

resurrecting a 2002 thread that posits an alternative lineage for Sev

The Urth list — 72 messages, 11 voices, 20 Sep 2014

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6674>

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Marc Aramini — 20 Sep 2014, 19:58

I just passed over a truly old discussion which never got much attention, but interests me for several reasons. I think my response to Don's post was good, but it never received any further response. Don posits that Typhon is Sev's father (I rather think he is Silk's, though I probably didn't realize that back in 2002).

Here is Don't post, and below will be my answer from 2002.

Howdy y'all,

A few posts back, someone wrote that they wished there was a Book of Typhon and a Book of Piaton. Well, I don't know about the second but I'm beginning to believe that the entire Sun Cycle might be the first. I wonder if Typhon (excluding Pas) is not the best concealed major character in fiction ever. And while my reading of King Jesus pointed me in this direction (rightly or wrongly), I don't think it's necessary at all to my speculations. On what? Severian's ancestry, to start.

Let me start by saying flat out that I don't believe that Dorcas is

Severian's grandmother or that Ouen is his father. To me, that is such a big red herring that we could all eat fish taco's for a month. It's always bothered me and I'll state the simple reason why. Incest. I cannot believe that Wolfe would have his main character commit incest, knowingly or unknowingly, and especially without any good reason. And there is no good reason (unless you want to establish Severian as Antichrist, which I don't believe) for Severian to sleep with his grandmother. If she was his mother, there's the Oedipus parallel. If his sister, there's the marriage of Pharaoh and his Sister (and other parallels I can't think of). If his daughter, there's the story of Noah. If someone can point out a mytho-symbolic instance of grandson-grandmother incest then I will rethink this. Otherwise I will never be convinced.

Especially when there are two better alternatives which fit much more

snugly into Severian's mythos. There is the obvious Jesus parallel where Joseph/Ouen is the "father" (though God is the real father) and Mary/Katharine (which means "pure") is the virgin/pelerine mother. There is also the Arthurian parallel where Sir Hector is Arthur's "father" through the intervention of Merlin/Inire? and the real father is Uther the King (Monarch). Either fit better than the Dorcas and Ouen alternative.

Before I get too deep into this, let me say that I have a lot of puzzle

pieces and a fair amount of them fit together, but I don't have a comprehensive picture and I'm confused by some things. Mainly I'm confused by the relationship between Ymar and Severian, and because of this I'm unable to make the precise connection I'd like between either Ymar and Typhon or Severian and Typhon. That said, I'm sure there is a strong familial connection between the three and I'm equally sure that the Sun Cycle is also a very complex dynastic novel in addition to its other mind boggling functions. What I'm saying is any help would be appreciated. There are four things that tie Ymar to Severian strongly in my mind. The first is that they are both sheltered by the Guild. The second is that they both go on to be Autarch and travel to Yesod. Third is the anecdote about Ymar following the dog (which I think is the real point of Severian's relating it, in spite of his elaborate attempt to explicate its meaning), and the fourth is in Ymar's title: the Almost Just. As in James the Just, brother of Jesus. I also discovered that ymar is supposedly Hebrew for ox, though I have no idea what relevance that has.

One or both of them is Typhon's son. My reasoning for this is in the

Tale of a Boy Called Frog. In this tale, Spring Wind/typhoon/Typhon fathers twin sons with a princess whose father had given her over to an order of virgin priestesses (hmmm?). I would add that Spring Wind is the son of Early Summer and the juice of a red flower (fire? a rose? the old sun?)

"No,

I was not born as I am, or born at all, as you meant it." The sons are set adrift on a stream (the brook madregot?) One of the sons is taken in by wolves and sheltered by the Black Killer (the Guild?) and goes on to rule. "Here is the red flower. In his name I rule." Severian's coat of arms contains the red flower, as does the mausoleum of his boyhood. This implies some sort of dynastic tie between the two. And Severian's memorial stone in "Urth" says "by Right the First Man of Urth" By right of what? No one knows whether he's the one to bring the New Sun. Maybe it's by right of blood, by his tie to the Monarch.

My problem is, is this Severian the story is talking about or is it Ymar?

Are they brothers? Are they the same person? Is one a clone of the other? If Severian is this son then it seems likely that Katharine and Kypris are one and the same. If Ymar is the son then Kypris is surely his mother. My pet theory is that Ymar is Typhon's son and Severian is his (Ymar's) clone. This allows Katharine to give a virgin birth and allows Severian to be his own father. This dynastic theory also meshes nicely with Greek mythology, which as Peter Green states in his introduction to Apollonius of Rhodes Argonautica (univ. of california press, p.22) ". . . has as background a complex genealogical web of intertwined family relationships. . ."

Whatever the answer, the one thing I am absolutely positive of is that

Dorcas is in no way an immediate member of Severian's family. Which brings another question. Does he know his ancestry? (I think yes. Valeria most likely told him.) If he does, why is he hiding it?

Don

And my brilliant, but youthful, response:

In a previous post, Don asserted that he sees little need for Dorcas to be a familial relation of Severian's. I argue that it is imperative that she be a member of his line: her love is a distorted version of motherly love that is the most redeeming love in the text outside of divinity.

