her at the end, she is **raised** -- ennobled.

J.

Sergei SOLOVIEV — 25 Oct 2011, 16:13 · in reply to David Stockhoff

David Stockhoff wrote:

On 10/25/2011 7:35 AM, Sergei SOLOVIEV wrote:

By the way, the "old name" corresponding to Hethor I think is just "Hector".

I.e. - reference to Earth and its culture.

A VERY old name. I wonder if some attributes are shared

I don't think so - just one more element like "Kim" pointing to something very old.

Sergei

Sergei SOLOVIEV — 25 Oct 2011, 16:33 · in reply to Lee Berman

I disagree with your disagreement -

Sergei Soloviev: I said that in the BoTNS and UoTNS (in the text!) no discernible human emotions are attributed to the personages who are presented as aliens - first of all, Ossipago, Barbatus ... (who are "explicitly" presented as aliens), but also to sea monsters, to walking statues, to Cumaeans - and to Inire, and Tzadkiel - (in its version of Zak as well) - and Apheta -

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their knee to Severian. Also they always express joy to see him. Inire shows some emotion in the episode with Domnina and his letter to Severian expresses great joviality. Tzadkiel shows less emotion

with each successive incarnation, but he/she still has some. And as Zak he demonstrates fear, anger and

affection. Apheta is pretty calm and serene like B and F but in contrast she finds Severian to be disgusting and horrible. Quite beneath her, though she gains enough respect for him by the end of their

encounter to admit her disgust to him.

What you tell about their emotions are only guesses - like Odilo may guess something

about Inire. Very abstract, very approximative, like emotions of a picture on the wall,

because we need to interpret in some way facial expressions and behaviour. I disagree that psychopath Hethor is exceptional, I would say, many of us even met somebody like this, maybe to lesser degree. And Severian can place his emotions (and of other human personages) without difficulty.

Jeff Wilson: by the way, the "old name" corresponding to Hethor I think is just "Hector".

David Stockhoff I.e. - reference to Earth and its culture. A VERY old name. I wonder if some attributes are shared

I don't get this. What resemblance does Hethor have to the Trojan Hector who was a brave and noble prince

and warrior? I don't think Wolfe would pick this name just for the heck of it.

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term started around 50 B.C. and lasted 140 years. Not especially interesting though.

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I think you are trying to associate symbolic significance with every name in BoTNS. I think that (like "kimleesong") it is just reference to our time and our culture. Hector is sufficiently common name. Maybe there is also some irony. (Not very heroic he is, Hethor.)

Sergei

Sergei SOLOVIEV — 25 Oct 2011, 17:02 · in reply to Sergei SOLOVIEV

From "Seven sermons to the dead" by C. G. Jung (I've seen it in the appendix to Memories, Dreams, Reflections by C.G. Jung, Vintage Books, 1961.).

I cannot quote all, but I think it is important for the understanding of BoTNS and Wolfe ideas (at least as a context). The text is openly "gnostic". Jung writes it in the name of Basilide of Alexandria.

...

From Sermo III

Hard to know is the deity of Abraxas. Its power is the greatest, because man perceiveth it not. From the sun he draveth the summum bonum; from the devil the infimum malum; but from Abraxas LIFE, altogether indefinite, the mother of good and evil. ... The power of Abraxas is twofold; but ye see it not, because for your eyes the warring opposites of this power are extinguished. What the god-sun speaketh is life. What the devil speaketh is death. But Abraxas speaketh that hallowed and accursed word which is life and death at the same time. ... Everything that ye create with the god-sun giveth effective power to the devil. That is terrible Abraxas. It is the the mightiest creature, and in it the creature is afraid of itself. It is the manifest opposition of creature to the pleroma and its nothingness. ...

From Sermo IV

...

Each star is a god, and each space that a star filleth is a devil. But empty-fullness of the whole is the pleroma. The operation of the whole is Abraxas, to whom only the ineffective standeth opposed. Four is the number of principal gods, as four is the number of the world's measurements. One is the beginning, the god-sun. Two is Eros; for he bindeth twain together and outspreadeth himself in brightness. Three is the Tree of Life, for it filleth space with bodily forms. Four is the devil, for he openeth all that is closed. All that is formed of bodily nature doth he dissolve; he is the destroyer in whom everything is brought to nothing.

David Stockhoff — 25 Oct 2011, 17:02 · in reply to James Wynn

Ah, OK.

On 10/25/2011 10:46 AM, James Wynn wrote:

IIRC, the lowest god flees at the end of the conversation and we see his back, so we know he is a liar.

On 10/25/2011 9:26 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: David Stockhoff <mailto:dstockhoff at verizon.net>

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- Gerry Quinn

David Stockhoff — 25 Oct 2011, 17:06 · in reply to Sergei SOLOVIEV

On 10/25/2011 12:33 PM, Sergei SOLOVIEV wrote:

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I don't get this. What resemblance does Hethor have to the Trojan Hector who was a brave and noble prince and warrior? I don't think Wolfe would pick this name just for the heck of it.

