

Flaubert's _The Temptation of Saint Anthony_ as influence on _New Sun_?

The Urth list — 12 messages, 7 voices, 16 Apr 2013

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6371>

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Darth Ed — 16 Apr 2013, 03:29

My Wolfe reading group has been re-reading _The Book of the New Sun_ lately. For about half the group, this is our third or fourth time reading it. For the remainder, it is our second time. One of our members remarked that he had recently read Gustave Flaubert's _The Temptation of Saint Anthony_ [*] and he was struck by how many words from _New Sun_'s antiquated vocabulary were used in _The Temptation of Saint Anthony_.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Temptation_of_Saint_Anthony_\(Flaubert\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Temptation_of_Saint_Anthony_(Flaubert))

He listed a half dozen examples, which I can't recall at the moment, but it was a very convincing list. We all thought it was very possible that this novel may have had a profound influence on Wolfe in his writing of _The Book of the New Sun_. The subject matter is certainly something that Wolfe might have been interested in following his conversion to Catholicism. I thought surely someone must have made this connection previously, but my searches of the urth.net mailing list, WolfeWiki.com, and the web at large revealed no discussion that I could locate of any connection between Wolfe and Flaubert's _The Temptation of Saint Anthony_, except for *one* academic book on Google Books:

<http://books.google.com/books?id=tE4FPNc8pr4C&lpg=PA106&ots=0GAiFFsx8a&dq=flaubert%20gene%20wolfe%20new%20sun%20temptation&pg=PA106#v=onepage&q=flaubert%20gene%20wolfe%20new%20sun%20temptation&f=false>

The author of the essay rather matter-of-factly states, right after quoting a passage from Gustave Flaubert's _The Temptation of Saint Anthony_:

"Gene Wolfe's _Book of the New Sun_ obviously derived in equal part from the _Temptation_ and Borges's _Book of Imaginary Beings_ (which itself contains many excerpts from the former source)."

Sadly, the next page in that book is not visible on Google Books. A member of our group purchased the book from Google Books to check, and the Wolfe discussion pretty much ends with that sentence. Fortunately, Google Books has a convenient return policy. :-)

Has anyone here read Flaubert's _The Temptation of Saint Anthony_ and would care to comment?

Has Wolfe made any comments concerning Flaubert or _The Temptation of Saint Anthony_ in any interviews?

Obviously, Borges' work has long been recognized as an influence on Wolfe and _New Sun_. Is this possible Flaubert connection relatively untrodden territory? Or is this something generally known and my Google searches just didn't turn up much discussion of it?

Thanks,
Ed

<http://www.wolfewiki.com/pmwiki/pmwiki.php?n=Profiles.DarthEd>

David Duffy — 16 Apr 2013, 08:59 · in reply to Darth Ed

On Tue, 16 Apr 2013, DARTH Ed wrote:

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Well that will depend on the translation, of course. Looking through the [gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org) one (Dunne 1904). Yes, we see "Erebus", "cynocephali", etc. But most of the story is taken up by visions of Death, Lust, the medieval bestiary, the Queen of Sheba, Roman, Egyptian, Buddhist, Hindu pantheons, Gnosticism, and space, guided by Hilarion/the Devil. They don't seem particularly close to Wolfe's vision. Specifically, Typhon doesn't resemble either Flaubert's Devil or the Emperor Constantine.

Just 2c, David Duffy.

Nessun Saprà — 16 Apr 2013, 09:02 · in reply to DARTH Ed

According to a interview with Joan Gordon 1981 (reprinted in Wright's "Shadows") GW's favorite authors are "Damon Knight, Kate Wilhelm, Joanna Russ, Ursula LeGuin, R. A. Lafferty, Saul Bellow and John Updike, with many more among the living. Poe, Proust, Dickens, Chesterton, FLAUBERT, Orwell, Thurber, Twain, Melville, Irving, Van Gulik, Kafka, Borges, Dostoyevsky, Bulgakov "

Nessuno

-----Ursprüngliche Nachricht-----

Von: urth-bounces at lists.urth.net [mailto:urth-bounces at lists.urth.net] Im Auftrag von DARTH Ed
Gesendet: Dienstag, 16. April 2013 05:30
An: The Urth Mailing List
Betreff: (urth) Flaubert's *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* as influence on *New Sun*?

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Gerry Quinn — 16 Apr 2013, 09:32 · in reply to Darth Ed

From: Darth Ed

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Fairly untrodden, I'd say. Proust seems to be the main go-to non-SF author other than Borges.