I argue that, as Gene Wolfe has stated, in some small part the story of Severian is the story of a man looking for love. I think that Wolfe is a careful enough writer to show that these females (whatever you think of them) are symbolic of something other than themselves. In the text, first you have an ideal of beauty that you covet (Thea), then you have the prostitute - the easiest form of "love" for a young boy to get with a little cash - that mirrors a desire (that mirrors another desire).

Then you have a wiser, older mentor (Thecla). Then the femme fatale in the form of Agia - conniving, plain outside and ugly inside - then you have the most redeeming love of the text - one that must be explored in the same sexual metaphor that Wolfe uses to explore all the others - the most versatile form of love (note the changing flowers in Dorcas' hair - she is the only one who can change her flowers if we associate Thecla with the death lilies and Agia with the Avern) - that of the mother figure. It is a tension between sexual desire and the need to be protected from the external environment - and notice how Dorcas changes Sev's perceptions of the outside world by having him feel her up, presenting him with the archetypal symbol of safety - the breast. That's pretty motherly. Then we have false vanity, teasing, and uppitiness (Jolenta). Later we get an exploration of adultery (Cyriaca), then an exploration of slavery/bondage in the form of Pia, and perhaps one of buggery with little Sev. (but probably not) Finally this culminates in frigid, banal marriage with a haughty wench that leaves everybody feeling bad, so one might as well go to the stars to be castrated.

In many ways, the text is an exhaustion of the possibilities of happiness through either feminine spirituality or sexuality (you've noticed all those evil feminine goddesses and cults lurking in the text, Don). Love, to a young man, might seem to be best embodied by someone in the image of his mother, but even that should be shunned for something a bit more redemptive and spiritual, as Severian ultimately does. I think Dorcas needs to be maternal, and Severian's symbolic incest is not contrary to Wolfe's intentions, for the thematic consistency of the book relies on all of these various roles offering nothing but a vacuous relief from lust and desire in the form of a grasping, new hatched chick hungry to devour the world. (At least, I think so).

Marc Aramini

Marc Aramini — 20 Sep 2014, 20:14 · in reply to Marc Aramini

Certainly the repose of Cilinia/Scylla in what could be Sev's mausoleum is at least one plausible bit of possibly coincidental evidence for Don's position (for all that some people maintain it is a different mausoleum ...)

I still prefer Pia over ... Scylla ... as a sister for Sev, though, what with the fish imagery of the lake people and Oannes and Sev swimming "like a frog" in that scene, calling her like a sister in love to Dorcas with her hungry mouth, being exactly his age, having a thin waist unusual for an autochthon and black hair, etc. Whatever - that sister talk gets old quickly.

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Lee — 02 Oct 2014, 12:37 · follows Marc Aramini

On Wed, Oct 1, 2014 at 7:35 AM, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:

I agree. Marc's position has a point, in that incest which is neither intended nor known can't be much of a symbol.

I disagree. For me, what is being missed is that the incest taboo applies to human beings. But for the pagan gods, incest was the norm and sexual activity outside the family, (with humans) was the more shameful act.

The origin of these incestuous god myths may well derive from the incestuous dynasties which ruled the Mediterranean empires. The principle remains the same: it is morally proper for superior beings to only mate among themselves and not with the rabble of humanity. (hence Apheta's distaste at having to mate with Severian).

Severian is a (pagan) god. He has a presentiment of it at the beginning of his story but by the end of Citadel, we are meant to understand that he was The Conciliator and he will be The New Sun.

By the end of Urth of the New Sun we also understand that in addition to his superhuman healing powers, he was also worshipped as Apu Punchau, he can breathe underwater, he can travel through time he is immortal (though not invulnerable), and at the very end he once again finds himself worshipped as a god.

The first person style of narrative is a strong temptation for the reader to put him/herself into Severian's shoes and to think "he is like me". Just like Severian we have all had our share of life's ups and downs and we all sometimes think "why me?" when something unusual happens to us. During the course of the story Severian never really acknowledges the constellation of god features he possesses. So it is easy for the reader to follow along and also think of Severian as a normal human, though clearly he is not.

Oedipus plucked his eyes out on finding out about his incestuous marriage to his mother. Severian seems to harbor no level of guilt which even approaches that. As I see it, Severian's incest does carry a large symbolic burden. It, among many other things, helps establish his essential pagan godhood.

António Marques — 02 Oct 2014, 13:13 · in reply to Lee

On 2 October 2014 13:37, Lee <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:

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This is a very important point.

Marc Aramini — 02 Oct 2014, 13:47 · in reply to Lee

This is obvious, but for me the miracles make him pretty explicitly a Judeo-Christian wonderworker/savior with a little sin and torture thrown in for good measure (bleeding from the forehead when he sees the many eye-winged butterfly, turning water to wine, resurrecting the dead, healing, carrying a huge cross shaped torture device which is occasionally planted in the ground, being tempted by Satan almost verbatim (but never, say, transforming into an animal like a Pagan god)) - my earliest impression when I was a young boy was not that he was a normal person but a Christ. The pagan gods are the unnatural creatures in New Sun whose mythologies are incorporated and transformed into Christian stories [such as the flood and the story of Genesis]. (At least throughout The Book of the New Sun).

I never fancied Sev ordinary. While clearly Wolfe loves playing with mythical creatures, the importance of his Catholicism to his works shouldn't be understated.