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Sergei

What's to get? You just said it all. Or was that someone else?

Mantis thinks Hethor is Kim Lee Soong.

Sergei SOLOVIEV — 25 Oct 2011, 17:08 · in reply to David Stockhoff

I think I've been answering Lee, but I cut off upper part of the message.

David Stockhoff wrote:

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Sergei

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Lee Berman — 26 Oct 2011, 12:47 · follows Sergei SOLOVIEV

Sergei Soloviev: I think I've been answering Lee, but I cut off upper part of the message.

Yes, when I first saw your mention of "Kim" I was confused. I thought maybe you had mixed up Mowgli and the Jungle Book with that other Kipling novel.

I don't get this. What resemblance does Hethor have to the Trojan Hector who was a brave and noble prince and warrior? I don't think Wolfe would pick this name just for the heck of it.

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Though I corrected you before, you again insinuate that I am attempting to inject my own meanings into the text. Again I tell you I am not. I am trying NOT to. I am only interested in Gene Wolfe's intentions. My extensive research into Gene Wolfe biographies and interviews reflects this purpose.

If my own personal perceptions get into the picture on occasion it is an error. One which I hope to correct. I appreciate the help in making the corrections. It seems there are some who find everything I write to be in error and are trying to be very helpful in pointing my complete and utter misunderstanding of Gene Wolfe. Thanks.

I don't think Kim Lee Soong has mythological significance in this story. But Gene Wolfe was stationed in Korea during the war and I suspect he did not choose it as a casual throw-away. I think the name probably has significant personal importance for him. If he is willing to put "Gene Wolfes" into his stories and inject his family members here and there why wouldn't he also put his friends in, now and then?

I don't think every single name in the Sun Series has deep, symbolic significance. But many do including most of the main characters, of whom Hethor is one. There is symbolic significance to the names Thecla, Dorcas, Inire, Agia, Catherine, Talos, Baldanders, The Cumaeen, Typhon, Palaemon, Isangoma, Tzadkiel, Apheta, Abaia, Erebus, Fauna, etc. etc. .

Hethor is the name of a minor demonic magistrate and we are told his real, concealed name is something much older. But I am supposed to think Gene Wolfe means his real name to be "Hector" simply because that is a common name? (it isn't common in the USA, btw). Sorry, but

this does not sound like Gene Wolfe to me. Especially not in the Sun Series in which names and naming systems are of such obvious importance.

David Stockhoff — 26 Oct 2011, 13:31 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Great name for a band!

On 10/25/2011 3:57 AM, Jeff Wilson wrote:
snuff ballet

Jeff Wilson — 26 Oct 2011, 13:46 · in reply to Thomas Bitterman

On 10/25/2011 10:37 AM, Thomas Bitterman wrote:
On Mon, Oct 24, 2011 at 4:54 PM, Gerry Quinn <gerry at bindweed.com
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From: Lee Berman <mailto:severiansola at hotmail.com>

> Gerry Quinn:

> >Agia: "His name isn't really Hethor, by the way. He says it's a
much older one, that

> >hardly anyone has heard of now."

And don't forget the clothes he sold in Agia's shop. They weren't
Hiero clothes — they were ancient Urth clothes, but preserved by
relativistic time dilation. Hethor's ship, like that of Jonas, like
all or most of those ancient ships, got lost in time and wound up in
the distant future of Urth.

His name is Charlton Heston. The "ship that gets lost in time and
returns to Earth in the future" is a _Planet of the Apes_ allusion.
Charlton is an old name that hardly anyone has heard of now. Hethor
sounds enough like Heston without giving away the game. The clothes are
a pun on his character's name: Colonel George Taylor. Colonel can
designate the second-highest field rank, so first mate fits.

Good one, Thomas!

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

James Wynn — 26 Oct 2011, 13:48 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 10/25/2011 9:01 AM, Lee Berman wrote:
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I'm not prepared to show that Wolfe has woven elements of the Illiad into the life of Severian,
but it would be very much like Wolfe to do that. And Hector, and as the nemesis of the sword
wielding Achilles and slayer of his alter-ego, would be a fine reference to Severian's Hethor.

J.

David Stockhoff — 26 Oct 2011, 13:48 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 10/26/2011 8:47 AM, Lee Berman wrote:
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Certainly "Hector" should have significance, even if ironic. But what's a demonic magistrate?

What of the other suggested names: Kimleesoong? Heston/Colonel George Taylor?

I'm not sure a friend would appreciate having a pervert named for him. Hethor doesn't seem the type to have followers anyway.

The PoA reference is great thought oblique. Still, it sums up why Hethor is here at all---his ship got lost in the fabric of space and ended up crashing in the far future Urth.

Beyond that, we really don;t need to know much more about him, since we already know quite a bit. He is a symbol of perversion of lust, power, and technology. As controller/lover of Agia, Queen of the Greenwood, he's got it made in this urthly plane, at least in terms of sensual/sensory satisfaction. He's been led aside by his desires and he's OK with that.