- Gerry Quinn

Sergei SOLOVIEV — 16 Apr 2013, 10:57 · in reply to Darth Ed

I am not sure that Flaubert's "The Temptation of Saint Anthony" is really an important source for GW. The fact is, Flaubert borrowed on many sources, he is very eclectic (a word that GW likes). To my mind, GW rather looked to the same sources, than was influenced by Flaubert. Similarly, Borges is not a primary source. Apocryphal books, gnostic gospels, medieval bestiaries are, I think, much more likely. I remember that in one of gnostic gospels the recurrent idea was something like "alas to the Man who is eaten by a Lion, blessed is the Lion eaten by a Man" - it reminds us many situations in BotNS, true?

Regards,

Sergei Soloviev

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Thanks,
Ed

David Stockhoff — 16 Apr 2013, 12:06 · in reply to Darth Ed

I don't know who this Jason Price Everett guy is, but his workbook is ... interesting. And Michael Moorcock likes him:

http://8thhousepublishing.com/Shop/index.php?main_page=product_music_info&products_id=18

On 4/15/2013 11:29 PM, Darth Ed wrote:

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Thanks,
Ed

Darth Ed — 17 Apr 2013, 19:53 · in reply to David Duffy

On Apr 16, 2013, at 4:59 AM, David Duffy wrote:
Well that will depend on the translation, of course.

True, certainly, and a valid point.

Looking through the [gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org) one (Dunne 1904). Yes, we see "Erebus", "cynocephali", etc. But most of the story is taken up by visions of Death, Lust, the medieval bestiary, the Queen of Sheba, Roman, Egyptian, Buddhist, Hindu pantheons, Gnosticism, and space, guided by Hilarion/the Devil. They don't seem particularly close to Wolfe's vision. Specifically, Typhon doesn't resemble either Flaubert's Devil or the Emperor Constantine.

I don't think I made any claim to a thematic influence, simply one on the vocabulary used in *New Sun*; however, I would counter that Wolfe has written stories about many of those things (notably, the Roman and Egyptian pantheons, Gnosticism, and the Devil).

Now that you mention it, I found the presence of a character named Typhon to be a particularly striking similarity. Erebus, too, although I only see a single mention of that name in the Gutenberg text. It would still be interesting to compare concordances, I think.

On Apr 16, 2013, at 5:02 AM, Nessun Sapr? wrote:

According to a interview with Joan Gordon 1981 (reprinted in Wright's "Shadows") GW's favorite authors are "Damon Knight, Kate Wilhelm, Joanna Russ, Ursula LeGuin, R. A. Lafferty, Saul Bellow and John Updike, with many more among the living. Poe, Proust, Dickens, Chesterton, FLAUBERT, Orwell, Thurber, Twain, Melville, Irving, Van Gulik, Kafka, Borges, Dostoyevsky, Bulgakov ?"

Fascinating! Thank you. I really should pick up a copy of "Shadows".

Happy reading,

Ed

<http://www.wolfewiki.com/pmwiki/pmwiki.php?n=Profiles.DarthEd>

David Stockhoff — 18 Apr 2013, 14:43 · in reply to Darth Ed

Speaking of borrowed words, does anyone know of an earlier use of the term "autarch" than by James Blish in his Cities in Flight novels? or, for that matter, any other use?

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Blish

Gwern Branwen — 18 Apr 2013, 16:02 · in reply to David Stockhoff

On Thu, Apr 18, 2013 at 10:43 AM, David Stockhoff

<dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:

Speaking of borrowed words, does anyone know of an earlier use of the term "autarch" than by James Blish in his Cities in Flight novels? or, for that matter, any other use?

It's surprisingly rare:

http://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=autarch&year_start=00&year_end=00&corpus=&smoothing=3&sharehttp://i.imgur.com/tvf6jCT.png

A direct Google Books search from 1/1/1700 to 1/1/1950 turns up (https://encrypted.google.com/search?q=%22autarch%22&gbv=2&sa=X&ei=yhZwUZbRIMep4AOygoHwDg&ved=CYPwUoBA&source=Int&tbslr%3A1%2Ccd_min%3A1%2F1%2F1700%2Ccd_max%3A1%2F1%2F1950&tbs=bks), after eliminating obvious duplicates, 17 results (archive of results: <https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/85192141/2013-googlebooks-autarch.html.maff>):

1. The Edinburgh Review of Critical Journal October 1824...January 1825 - Page 334 books.google.com/books?id=WmIJAAAAQAAJ

A Frank having made certain acquisitions, may be raised to the rank of Autarch. The election lies with the ... An Autarch, in addition to the rights of the Veteran Frank, is privileged from all fines ; but he receives no reward. The institution of ...