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Brad Henry — 02 Oct 2014, 14:04 · in reply to Marc Aramini

And part of catholic teaching is that saints are not simply 'controlled by christ' in their working of miracles (many saints have performed miracles like severian') but they are in the process of 'theosis' (or, sometimes called 'divination'), being made into gods, that culminates in their resurrection to immortality. It is a christian quip: "God became man, so that man might become (a) god." The traditional biblical cite for this is 2 Peter 1.3-4.

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António Marques — 02 Oct 2014, 14:14 · in reply to Brad Henry

And Christ performed miracles through faith, not by the use of some magical power belonging to himself.

On 2 October 2014 15:04, Brad Henry <bradhenry101 at gmail.com> wrote:

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Brad Henry — 02 Oct 2014, 14:19 · in reply to António Marques

I'm sure I'm late to the game on this one too, but Paul often refers to the final culmination of a christian's life as being made "like the stars (suns) in the heavens" (a traditional apocalyptic image that should not be taken simply metaphorically).

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Matthew Weber — 02 Oct 2014, 14:39 · in reply to António Marques

Through faith in what, Himself?

Christ is a hypostasis of divinity and humanity. It's correct to say that his power is not magical (i.e. granted him by some other, more powerful agency). It is no more magical than my power to use my arm to lift a cup of coffee to my mouth so I can drink it. My power to do so is inherent, as is Christ's to perform signs.

Insofar as Wolfe is an orthodox RC, it can be assumed that this is what he believes as well.

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Marc Aramini — 02 Oct 2014, 14:52 · in reply to Matthew Weber

Yes, I am quite sure Wolfe subscribes to the whole "one in being with the Father" creed - Christ is fully human and fully divine (a similar paradox to the whole three in one, one in three theological parsing - we aren't dealing with Arianism or Gnosticism in Wolfe ... oh wait, maybe sometimes we are ...)

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Through faith in what, Himself?

Christ is a hypostasis of divinity and humanity. It's correct to say that his power is not magical (i.e. granted him by some other, more powerful

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Insofar as Wolfe is an orthodox RC, it can be assumed that this is what he believes as well.

On Thu, Oct 2, 2014 at 7:14 AM, Ant?nio Marques <antonio at gmail.com> wrote:

And Christ performed miracles through faith, not by the use of some magical power belonging to himself.

On 2 October 2014 15:04, Brad Henry <bradhenry101 at gmail.com> wrote:

And part of catholic teaching is that saints are not simply 'controlled by christ' in their working of miracles (many saints have performed miracles like severian') but they are in the process of 'theosis' (or, sometimes called 'divination'), being made into gods, that culminates in their resurrection to immortality. It is a christian quip: "God became man, so that man might become (a) god." The traditional biblical cite for this is 2 Peter 1.3-4.

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This is obvious, but for me the miracles make him pretty explicitly a Judeo-Christian wonderworker/savior with a little sin and torture thrown in for good measure (bleeding from the forehead when he sees the many eye-winged butterfly, turning water to wine, resurrecting the dead, healing, carrying a huge cross shaped torture device which is occasionally planted in the ground, being tempted by Satan almost verbatim (but never, say, transforming into an animal like a Pagan god)) - my earliest impression when I was a young boy was not that he was a normal person but a Christ. The pagan gods are the unnatural creatures in New Sun whose mythologies are incorporated and transformed into Christian stories [such as the flood and the story of Genesis]. (At least throughout The Book of the New Sun).

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By the end of Urth of the New Sun we also understand that in addition to his superhuman healing

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a god.

António Marques — 02 Oct 2014, 15:14 · in reply to Matthew Weber

Christ the man performed miracles through his faith in God, nothing else. That is, Christ's ability to perform miracles wasn't in any way different from that of his disciples, who also performed them through faith in God. That is straight, orthodox (and Orthodox), Catholic teaching, or should I say dogma. Christ wasn't able to perform miracles because he was God, but because of his faith in God. He also prayed, while we're at it!

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Lee — 05 Oct 2014, 12:27 · follows António Marques

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Norwood, Frederick Hudson — 06 Oct 2014, 13:23 · in reply to Lee

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Rick

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Sent: Sunday, October 05, 2014 8:28 AM

To: urth at urth.net

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António Marques — 06 Oct 2014, 13:55 · in reply to Norwood, Frederick Hudson

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Marc Aramini — 06 Oct 2014, 14:19 · in reply to Norwood, Frederick Hudson

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António Marques — 06 Oct 2014, 14:35 · in reply to Marc Aramini

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To: urth at urth.net

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Norwood, Frederick Hudson — 06 Oct 2014, 14:59 · in reply to António Marques

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David Stockhoff — 06 Oct 2014, 17:46 · in reply to Lee

I can't argue with that. But I do think that for this eastern-mythical interpretation to really work, it must fit into---and be secondary to---some kind of Catholic incorporating/transforming structure.

On 10/2/2014 8:37 AM, Lee wrote:

On Wed, Oct 1, 2014 at 7:35 AM, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:

I agree. Marc's position has a point, in that incest which is neither intended nor known can't be much of a symbol.