Jeff Wilson — 26 Oct 2011, 13:48 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 10/25/2011 9:01 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

Jeff Wilson: by the way, the "old name" corresponding to Hethor I think is just "Hector".

I did not say this. Again, Lee, please be more careful about your quoting.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at clueland.com

Computational Intelligence Laboratory - Texas A&M Texarkana

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

David Stockhoff — 26 Oct 2011, 13:53 · in reply to James Wynn

On 10/26/2011 9:48 AM, James Wynn wrote:

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How does he slay Sev's alter ego? I don't recall Hether successfully killing anyone.

Jeff Wilson — 26 Oct 2011, 13:54 · in reply to David Stockhoff

On 10/26/2011 8:31 AM, David Stockhoff wrote:

Great name for a band!

On 10/25/2011 3:57 AM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

snuff ballet

I think the inevitable comparison to Spandau Ballet would detract from it, and I shudder to think what sort of T-shirt Son-o-Witz would draw for them!

Jeff Wilson — 26 Oct 2011, 14:00 · in reply to David Stockhoff

On 10/26/2011 8:53 AM, David Stockhoff wrote:

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His slug does in several of the sorcerors at least. Which would be somewhat apt, since Hector thinks he is killing Achilles but does in Patroclus instead.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at clueland.com
Computational Intelligence Laboratory - Texas A&M Texarkana
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Then who is Helen? Presumably Agia. Is Dorcas then Thecla, Achilles' mother (whose might by Tethys by another name (a name that means "grandmother"))? Or is she Doris, the mother of Thetis (her own grandmother by way of Tethys), which would then mean Severian's mysterious mother is the shape-changing Thetis?

I'm not saying Wolfe did this, but when he does this sort of thing he's really clever about it and it's tough to anticipate him. It's never as easy as here's a brave guy whose a lot like "So-and-so".

J.

David Stockhoff — 26 Oct 2011, 14:08 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On 10/26/2011 10:00 AM, Jeff Wilson wrote:
On 10/26/2011 8:53 AM, David Stockhoff wrote:

On 10/26/2011 9:48 AM, James Wynn wrote:

On 10/25/2011 9:01 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

I don't get this. What resemblance does Hethor have to the Trojan Hector who

was a brave and noble prince and warrior?

I don't think Wolfe would pick this name just for the heck of it.

I'm not prepared to show that Wolfe has woven elements of the Illiad into the life of Severian, but it would be very much like Wolfe to do that. And Hector, and as the nemesis of the sword wielding Achilles and slayer of his alter-ego, would be a fine reference to Severian's Hethor.

How does he slay Sev's alter ego? I don't recall Hether successfully killing anyone.

His slug does in several of the sorcerors at least. Which would be somewhat apt, since Hector thinks he is killing Achilles but does in Patroclus instead.

Somewhat. But Sev does not seek vengeance on Hethor for killing his lover/friend. You'd think that would be the main reference point.

Gerry Quinn — 26 Oct 2011, 14:11 · in reply to David Stockhoff

From: David Stockhoff

[Hethor]

Beyond that, we really don;t need to know much more about him, since we already know quite a bit. He is a symbol of perversion of lust, power, and technology.

I think he's just a baddie, without too much symbolic overloading.

As controller/lover of Agia, Queen of the Greenwood, he's got it made in this urthly plane, at least in terms of sensual/sensory satisfaction. He's been led aside by his desires and he's OK with that.

Agia reckons she controls him, and it seems a fair assessment. Of course, he may be happy enough with his side of the bargain.

As for his name, he is clearly mad and his shipmates referred to him as a "header" or head case. Due to a period of imposed political correctness, perhaps in the Machine Era, such names are no longer used.

- Gerry Quinn

James Wynn — 26 Oct 2011, 14:18 · in reply to David Stockhoff

On 10/26/2011 9:08 AM, David Stockhoff wrote:

On 10/26/2011 10:00 AM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

On 10/26/2011 8:53 AM, David Stockhoff wrote:

On 10/26/2011 9:48 AM, James Wynn wrote:

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How does he slay Sev's alter ego? I don't recall Hether successfully killing anyone. [...] But Sev does not seek vengeance on Hethor for killing his lover/friend. You'd think that would be the main reference point.

I think the important point of Patroclus in the story is that he dons the mantle of Achilles for a while and is then slain. In that sense, he plays the role played by Mordred and other usurpers in mythology. Who killed Dux Caesidius?

J.

David Stockhoff — 26 Oct 2011, 14:21 · in reply to James Wynn

On 10/26/2011 10:08 AM, James Wynn wrote:

Then who is Helen? Presumably Agia. Is Dorcas then Thecla, Achilles' mother (whose mother by Tethys by another name (a name that means "grandmother"))? Or is she Doris, the mother of Thetis (her own grandmother by way of Tethys), which would then mean Severian's mysterious mother is the shape-changing Thetis?