2. The Edinburgh Review: Or Critical Journal - Volume 17 - Page 316; Sydney Smith, Lord Francis Jeffrey Jeffrey, Macvey Napier - 1810 books.google.com/books?id=AMflvX8uFeAC

Hence, one of his S^nfcrit nanus, Vrifhndw.ija, li^nifyinj — whose enign is a bull. "Autarch informs uj, that ' iNilum pattern ac fervatorem fu-x re- ij 4 gicuis, * gionis, ac defluxum Ofiridis nominant. ' The Ganges in. Moor's Hindu Pantheon..."

3. Public education: plans for the government and liberal instruction ... - Page 56 Arthur Hill (teacher.) - 1825 books.google.com/books?id=UAAAAAYAAJ

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The election lies with the conference, the committee, and the previous autarchs, either of which bodies has a veto. An autarch, in addition to the rights of the veteran frank, ...

4. History of Greece - Volume 1 - Page 284 books.google.com/books?id=n3sLAAAAAYAAJ George Grote - 1849

... purified by reason, the aspect of history : in those cases where it haughtily scorns plausibility and will admit no alliance with what is probable, I shall beg for indulgent hearers, willing to receive antique Autarch? narrative in a mild spirit².

5. Alliteration: An alliterated allocution by the letter A against ...

- Page 22 books.google.com/books?id=ehIVAQAAMAAJ James Nelson Hulme - 1882

Ynd Anglican aldermen and anarclials, A.nd arch-dukes, and arch-priests, and admirals, Approving Ale, acquired an assuetude \lish f and allowed Ale an amplitude About as ample as asks an autarch, 1

As-ttite ' , — Critically examining or ...

6. Catalog of Copyright Entries. New Series: 1934 - Part 1 - Page 32

books.google.com/books?id=raMhAQAAIAAJ Library of Congress. Copyright Office - 1935

31 Widmark, Lawrence Emil, 1889- An inquiry into the functioning of an industrial autarch}', by Lawr. E. Widmark ... cNew York, Albert Bonnier publishing house, c1934] 3 p. 1., 9-60 p. diagrs. 231cm. "Is modern business mathematically ..."

7. Reflections on the rise and fall of the ancient republics: ... - Page 148

books.google.com/books?id=QE1WAAAAYAAJ Edward Wortley Montagu - 1769

... has handed down, to us a striking instance of this truth in the case of Aristides, which is too remarkable i& be omitted. c When Aristides was created Qu?stor, or high Treasurer of Athens, he fairly laid be- * Demades, according to Autarch, ...

8. The Voyage of Fran?ois Pyrard of Laval to the East Indies, the ...

- Issue 76, Volume 1 - Page 404 books.google.com/books?id=x4EMAAAAIAAJ Fran?ois Pyrard, Pierre de Bergeron, J?r?me Bignon - 1887

These porches or Autarch in front of the houses are for receiving passing strangers, both for giving them meat and drink, and also a place to rest and sleep ; they take them not inside their houses, so that they may depart during the night when ...

9. Lives, translated from the Greek, with notes critical and ... - Volume 7 - Page 8

books.google.com/books?id=rFAMAAAAYAAJ Plutarch - 1808

... being ordered by the senate to repel force with force, attacked him, killed several of his men, and lost some of his own. By this action he forfeited the favour of the people : Put this was not the only thing that rendered him & autarch's LIVES.

10. The English portion of the library of the Ven. Francis Wrangham - Page 315

books.google.com/books?id=AMURAAAIAAJ Francis Wrangham - 1826

See D'laraeli's autarch of Author/, and tit. Anecd. III. 887.

Two Copies only of this Collection were printed on T'ine Paper : of which one was MM. at Dr. Farmer's Sale in it90, to Mr. Dent for 11. 16*. ; and the ottrer, his own present to Mr. Reed, ...

11. The Publishers' circular and general record of British and foreign ... - Volume 33 - Page 777 books.google.com/books?id=aWVWAAAAYAAJ 1870

ENGLISH WRITERS. Chapters for Self-Improvement in English

Literature. DITHER PEOPLES WINDOWS. By the Author of 'Gentle Life.' LIBRARY EDITIONS OF STANDARD WORKS. AUTARCH'S LIVES. New Edition. By the late A. H. Clougii.

12. The whole critical works of Monsieur Rapin ...: Newly done into ... - Page 398

books.google.com/books?id=UC1JAAAAMAAJ Ren? Rapin, Thomas Taylor, Thomas Rymer - 1706

His Know- autarch" ren^re^ mra sensible of his Ignorance, and de Doctr. his Ingenuity prompted him, without Ceremony, Epicur. to confess it. Epicurus had good Talents of Nature, and was a Philosopher in his very Pleasures : 'Tis a saying of ...