I disagree. For me, what is being missed is that the incest taboo applies to human beings. But for the pagan gods, incest was the norm and sexual activity outside the family, (with humans) was the more shameful act.

Marc Aramini — 06 Oct 2014, 17:47 · in reply to António Marques

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Antonio, I don't know where you're getting your Catholic/Orthodox theology, but it's wrong. Both churches clearly teach (cf. <http://www.christusrex.org/www1/CDHN/ccc.html>) that Jesus Christ was God, the Son, begotten of the Father, true God from true God, but *also* fully human: twi-natured.

On Thu, Oct 2, 2014 at 8:14 AM, Ant?nio Marques <antonio at gmail.com> wrote:
Christ the man performed miracles through his faith in God, nothing else.
That is, Christ's ability to perform miracles wasn't in any way different from that of his disciples, who also performed them through faith in God.
That is straight, orthodox (and Orthodox), Catholic teaching, or should I say dogma. Christ wasn't able to perform miracles because he was God, but because of his faith in God. He also prayed, while we're at it!

On 2 October 2014 15:39, Matthew Weber <palaeologos at gmail.com> wrote:
Through faith in what, Himself?

Christ is a hypostasis of divinity and humanity. It's correct to say that his power is not magical (i.e. granted him by some other, more powerful agency). It is no more magical than my power to use my arm to lift a cup of coffee to my mouth so I can drink it. My power to do so is inherent, as is Christ's to perform signs.

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And Christ performed miracles through faith, not by the use of some magical power belonging to himself.

On 2 October 2014 15:04, Brad Henry <bradhenry101 at gmail.com> wrote:

And part of catholic teaching is that saints are not simply 'controlled by christ' in their working of miracles (many saints have performed miracles like severian') but they are in the process of 'theosis' (or, sometimes called 'divination'), being made into gods, that culminates in their resurrection to immortality. It is a christian quip: "God became man, so that man might become (a) god." The traditional biblical cite for this is 2 Peter 1.3-4.

On Thu, Oct 2, 2014 at 9:47 AM, Marc Aramini <marcaramini at gmail.com> wrote:

This is obvious, but for me the miracles make him pretty explicitly a Judeo-Christian wonderworker/savior with a little sin and torture thrown in for good measure (bleeding from the forehead when he sees the many eye-winged butterfly, turning water to wine, resurrecting the dead, healing, carrying a huge cross shaped torture device which is occasionally planted in the ground, being tempted by Satan almost verbatim (but never, say, transforming into an animal like a Pagan god)) - my earliest impression when I was a young boy was not that he was a normal person but a Christ. The pagan gods are the unnatural creatures in New Sun whose mythologies are incorporated and transformed into Christian stories [such as the flood and the story of Genesis]. (At least throughout The Book of the New Sun).

I never fancied Sev ordinary. While clearly Wolfe loves playing with mythical creatures, the importance of his Catholicism to his works shouldn't be understated.

On Thursday, October 2, 2014, Lee <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:

On Wed, Oct 1, 2014 at 7:35 AM, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:

Severian is a (pagan) god. He has a presentiment of it at the beginning of his story but by the end

of Citadel, we are meant to understand that he was The Conciliator and he will be The New Sun.

By the end of Urth of the New Sun we also understand that in addition to his superhuman healing

powers, he was also worshipped as Apu Punchau, he can breathe underwater, he can travel through time

he is immortal (though not invulnerable), and at the very end he once again finds himself worshipped as

a god.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 06 Oct 2014, 17:56 · in reply to Marc Aramini

Marc - Of course you are right that "all humans are equal" is a heretical, Enlightenment, idea: but it is also true that all humans are to be treated, according to the Church, with full human dignity as (flawed) living images of God. And, as the angel says somewhere in BotNS, the difference in dignity between us (and between us and the angels) is as nothing between the difference between us (and the angels) and God.

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Sent: Monday, October 06, 2014 10:35 AM

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Subject: Re: (urth) resurrecting a 2002 thread that posits an alternative lineage for Sev

The Catholic attitude to Mary is only Catholic in that Protestants defined themselves against Catholics. Otherwise, it's the common or garden Christian attitude, from Rome to Constantinople to Nineveh or Addis Ababa (as so many other things that are often thought of as Catholic).

On 6 October 2014 15:19, Marc Aramini <marcaramini at gmail.com> wrote:

Probably most clearly fictionally expressed in "Queen" with the fictional exploration of an assumption. (I think that was the story).

The same as most Catholics, I am sure. Reverence and respect on a level slightly greater than that for the other saints. Mary's own immaculate conception is kind of a vital hint to when the changeling shows up in "The Changeling"

There is a superstitious nature to the Saints and their areas of specialty in most catholic families. It might also show his frequent use of voodoo, which has taken the images of Catholicism and channelled something else through it.

Deification is a Protestant over-reaction to the great respect offered to the saints and Mary as intermediaries on the behalf of humanity to an infinitely incomprehensible God. Reverence and awe and relative closeness to God (compared to our own existence) does not make one a literal God.

I imagine he views them much as the story of the cock and the angel from New Sun, though perhaps God is not as remote to them.

On Monday, October 6, 2014, Norwood, Frederick Hudson <NORWOODR at mail.etsu.edu> wrote:

Interesting. Using that definition I can see Protestants viewing the Roman near-deification of Mary as being essentially polytheistic. What are Gene Wolfe's views on Mary?