I didn't know Thecla is Achilles' mother---Mantis does not note it. But that does suggest a starting point to a thread of Iliad connections. However, I'd approach that by asking how Thecla is Sev's mother, and I don't have an answer.

In a way she does push him out into the world, but her later merging with him only suggests motherhood if you require incest as a minimum feature of all Sev's relationships. Rather than giving him his life, she gives him her life. I don't see this going far.

James Wynn — 26 Oct 2011, 14:35 · in reply to David Stockhoff

On 10/26/2011 9:21 AM, David Stockhoff wrote:

On 10/26/2011 10:08 AM, James Wynn wrote:

Then who is Helen? Presumably Agia. Is Dorcas then Thecla, Achilles' mother (whose mother by Tethys by another name (a name that means "grandmother"))? Or is she Doris, the mother of Thetis (her own grandmother by way of Tethys), which would then mean Severian's mysterious mother is the shape-changing Thetis?

I didn't know Thecla is Achilles' mother

Mis-write. Thetis, not Thecla.

Sergei SOLOVIEV — 26 Oct 2011, 14:47 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

I would like to repeat that my approach to interpretation is different, I believe there is a network of analogies, of cross references in the text, rather than strong causal connection. The name may be Hector, but I do not say that it implies that all the other elements of Iliad must have parallels in BoTNS.

We already discussed that the name Dorcas corresponds to the name of the girl resurrected in the Bible. But it doesn't imply that all the other episodes of the Bible have their counterpart in BoTNS! There is too much references to different sources, they cannot be all reflected to the same extent (hidden or not) in BoTNS. (Cf. my post about Abraxas.)

I suggested that Hector may be just one more reference to our time.

The name Hector may be rare in the USA, but Urth is not USA! By the way, other personage named Hector was captain Hector Servadac in a novel by Jules Verne:

On the coast of Algiers, French Captain Hector Servadac, his orderly Ben Zoof and the ground >below their feet are ripped from the Earth by a passing comet. (Amazon)

Whet the name Kim Lee Soong is mentioned, it is told also that the lands where this people lived are now under the sea. I.e., to give us some information about the changing "face of Urth".

Sergei Soloviev

Jeff Wilson wrote:

On 10/26/2011 8:53 AM, David Stockhoff wrote:

On 10/26/2011 9:48 AM, James Wynn wrote:

On 10/25/2011 9:01 AM, Lee Berman wrote:

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How does he slay Sev's alter ego? I don't recall Hether successfully killing anyone.

His slug does in several of the sorcerors at least. Which would be somewhat apt, since Hector thinks he is killing Achilles but does in Patroclus instead.

David Stockhoff — 26 Oct 2011, 14:50 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

On 10/26/2011 10:11 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: David Stockhoff <mailto:dstockhoff at verizon.net>

**

**

[Hethor]

Beyond that, we really don;t need to know much more about him, since we already know quite a bit. He is a symbol of perversion of lust, power, and technology.

I think he's just a baddie, without too much symbolic overloading.

Well, evil is never just evil in Wolfe

As controller/lover of Agia, Queen of the Greenwood, he's got it made in this urchly plane, at least in terms of sensual/sensory satisfaction. He's been led aside by his desires and he's OK with that.

Agia reckons she controls him, and it seems a fair assessment. Of course, he may be happy enough with his side of the bargain.

Let's say they have a mutually controlling relationship. ;)

As for his name, he is clearly mad and his shipmates referred to him as a "header" or head case. Due to a period of imposed political correctness, perhaps in the Machine Era, such names are no longer used.

They didn't actually say "header," did they?

David Stockhoff — 26 Oct 2011, 14:51 · in reply to James Wynn

On 10/26/2011 10:35 AM, James Wynn wrote:

On 10/26/2011 9:21 AM, David Stockhoff wrote:

On 10/26/2011 10:08 AM, James Wynn wrote:

Then who is Helen? Presumably Agia. Is Dorcas then Thecla, Achilles' mother (whose might by Tethys by another name (a name that means "grandmother"))? Or is she Doris, the mother of Thetis (her own grandmother by way of Tethys), which would then mean Severian's mysterious mother is the shape-changing Thetis?

I didn't know Thecla is Achilles' mother

Mis-write. Thetis, not Thecla.

Whew!

Lee Berman — 26 Oct 2011, 14:55 · follows David Stockhoff

James Wynn: > On 10/26/2011 8:48 AM, James Wynn wrote:

I'm not prepared to show that Wolfe has woven elements of the Iliad into the life of Severian, but it would be very much like Wolfe to do that.

I agree, it WOULD be like Wolfe. It wasn't only me who was able to follow James' lead in recognizing that the sober, brilliant young general Spring Wind and the arrogant, vain Typhon are connected by a wind theme and the contrasting youth and later years of Alexander The Great.