13. Niles' Weekly Register - Volume 15 - Page 225 books.google.com/books?id=q_laAAAAYAAJ Hezekiah Niles, William Ogden Niles - 1819

kiLkh, at t5 run am*um, patari.k in autarch. By th* assistance of a supplement, arranged to jirialt the present regular number, we are enabled this week to dispose of the entire reports of Messrs.

HoBirrnd Graham, on South- American affairs, ...

14. The European Magazine, and London Review - Volumes 61-62 - Page 210

books.google.com/books?id=NB8YAQAIAAJ 1812

... are of the exact species of writing of the Athente, critical justice demands from us, that we should slate of what species they are : and here we must refer their origin to a much more ancient prototype than Anthony Woodi we mean, to Autarch, ...

15. Asiatic Journal - Volume 6 - Page 183

books.google.com/books?id=PBQLAQAAAMAAJ 1831

We have lost Mr. Creus, the Spanish Consul, and Mr. Autarch!, his interpreter. At Cairo the mortality was less severe. The establishment of the Pacha, the regiments and manufacturers, have suffered most. We huve also to regret the loss of ...

16. Cobbett's Political Register - Volume 10 books.google.com/books?id=iCM8AAAAIAAJ William Cobbett - 1806

It is only under autarch of triumph that you should return.

What! have , we braved the seasons, the seas, and the deserts ; have we triumphed over Europe leagued against us ; have we borneour glory, from Orient to the Setting Sun, only to ...

17. Hannah More - Page 76 books.google.com/books?id=8KwEAAAAYAAJ Charlotte Mary Yonge - 1888

What little ornament there is I have bestowed, not injudiciously I trow, on the slenderest part. You will find but one episode, and even that does not obstruct the progress of the main subject ; and for parallels, I will be bold to say Autarch does ...

We can see there's a lot of Greco-Roman context in the hits, and in one or two it looks like some sort of error ('autarch of triumph?') or to be someone's name ('Mr. Autarch'). So overall, a very rare word indeed.

gwern
<http://www.gwern.net>

Sergei SOLOVIEV — 18 Apr 2013, 16:57 · in reply to David Stockhoff

I think it was already mentioned that autarch means the same as autocrator, and autocrator was an official title of Byzantine emperors

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

The same title (translated into Russian) was among the titles of Russian emperors ("samoderjets").

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David Stockhoff wrote:

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Blish

David Stockhoff — 18 Apr 2013, 17:35 · in reply to Sergei SOLOVIEV

Yes, that's a good point. It seems to be a rare secondary form but directly linked to Byzantium.

I was actually more interested in /literary /usage, which I didn't make clear . . .

On 4/18/2013 12:57 PM, Sergei SOLOVIEV wrote:

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David Stockhoff — 18 Apr 2013, 17:46 · in reply to Gwern Branwen

Now that's an interesting tool. I'd guess the first real spike around 1960 is Blish, the second is Wolfe, and the third is post-Wolfe SF, maybe even fan fiction of a sort.

Some of those hits must be "Plutarch."

Asimov's /The Stars Like Dust, /1951, also uses it.

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Sydney Smith, Lord Francis Jeffrey Jeffrey, Macvey Napier - 1810
books.google.com/books?id=AMflvX8uFeAC

> Hence, one of his Sⁿfcrit nanus, Vrifhndw.ija, liⁿnifyinj ?
whofe enfigh is a bull. "Autarch informs uj, that ' iNilum pattern ac
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what is probable, I shall beg for indulgent hearers, willing to
receive antique Autarch? narrative in a mild spirit².

5. Alliteration: An alliterated allocution by the letter A against ...
- Page 22 books.google.com/books?id=ehIVAQAAMAAJ James Nelson Hulme -
1882

> Ynd Anglican aldermen and anarclials, A.nd arch-dukes, and
arch-priests, and admirals, Approving Ale, acquired an assuetude \lish
f and allowed Ale an amplitude About as ample as asks an autarch, 1
As-ttite ' , — Critically examining or ...

6. Catalog of Copyright Entries. New Series: 1934 - Part 1 - Page 32
books.google.com/books?id=raMhAQAAIAAJ Library of Congress. Copyright
Office - 1935

> 31 Widmark, Lawrence Emil, 1889- An inquiry into the functioning
of an industrial autarch}', by Lawr. E. Widmark ... cNew York, Albert
Bonnier publishing house, c1934] 3 p. 1., 9-60 p. diagrs. 231cm. "Is
modern business mathematically ..."