Rick Norwood

From: Urth [mailto:urth-bounces at lists.urth.net
<urth-bounces at lists.urth.net>] *On Behalf Of *Ant?nio Marques
Sent: Monday, October 06, 2014 9:56 AM
To: The Urth Mailing List
Subject: Re: (urth) resurrecting a 2002 thread that posits an
alternative lineage for Sev

Not necessarily. Pagan has meant 'polytheist' from early on.
Non-polytheists might be hereticals, infidels, whatever, without
necessarily being pagan.

The idea that the Roman Church is 'pagan' is part of Protestant
folklore. No one else pays any attention to it.

On 6 October 2014 14:23, Norwood, Frederick Hudson <NORWOODR at mail.etsu.edu> wrote:

The word pagan means: neither Christian nor Jewish. (The earlier
meaning -- a rustic, a rude fellow, not schooled in the ways of the big
city -- is obsolete.) Therefore Catholics are not pagans. There may or
may not be a continuous progression from the pagan to the Christian, but as
soon as you say "I believe in God, the Father, almighty, maker of heaven
and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord," you stop being a
pagan.

Rick

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

From: Urth [mailto:urth-bounces at lists.urth.net
<urth-bounces at lists.urth.net>] On Behalf Of Lee
Sent: Sunday, October 05, 2014 8:28 AM
To: urth at urth.net
Subject: (urth) resurrecting a 2002 thread that posits an alternative
lineage for Sev

Marc Aramini: when I was a young boy was not that he was a normal person but a Christ. The pagan gods are

the unnatural creatures in New Sun whose mythologies are incorporated and transformed into Christian stories

[such as the flood and the story of Genesis].

I would mention that the pagan gods of earth are actually of the MOST natural origin; things such as earth and sky

and ocean and weather. More advanced religions serve a function only in more advanced, i.e. civilized, urbanized

societies.

Perhaps calling Severian a pagan god was an oversimplified and misleading analogy. My usual way of describing

the analogy is as a demi-god, akin to the half-breed Greco-Roman heroes. Like Severian, they were born not

knowing their true parentage and unaware of the source of their superhuman abilities and skills.

While clearly Wolfe loves playing with mythical creatures, the importance of his Catholicism to his works shouldn't

be understated.

I think you are seeing a disconnect which Wolfe does not; i.e. the importance of paganism to Catholicism shouldn't

be understated. The idea that Hercules serves as a prototype for Jesus certainly doesn't originate with me.

Antonio Marques: That is, Christ's ability to perform miracles wasn't in any way different from that of his disciples,

who also performed them through faith in God.

I think this is a good observation. Later Christian saints also are known to perform miracles through the power of faith.

In contrast to Jesus, Severian had some very devoted and faithful followers as The Conciliator. He had a cult, The

Pelerines, who were completely devoted to the reverence of the Conciliator and who were even in possession of the

Claw. None of them appeared to have any hint of the powers Severian channeled from the New Sun.

Matthew Weber: Christ is a hypostasis of divinity and humanity. It's correct to say that his power is not magical...

... Insofar as Wolfe is an orthodox RC, it can be assumed that this is what he believes as well.

On his own Catholicism, with regard to his writing, Wolfe says of himself (in the Larry McCaffrey interview):

I am a practicing Catholic, although I don't think that designation would give people much of an idea about what my

beliefs are. People have a very limited, stereotyped view of what it means to be a Catholic.....

.....I certainly don't dismiss religious or other mystical forms of speculation out of hand. I read it and try to make my own

judgments about it. And in The Book Of The New Sun I tried to work out some of the implications of my beliefs.

Marc Aramini: Yes, I am quite sure Wolfe subscribes to the whole "one in being with the Father" creed - Christ is fully human

and fully divine (a similar paradox to the whole three in one, one in three theological parsing - we aren't dealing with

Arianism or Gnosticism in Wolfe ... oh wait, maybe sometimes we are)

I think this is a good discussion. In deciding whether Catholicism is separate from paganism or is part of a continuous

progression from it, I think there is sort of a Necker Cube effect going on. The picture changes, depending on what

perspective you are viewing from. My sense is that Wolfe is aware of this Necker Cube and plays with the different

perspectives in the course of his writing.

Marc Aramini — 06 Oct 2014, 18:16 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Yes - one in being/consubstantial with God the father (the book of the new sun even goes as far as saying the increate IS the New Sun - orthodox as it gets)

On Monday, October 6, 2014, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:
Antonio, I don't know where you're getting your Catholic/Orthodox theology, but it's wrong. Both churches clearly teach (cf. <http://www.christusrex.org/www1/CDHN/ccc.html>) that Jesus Christ was God, the Son, begotten of the Father, true God from true God, but *also* fully human: twi-natured.

On Thu, Oct 2, 2014 at 8:14 AM, Ant?nio Marques <antonio at gmail.com <javascript:_e(%7B%7D,'cvml','antonio at gmail.com');>> wrote:

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On 2 October 2014 15:39, Matthew Weber <palaeologos at gmail.com <javascript:_e(%7B%7D,'cvml','palaeologos at gmail.com');>> wrote:

Through faith in what, Himself?