And Hector, and as the nemesis of the sword wielding Achilles and slayer of his alter-ego, would be a fine reference to Severian's Hethor. Then who is Helen? Presumably Agia. Is Dorcas then Thecla, Achilles' mother

Unfortunately, the dots aren't connecting for me at all here. I'm pretty familiar with the Iliad but I don't recognize its characters' aspects in BotNS characters as I can for other likely Wolfe mythological allusions.

(Hercules' life seems a much closer match to severian's, though I think I can only find plausible matches for 7 or 8 of the labors)

Marc Aramini — 26 Oct 2011, 15:01 · in reply to Lee Berman

This morning as I was coming in to work, Umberto Eco was on the radio! In his thick accent, he was answering questions about his writing philosophy and making other comments. I was really suprised to hear it on the radio. The interviewer asked him why he was obsessed with liars in his fiction, why his narrators like Baudolino were so untrustworthy, and it reminded me of recent debates over the trustworthiness of Wolfe narrators.

Eco claimed that as a man interested in semiotics, the creation of signs, that when human being create signs half the time they intend the contrary, and in fact want to conceal the truth, and that this occurs at almost every level of human interaction from the education of children to interpersonal relationships, and that ficiton is another level of this lying but the suspension of disbelief allows us to get together and lie about the existence of little red riding hood. However, his attempt at verisimilitude and capturing humans and their communication style and the relationship between sign and signified would of course have to incorporate the tendency of humans to lie and have personal motivations in concealment in the creation of their signs. Consequently, in Eco we will have unreliable narrators because people are unreliable according to his philosophy almost 50% of the time.

Just thought this was interesting, I think some authors are more obsessed with this than others.

Gerry Quinn — 26 Oct 2011, 15:01 · in reply to David Stockhoff

From: David Stockhoff

On 10/26/2011 10:11 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: David Stockhoff <mailto:dstockhoff@verizon.net>

As for his name, he is clearly mad and his shipmates referred to him as a "header" or head case. Due to a period of imposed political correctness, perhaps in the Machine Era, such names are no longer used.

They didn't actually say "header," did they?

It is a common expression in Ireland. If you say "he's a header" it will be understood as "he's a head case".

- Gerry Quinn

Marc Aramini — 26 Oct 2011, 15:09 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

--- On Wed, 10/26/11, Gerry Quinn <gerry@bindweed.com> wrote:

From: Gerry Quinn <gerry@bindweed.com>

Subject: Re: (urth) Father Inire as Dionysus

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

Date: Wednesday, October 26, 2011, 8:01 AM

From: David Stockhoff

On 10/26/2011 10:11 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: David Stockhoff <mailto:dstockhoff@verizon.net>

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- Gerry Quinn

“Why would Wolfe use an Irish expression in his far future Byzantine/South America?” I would need other examples of Irish slang associated with Hethor.

Lee Berman — 26 Oct 2011, 15:40 · follows Marc Aramini

David Stockhoff: Certainly "Hector" should have significance, even if ironic. But what's a demonic magistrate?

I don't know! I found it in an obscure occult text from 1920. I don't normally read such stuff. But I get the impression Gene Wolfe has. There really aren't many online references to the name "Hethor" and most of them are post-BotNS (i.e. probably inspired by it).

What of the other suggested names: Kimleesoong? Heston/Colonel George Taylor?

Humorously, I also considered "Heston" as a possible inspiration for "Hethor" but only because I detect other 60's pop culture references in BotNS. I don't think it is a serious consideration though.

I just don't get this stuff about "Hector". Wolfe isn't doing that (changing the spelling/sound of mythological names). He doesn't give us Syphon or The Cumaeshion or Tzradspiel. He uses the original, correct english spelling (or at least one of them, when there are variants).

I'm not sure a friend would appreciate having a pervert named for him.
Hethor doesn't seem the type to have followers anyway.

Again, with all due credit (a lot!) to Mantis, I think he is off base in thinking Hethor is Kim Lee Soong. There is so much else about Hethor which points elsewhere.

Yes there is the suggestion that Hethor avoids Jonas to avoid being recognized. And in UotNS Severian sees a Jonas look-alike on the ship and a Hethor look-alike on the ship. That's enough for me. They were ship mates.

I think it is a goosechase to think there is more than one ship which becomes lost in the folds of time. The text hints there is only one and I take the hint. Hethor's ship is the Quasar which (at least in the 70's) is the oppsite of a black hole, a White Fountain. That ship travels to Yesod to retrieve the White Fountain. Severian's "family" crest includes a ship and a fountain. These clues paint a pretty clear picture for me.

Sergei SOLOVIEV — 26 Oct 2011, 15:55 · in reply to Lee Berman

What about the epoch when humankind travelled to the Stars? Vodalus wants to restore it. Hardly possible if there was always just one ship.