7. Reflections on the rise and fall of the ancient republics: ... -
Page 148 books.google.com/books?id=QE1WAAAAAYAAJ Edward Wortley Montagu
- 1769

> ... has handed down, to us a striking instance of this truth in the case of Aristides, which is too remarkable to be omitted. c When Aristides was created Quæstor, or high Treasurer of Athens, he fairly laid before Demades, according to Autarch, ...

8. The Voyage of François Pyrard of Laval to the East Indies, the ... - Issue 76, Volume 1 - Page 404 books.google.com/books?id=x4EMAAAAIAAJ François Pyrard, Pierre de Bergeron, Jérôme Bignon - 1887

> These porches or Autarch in front of the houses are for receiving passing strangers, both for giving them meat and drink, and also a place to rest and sleep ; they take them not inside their houses, so that they may depart during the night when ...

9. Lives, translated from the Greek, with notes critical and ... - Volume 7 - Page 8 books.google.com/books?id=rFAMAAAAIAAJ Plutarch - 1808

> ... being ordered by the senate to repel force with force, attacked him, killed several of his men, and lost some of his own. By this action he forfeited the favour of the people : But this was not the only thing that rendered him & autarch's LIVES.

10. The English portion of the library of the Ven. Francis Wrangham - Page 315 books.google.com/books?id=AMURAAAAIAAJ Francis Wrangham - 1826

> See D'Iraeli's autarch of Author/, and tit. Anecd. III. 887.

Two Copies only of this Collection were printed on T'ine Paper : of which one was MM. at Dr. Farmer's Sale in 1790, to Mr. Dent for 11. 16s. ; and the other, his own present to Mr. Reed, ...

11. The Publishers' circular and general record of British and foreign ... - Volume 33 - Page 777 books.google.com/books?id=aWVWAAAAIAAJ 1870

> ENGLISH WRITERS. Chapters for Self-Improvement in English Literature. OTHER PEOPLES WINDOWS. By the Author of 'Gentle Life.' LIBRARY EDITIONS OF STANDARD WORKS. AUTARCH'S LIVES. New Edition. By the late A. H. Clough.

12. The whole critical works of Monsieur Rapin ...: Newly done into ... - Page 398 books.google.com/books?id=UC1JAAAAIAAJ René Rapin, Thomas Taylor, Thomas Rymer - 1706

> His Knowledge autarch's René's more sensible of his Ignorance, and of Doctor his Ingenuity prompted him, without Ceremony, Epicurus to confess it. Epicurus had good Talents of Nature, and was a Philosopher in his very Pleasures : 'Tis a saying of ...

13. Niles' Weekly Register - Volume 15 - Page 225 books.google.com/books?id=q_lAAAAIAAJ Hezekiah Niles, William Ogden Niles - 1819

> kilkh, at 5 run am*um, patari.k in autarch. By the assistance of a supplement, arranged to justify the present regular number, we are enabled this week to dispose of the entire reports of Messrs. Hobbes and Graham, on South- American affairs, ...

14. The European Magazine, and London Review - Volumes 61-62 - Page 210 books.google.com/books?id=NB8YAQAIAAJ 1812

> ... are of the exact species of writing of the Athenians, critical justice demands from us, that we should state of what species they are

: and here we must refer their origin to a much more ancient prototype than Anthony Woodi we mean, to Autarch, ...

15. Asiatic Journal - Volume 6 - Page 183

books.google.com/books?id=PBQLAQAAAMAJ 1831

> We have lost Mr. Creus, the Spanish Consul, and Mr. Autarch!, his interpreter. At Cairo the mortality was less severe. The establishment of the Pacha, the regiments and manufacturers, have suffered most. We have also to regret the loss of ...

16. Cobbett's Political Register - Volume 10

books.google.com/books?id=iCM8AAAAIAAJ William Cobbett - 1806

> It is only under autarch of triumph that you should return.

What! have , we braved the seasons, the seas, and the deserts ; have we triumphed over Europe leagued against us ; have we borne our glory, from Orient to the Setting Sun, only to ...

17. Hannah More - Page 76 books.google.com/books?id=8KwEAAAAYAAJ
Charlotte Mary Yonge - 1888

> What little ornament there is I have bestowed, not injudiciously I trow, on the slenderest part. You will find but one episode, and even that does not obstruct the progress of the main subject ; and for parallels, I will be bold to say Autarch does ...

We can see there's a lot of Greco-Roman context in the hits, and in one or two it looks like some sort of error ('autarch of triumph?') or to be someone's name ('Mr. Autarch'). So overall, a very rare word indeed.