Christ is a hypostasis of divinity and humanity. It's correct to say that his power is not magical (i.e. granted him by some other, more powerful agency). It is no more magical than my power to use my arm to lift a cup of coffee to my mouth so I can drink it. My power to do so is inherent, as is Christ's to perform signs.

Insofar as Wolfe is an orthodox RC, it can be assumed that this is what he believes as well.

On Thu, Oct 2, 2014 at 7:14 AM, Ant?nio Marques <antonio at gmail.com <javascript:_e(%7B%7D,'cvml','antonio at gmail.com');>> wrote:

And Christ performed miracles through faith, not by the use of some magical power belonging to himself.

On 2 October 2014 15:04, Brad Henry <bradhenry101 at gmail.com <javascript:_e(%7B%7D,'cvml','bradhenry101 at gmail.com');>> wrote:

And part of catholic teaching is that saints are not simply 'controlled by christ' in their working of miracles (many saints have performed miracles like severian') but they are in the process of 'theosis' (or, sometimes called 'divination'), being made into gods, that culminates in their resurrection to immortality. It is a christian quip: "God became man, so that man might become (a) god." The traditional biblical cite for this is 2 Peter 1.3-4.

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I never fancied Sev ordinary. While clearly Wolfe loves playing with mythical creatures, the importance of his Catholicism to his works shouldn't be understated.

On Thursday, October 2, 2014, Lee <severiansola at hotmail.com <javascript:_e(%7B%7D,'cvml','severiansola at hotmail.com');>> wrote:

On Wed, Oct 1, 2014 at 7:35 AM, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:

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of Citadel, we are meant to understand that he was The Conciliator and he will be The New Sun.

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powers, he was also worshipped as Apu Punchau, he can breathe underwater, he can travel through time

he is immortal (though not invulnerable), and at the very end he once again finds himself worshipped as

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António Pedro Marques — 06 Oct 2014, 18:35 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

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Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 06 Oct 2014, 18:41 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

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I think if I meant what you read I'd have to put in a parenthetical '(which he wasn't)'. You are correct in that my phrasing is suboptimal, but I don't see how to improve on it other than rewriting it all. On the other hand, the issue itself of the divinity of Christ was completely absent from my mind when I wrote that, so I wasn't trying to be cautious in regard to it. I was merely

concerned with what i think is an important point about the miracles themselves.

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Norwood, Frederick Hudson — 07 Oct 2014, 11:58 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Christ was entirely God, all powerful, all knowing, able to perform miracles. At the same time, he was all human, there was much he did not know, and much he could not do. He prayed to God, asked God to change His mind, and asked God why He had forsaken Him.

This is one of the great Mysteries of Catholic dogma — and one of several reason why I'm not a Christian.

Rick

From: Urth [mailto:urth-bounces at lists.urth.net] On Behalf Of Dan'I Danehy-Oakes
Sent: Monday, October 06, 2014 2:42 PM
To: The Urth Mailing List
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On Thu, Oct 2, 2014 at 9:47 AM, Marc Aramini <marcaramini at gmail.com<mailto:marcaramini at gmail.com>> wrote:

This is obvious, but for me the miracles make him pretty explicitly a Judeo-Christian wonderworker/savior with a little sin and torture thrown in for good measure (bleeding from the forehead when he sees the many eye-winged butterfly, turning water to wine, resurrecting the dead, healing, carrying a huge cross shaped torture device which is occasionally planted in the

ground, being tempted by Satan almost verbatim (but never, say, transforming into an animal like a Pagan god)) - my earliest impression when I was a young boy was not that he was a normal person but a Christ. The pagan gods are the unnatural creatures in New Sun whose mythologies are incorporated and transformed into Christian stories [such as the flood and the story of Genesis]. (At least throughout The Book of the New Sun).

I never fancied Sev ordinary. While clearly Wolfe loves playing with mythical creatures, the importance of his Catholicism to his works shouldn't be understated.

On Thursday, October 2, 2014, Lee <severiansola at hotmail.com<mailto:severiansola at hotmail.com>> wrote:

On Wed, Oct 1, 2014 at 7:35 AM, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net<mailto:dstockhoff at verizon.net>> wrote:

Severian is a (pagan) god. He has a presentiment of it at the beginning of his story but by the end of Citadel, we are meant to understand that he was The Conciliator and he will be The New Sun.

By the end of Urth of the New Sun we also understand that in addition to his superhuman healing powers, he was also worshipped as Apu Punchau, he can breathe underwater, he can travel through time he is immortal (though not invulnerable), and at the very end he once again finds himself worshipped as a god.

Matt +

For all that nature by her mother wit

Could frame in earth.

Edmund Spenser (1552-1599), The Faerie Queene [1590], bk. IV [1596], canto 10, st. 21

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Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

António Pedro Marques — 07 Oct 2014, 13:37 · in reply to Norwood, Frederick Hudson

The point of this sub thread is precisely that according to orthodoxy Christ's ability to perform miracles was under the *human* part. The other issues you bring up are another matter.

No dia 07/10/2014, ?s 12:58, "Norwood, Frederick Hudson" <NORWOODR at mail.etsu.edu> escreveu:

Christ was entirely God, all powerful, all knowing, able to perform miracles. At the same time, he was all human, there was much he did not know, and much he could not do. He prayed to God, asked God to change His mind, and asked God why He had forsaken Him.