Sergei

Lee Berman wrote:

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David Stockhoff — 26 Oct 2011, 16:10 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 10/26/2011 11:40 AM, Lee Berman wrote:
I don't know! I found it in an obscure occult text from 1920. I don't normally read such stuff. But I get the impression Gene Wolfe has.
There really aren't many online references to the name "Hethor" and most of them are post-BotNS (i.e. probably inspired by it).

I like it!

Again, with all due credit (a lot!) to Mantis, I think he is off base in thinking Hethor is Kim Lee Soong. There is so much else about Hethor which points elsewhere.

I agree.

Yes there is the suggestion that Hethor avoids Jonas to avoid being recognized. And in UotNS Severian sees a Jonas look-alike on the ship and a Hethor look-alike on the ship. That's enough for me. They were ship mates.

Easily. Whether there is more than 1 ship or not.

I think it is a goosechase to think there is more than one ship which becomes lost in the folds of time. The text hints there is only one and I take the hint. Hethor's ship is the Quasar which (at least in the 70's) is the oppsite of a black hole, a White Fountain. That ship travels to Yesod to retrieve the White Fountain. Severiran's "family" crest includes a ship and a fountain. These clues paint a pretty clear picture for me.

Apparently there are ships and there are Ships. I am sure Typhon's fleet did not consist of a single ship full of freaks and mutants. I don't think Hethor's ship really IS the White Fountain. Severian is the White Fountain and rode Tzadkiel's ship; Hethor and Jonas may have as well. The Ship gets around. but it can't be all ships.

Lee Berman — 26 Oct 2011, 16:13 · follows David Stockhoff

Sergei Solviev: What about the epoch when humankind travelled to the Stars?
Vodalus wants to restore it. Hardly possible if there was always just one ship.

Tzadkiel's ship was not used to spread humanity from Urth throughout the galaxy. The towers/hulks which comprise much of the Citadel are examples of these ships and they are quite different than Tzadkiel's.

Moreover, Tzadkiel's ship is not of Urthly origin. It is so gigantic (and perhaps so mystical) that it can't approach Urth and requires a smaller tender ship to ferry passengers to the planet.

Tzadkiel's ship does so much more than go to the stars. It travels to the end of the universe (which is also its beginning). No other ship can do that.

Lee Berman — 26 Oct 2011, 16:28 · follows Lee Berman

David Stockhoff: Severian is the White Fountain and rode Tzadkiel's ship;

That's correct. And Gene Wolfe knew this while writing the first few chapters of his book as evidenced by Severian's family crest. He expected us to figure that out without what we learn in UotNS. Holy Crap, Gene! That's crazy!

But it does illustrate how deeply Wolfe is willing to bury his mysteries though some will eternally doubt it.

Apparently there are ships and there are Ships. I am sure Typhon's fleet did not consist of a single ship full of freaks and mutants. I don't think Hethor's ship really IS the White Fountain....; Hethor and Jonas may have (rode the Ship) as well. The Ship gets around. but it can't be all ships.

Well, no but as I noted in the post to Sergei, it is the only Ship which can travel to the end (and beginning) of the universe to retrieve the White Fountain.

I mentioned to Sergei about the ship hulks which serve as portions of the Citadel. And your mention of a "fleet" brings to mind that B, F and O have their own ship which they use to hover above Baldanders' castle and which they use to rescue Severian from his Apu Punchau burial chamber. That ship, while big, is not nearly as big as Tzadkiel's Ship (the "Quasar" if we may believe Hethor).

Is B, F and O's ship the tender? I kinda think the tender is even smaller than their ship because it can land directly on the ground. So maybe Tzadkiel does sorta have a "fleet". But I am still quite sure there is only one *Ship*.

Sergei SOLOVIEV — 26 Oct 2011, 16:34 · in reply to Lee Berman

The ships in the citadel are landers - it is noticed several times during the visits of Horn/Silk. They cannot go to the stars. They may remain from the epoch when humankind travelled to the stars, but only one true starcrosser - Whorl - is really described. But there surely had to be more (and Quasar - one of them) at this old glorious epoch. By the way, the Neighbours should be familiar with star travel, otherwise they would not mention the Whorl as starcrosser so casually.

Sergei

Lee Berman wrote:

Sergei Solviev: What about the epoch when humankind travelled to the Stars?

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Tzadkiel's ship was not used to spread humanity from Urth throughout the galaxy. The towers/hulks which comprise much of the Citadel are examples of these ships and they are quite different than Tzadkiel's.

Moreover, Tzadkiel's ship is not of Urthly origin. It is so gigantic (and perhaps so mystical) that it can't approach Urth and requires a smaller tender ship to ferry passengers to the planet.

Tzadkiel's ship does so much more than go to the stars. It travels to the end of the universe (which is also its beginning). No other ship can do that.

Lee Berman — 26 Oct 2011, 17:18 · follows Sergei SOLOVIEV

Sergei Soloviev: The ships in the citadel are landers - it is noticed several times during the visits of Horn/Silk. They cannot go to the stars. They may remain from the epoch when humankind travelled to the stars, but only one true starcrosser - Whorl - is really described. But there surely had to be more (and Quasar - one of them) at this old glorious epoch. By the way, the Neighbours should be familiar with star travel, otherwise they would not mention the Whorl as starcrosser so casually.