This is one of the great Mysteries of Catholic dogma — and one of several reason why I'm not a Christian.

Rick

From: Urth [mailto:urth-bounces at lists.urth.net] On Behalf Of Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Sent: Monday, October 06, 2014 2:42 PM

To: The Urth Mailing List

Subject: Re: (urth) resurrecting a 2002 thread that posits an alternative lineage for Sev

Antonio, it was this:

Christ the man performed miracles through his faith in God, nothing else. That is, Christ's ability to perform miracles wasn't in any way different from that of his disciples, who also performed them through faith in God.

While I can see in looking back that you are not saying "He isn't God," it sure looked to me like you were - the next line even more so:

Christ wasn't able to perform miracles because he was God, but because of his faith in God. He also prayed, while we're at it!

Can you see where I might have thought "not because he was God" meant "he was not God?" I could have read more carefully ... but I think you could have written it a bit more carefully also.

On Mon, Oct 6, 2014 at 11:35 AM, Antonio Pedro Marques <antonio at gmail.com> wrote:
Dan'I, I don't know where you're getting my presentation of Catholic/Orthodox theology from, but your 'wrong' is wrong - where exactly did I say anything about the issue you mention here? (I have said plenty about it, but not, I think, on this forum, much less 'wrong').

Mmmmm - could it be the way you parsed 'wasn't...because he was God'? I thought it was clear in context. I don't know how to be more clear without major rewriting.
(For the record, my 'was' is merely because I'm referring to a specific time in the past. It has no implications outside.)

No dia 06/10/2014, às 18:54, "Dan'I Danehy-Oakes" <danldo at gmail.com> escreveu:

Antonio, I don't know where you're getting your Catholic/Orthodox theology, but it's wrong. Both churches clearly teach (cf. <http://www.christusrex.org/www1/CDHN/ccs.html>) that Jesus Christ was God, the Son, begotten of the Father, true God from true God, but *also* fully human: two-natured.

On Thu, Oct 2, 2014 at 8:14 AM, Antonio Pedro Marques <antonio at gmail.com> wrote:
Christ the man performed miracles through his faith in God, nothing else. That is, Christ's ability to perform miracles wasn't in any way different from that of his disciples, who also performed them through faith in God. That is straight, orthodox (and Orthodox), Catholic teaching, or should I say dogma. Christ wasn't able to perform miracles because he was God, but because of his faith in God. He also prayed, while we're at it!

On 2 October 2014 15:39, Matthew Weber <palaeologos at gmail.com> wrote:
Through faith in what, Himself?

Christ is a hypostasis of divinity and humanity. It's correct to say that his power is not magical (i.e. granted him by some other, more powerful agency). It is no more magical than my power to use my arm to lift a cup of coffee to my mouth so I can drink it. My power to do so is inherent, as is Christ's to perform signs.

Insofar as Wolfe is an orthodox RC, it can be assumed that this is what he believes as well.

On Thu, Oct 2, 2014 at 7:14 AM, Antonio Pedro Marques <antonio at gmail.com> wrote:
And Christ performed miracles through faith, not by the use of some magical power belonging to himself.

On 2 October 2014 15:04, Brad Henry <bradhenry101 at gmail.com> wrote:
And part of catholic teaching is that saints are not simply 'controlled by christ' in their working of miracles (many saints have performed miracles like severian') but they are in the process of 'theosis' (or, sometimes called 'divination'), being made into gods, that culminates in their resurrection to immortality. It is a christian quip: "God became man, so that man might become (a) god." The traditional biblical cite for this is 2 Peter 1.3-4.

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powers, he was also worshipped as Apu Punchau, he can breathe underwater, he can travel through time

he is immortal (though not invulnerable), and at the very end he once again finds himself worshipped as

a god.

Lee — 07 Oct 2014, 13:58 · follows António Pedro Marques

Rick Norwood:

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At the same time, he was all human, there was much he did not know, and much he could not do. He prayed to God, asked God to change His mind, and asked God why He had forsaken Him.

This is one of the great Mysteries of Catholic dogma — and one of several reasons why I'm not a Christian

I'd add to that the paradox of Free Will. How can an all-powerful, all-knowing Creator construct every molecule of a human being and claim to not know what that human being will do when

faced with temptation?

I am not at all religious myself. But I know Gene Wolfe is. So when I enter his worlds and try to understand them, unlike the real world, I have to become something of a Christian and take leaps of faith and accept essential contradictions and otherwise become a bit religious. I think that is necessary when you are trying to understand a fictionally created world. Intent and meaning become more important than logic and science.

For the natural world, I think science works better.

Ah. No. These words can be used subjectively but all have perfectly good objective meanings. $7 \times 8 = 21$ is a misprision, not better than $7 \times 8 = 56$, not logical, lacking evidence, not right, and, most importantly, is wrong.

It only seems wrong because we are all human beings with 10 fingers and primate- evolved brains. We all happen to agree on the meaning of "7" and "x". Aliens with 12 fingers and silicon brains would likely not be in agreement with us.

Marc used a math problem because math is supposedly the "universal" language upon which we all agree. But if we really had universal access to all intelligences we would surely find that not all agree with our human-invented math.