Okay, I will concede that my mention of the Citadel hulks is not the best example. But you reminded me of the example I meant to include but forgot:

The Whorl. I can't understand how you can liken The Whorl to The Ship when they are so different. The Whorl is a hollowed out asteroid. The Ship is constructed of metal with wood decks. The Whorl uses whatever propulsion and is sub-light speed. The Ship uses mirror sails and transcends the speed of light.

Are you really thinking the Whorl can travel to the ends of the Universe and go to Yesod? It seems barely able to travel to a star visible from Urth.

Moreover, Hethor crewed on a ship with demon-haunted sails. There is only one Ship we are shown which has these. The text suggests Tzadkiel's Ship might be a singular, unique entity threading through time. From these clues I think we can discern what Wolfe is trying to say.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 26 Oct 2011, 17:21 · in reply to Lee Berman

Lee Berman wrote:

... well, no point in quoting; I concede the facts, and further agree that it's clear that Hethor, at some point, crewed aboard The Ship. But that's a far cry from making him identical with Tzadkiel and/or Fr. Inire. After all, lots of people have crewed aboard The Ship.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Jerry Friedman — 26 Oct 2011, 17:32 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

From: Dan'I Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com>

Lee Berman wrote:

... well, no point in quoting; I concede the facts, and further agree that it's clear that Hethor, at some point, crewed aboard The Ship.

But that's a far cry from making him identical with Tzadkiel and/or Fr. Inire. After all, _lots_ of people have crewed aboard The Ship.

What's your evidence for that? Surely it's obvious that there's only one Crewman who does lots of time travel.

(Since some people may not have noticed that Gerry was joking about "header", I'll mention that I'm joking.)

Jerry Friedman

David Stockhoff — 26 Oct 2011, 17:45 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On 10/26/2011 1:21 PM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:
Lee Berman wrote:

... well, no point in quoting; I concede the facts, and further agree that it's clear that Hethor, at some point, crewed aboard The Ship. But that's a far cry from making him identical with Tzadkiel and/or Fr. Inire. After all, _lots_ of people have crewed aboard The Ship.

In truth, I wonder if we all have crewed, or will crew, aboard The Ship. But that's another (ghost) story.

Gerry Quinn — 27 Oct 2011, 12:37 · in reply to Lee Berman

From: Lee Berman

I think it is a goosechase to think there is more than one ship which becomes lost in the folds of time. The text hints there is only one and I take the hint.

Where is this ?hint?? The text TELLS us quite clearly that there were many:

"He came to sell his clothes, and they were the kind worn on the old ships that sailed beyond the world's rim long ago, and they weren't costumes or forgeries or even tomb-tender old garments that had lain for centuries in the dark, but clothes not far from new. He said his ships all those ships became lost in the blackness between the suns, where the years do not turn. Lost so that even Time cannot find them."

There's also Jonas's crashed ship. Unless you think that Tzadkiel is going to crash on Urth some time in his future and Urth's past. Because he expects to find a port, and it is gone (that's why they crashed).

There's only one Ship. But there are lots of ships.

- Gerry Quinn

David Stockhoff — 27 Oct 2011, 13:08 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

On 10/27/2011 8:37 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:
From: Lee Berman <mailto:severiansola at hotmail.com>
**

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- Gerry Quinn

Yes. But it also says "all those ships" became lost. So it's ambiguous. Are there STILL any ships other than The Ship?

Gerry Quinn — 27 Oct 2011, 13:38 · in reply to David Stockhoff

From: David Stockhoff

On 10/27/2011 8:37 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: Lee Berman <mailto:severiansola at hotmail.com>
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I think it is a goosechase to think there is more than one ship which becomes lost in the folds of time. The text hints there is only one and I take the hint.

Where is this ?hint?? The text TELLS us quite clearly that there were many:

"He came to sell his clothes, and they were the kind worn on the old ships that sailed beyond the world's rim long ago, and they weren't costumes or forgeries or even tomb-tender old garments that had lain for centuries in the dark, but clothes not far from new. He said his ships all those ships became lost in the blackness between the suns, where the years do not turn. Lost so that even Time cannot find them." There's also Jonas's crashed ship. Unless you think that Tzadkiel is going to crash on Urth some time in his future and Urth's past. Because he expects to find a port, and it is gone (that's why they crashed).

There's only one Ship. But there are lots of ships.

Yes. But it also says "all those ships" became lost. So it's ambiguous. Are there STILL any ships other than The Ship?

Probably lots of the old lost ships are still lost and turn up occasionally, like the Fortunate Cloud and perhaps the Quasar (we don't know how Hethor returned to Urth).

Other ships exist too: the Whorl currently orbits a distant star, which is itself inhabited by spacefaring aliens. The ships that got away from Typhon's empire no doubt escaped to advanced planets where interstellar travel remains commonplace.

Finally, on the subject of multiple ships, Wolfe's appendix to CotA goes into some detail, and always uses the plural. Among other things he notes that: "the star-traveling ships appear to be propelled by light pressure on immense sails of metal foil".

He also indicates that the ships are commanded by the Hierodules but sometimes crewed by human beings, and that Jonas and Hethor appear to have been crewmen on such ships.

[However, it seems improbable that the Fortunate Cloud was so commanded; it seems to me to have been the product of an Asian culture much closer to our own times than the setting of BotNS.]

- Gerry Quinn

Sergei SOLOVIEV — 27 Oct 2011, 17:34 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

I don't think that "Quasar" was possibly a name for the Ship (Tzadkiel's ship). It sounds to me a name from some sort of "space opera", fit for spaceships from technocratic era. By the way, a ship sent to bring a "white fountain" would not be called "Quasar" (it would bring bad luck, sailors are superstitious) ...

In our day America ships (space missions etc) are not called after the aim of the mission - missions to Moon were not called "Moon" (or Diana, or Artemis) but Apollo, you had "Spirit" and "Opportunity" on Mars etc - Even "Mariner" is not derived from "Mars".

Landers can land without landing pad, as we know from "Short Sun".

Sergei

Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: David Stockhoff <mailto:dstockhoff at verizon.net>
On 10/27/2011 8:37 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: Lee Berman <mailto:severiansola at hotmail.com>
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I think it is a goosechase to think there is more than one ship which becomes lost in the folds of time. The text hints there is only one and I take the hint.

Where is this ?hint?? The text TELLS us quite clearly that there were many:

"He came to sell his clothes, and they were the kind worn on the old ships that sailed beyond the world's rim long ago, and they weren't costumes or forgeries or even tomb-tender old garments that had lain for centuries in the dark, but clothes not far from new. He said his ships all those ships became lost in the blackness between the suns, where the years do not turn. Lost so that even Time cannot find them." There's also Jonas's crashed ship. Unless you think that Tzadkiel is going to crash on Urth some time in his future and Urth's past. Because he expects to find a port, and it is gone (that's why they crashed).

There's only one Ship. But there are lots of ships.

Yes. But it also says "all those ships" became lost. So it's ambiguous. Are there STILL any ships other than The Ship?

Probably lots of the old lost ships are still lost and turn up occasionally, like the Fortunate Cloud and perhaps the Quasar (we don't know how Hethor returned to Urth).

Other ships exist too: the Whorl currently orbits a distant star, which is itself inhabited by spacefaring aliens. The ships that got away from Typhon's empire no doubt escaped to advanced planets where interstellar travel remains commonplace.

Finally, on the subject of multiple ships, Wolfe's appendix to CotA goes into some detail, and always uses the plural. Among other things he notes that: "the star-traveling ships appear to be propelled by light pressure on immense sails of metal foil".

He also indicates that the ships are commanded by the Hierodules but sometimes crewed by human beings, and that Jonas and Hethor appear to have been crewmen on such ships. [However, it seems improbable that the Fortunate Cloud was so commanded; it seems to me to have been the product of an Asian culture much closer to our own times than the setting of BotNS.]

- Gerry Quinn

Sergei SOLOVIEV — 28 Oct 2011, 14:37 · in reply to Sergei SOLOVIEV

Was it discussed before that "Cumaeen" is probably just the Cumaeen Sybil from Earth (or her "projection")?

Sergei

Lee Berman — 28 Oct 2011, 16:35 · follows Sergei SOLOVIEV

Sergei Soloviev: Was it discussed before that "Cumaeen" is probably just the Cumaeen Sybil from Earth (or her "projection")?

Yes. But I'd hesitate to say "just" the Cumaeen Sybil. There is a lot of relevant associations about her to consider. This character in mythology was a cave-dwelling Pythian (snake) Priestess of Apollo. She asked him for immortality and got it but she forgot to request eternal youth, so she gets pretty old and shrivelled. She is noted as being the first to herald the coming of Christ, by some (despite her pagan nature).

The Cumaeen Sibyl is associated with the goddess Fauna, so I have little doubt that the old woman in The Town That Forgot Fauna, is (in some manner) The Cumaeen.

The text pairs The Cumaeen with Father Inire and I've posted before about Inire's name likely linking him to Faunus. So mythology provides more evidence for the textual link between these two characters.

The Cumaeen Sybil was a prophetess and Isangoma repeatedly calls Marie "The Preceptress" in the Jungle Hut. Might be a coincidence. But not very likely if Isangoma is Father Inire.

The Homeric Hymn to Apollo also links The Cumaeen Sibyl to Echidna. Not a shocker since both are cave dwellers and snake-associated. This might suggest a connection between The Cumaeen and Typhon that isn't too difficult to figure out.

There are a few more dots which can be connected but I'll leave it at that for now.