Moreover, a Wolfe novel is not math. They include contradictions such as the already-cited "Shadow Children are degenerate humans/Shadow Children are native shapeshifters".

Another example is "Yesod is in Urth's future/Yesod is in Urth's past/Yesod is outside of time". All three descriptions can be found in the text. I think this is a case of "no correct answer". I think Wolfe is using contradiction and paradox to convey a sense of something that our human brains are incapable of grasping.

I think Lee addresses this very well. Wolfe is not a postmodernist.

I dunno. Judging by interviews, Wolfe may be a bit schizo on this point. Sometimes in interviews he seems to suggest there are right and wrong answers to his puzzles. Other times he seems to acknowledge that he puts puzzles in his work for which there are no correct solutions (e.g. Yesod's location in time).

Marc Aramini — 07 Oct 2014, 14:40 · in reply to Lee

"Marc used a math problem"????????????????????????????????

I feel like I am arguing with myself here, where everyone misattributes who said what. At least this way I know I will surely win the argument, whether I am Marc, Lee, or Rick. Is something funky going on with the indent levels?

-Marc (or am I?)

On Tue, Oct 7, 2014 at 6:58 AM, Lee <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:
Rick Norwood:

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times he seems to acknowledge that he puts puzzles in his work for which there are no

correct solutions (e.g. Yesod's location in time).

Norwood, Frederick Hudson — 07 Oct 2014, 15:00 · in reply to Marc Aramini

First, let me apologize for getting Marc and Lee mixed up. When I read an amalgam of many posts, I sometimes get confused about who is doing what, with what, and to whom. Even though I'm not a Christian, I do respond emotionally and intellectually to the Christianity in Wolfe, and think it adds a lot to his fiction. (As it does to the fiction of Tolkien and Lewis, two more favorite authors of mine.)

Aliens who use a different number base is a red herring. The math is the same, independently of the language in which it is written. In any case, Wolfe writes (mostly) in English.

And I really do think there are right and wrong interpretations of literature. As somebody said (Marc? Lee?), the ghost of Hamlet's father is not an alien. That interpretation would be just plain wrong.

Rick Norwood

Marc Aramini — 07 Oct 2014, 15:08 · in reply to Norwood, Frederick Hudson

No problem. I just didn't want meaning to be confused. [And now it is indeed you, too, who have said that the ghost of Hamlet's father is not an alien, and our disjunctive posts have come full circle, three in one, one in three.] And the math is indeed the same, independent of the language, (as long as the consciousness of the mathematician is operating in the same dimension, I suppose).

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an amalgam of many posts, I sometimes get confused about who is doing what, with what, and to whom.

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Rick Norwood

Norwood, Frederick Hudson — 07 Oct 2014, 15:27 · in reply to Marc Aramini

[And now it is indeed you, too, who have said that the ghost of Hamlet's father is not an alien, and our disjunctive posts have come full circle, three in one, one in three.]

Thou art God!

Rick Norwood

António Pedro Marques — 08 Oct 2014, 01:01 · in reply to Lee

No dia 07/10/2014, às 14:58, Lee <severiansola at hotmail.com> escreveu:

Rick Norwood:

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This is one of the great Mysteries of Catholic dogma — and one of several reasons why I'm not a Christian

I'd add to that the paradox of Free Will.

To which, of course, you're aware of solutions of various kinds.

This is disturbing. It implies that if what you conceive as logical difficulties were not present, you would find yourself a person of faith. Is that really so?

I rather think that what happens is that **because** you are not a believer, **then** such tenets of

religion strike you as irrational.

(Tho there is the possibility that you are, in fact, religious at heart, but unable to reconcile that with your analytical mind. If that is the case, there's no need to struggle, many folks have worked out any such issues over the ages.)

Religious belief is something that you either accept for yourself or you don't (you have doubts in two very different cases: 1 - you accept it but feel disheartened, 2 - you actually don't accept or don't know it at heart, but mentally you try to), and you just don't arrive at it after scientific consideration, nor abandon it after scientific consideration. No one acquires or loses faith through reason, for the very same reason that no one acquires or loses a romantic interest or a favourite dish through reason.

Yes, many seem to think that faith is some kind of primitive science, and, of course, if it were so then one might abandon it for scientific reasons. And no doubt there are many using their religion like some kind of science, but that's like deciding that a person has a number of good qualities because you happen to like the person. The opposite, also to be found frequently, is to decide that you like some dish because current science says it's healthy. And there are those who think they hold some sentiment dearly because they put some given work into it. All these, be they true or false, are orthogonal to the things they're supposed to be linked to.

That's not to say that belief cannot grow aided by external factors, or dwindle, but it remains fundamentally ruled by itself.

But it may be the case that what you're saying is not that you find such tenets of Christian belief illogical or otherwise, but rather aesthetically or emotionally unappealing (as opposed to rationally unappealing). That's a whole different matter. De gustibus, etc, I can only say that in that case one can't really make a judgement based on isolated bits, for the same reason you can't do it with a painting. I mean, you can, it's a free country.

Norwood, Frederick Hudson — 08 Oct 2014, 14:08 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

I was raised a Christian, have read the Bible from Genesis to Revelations, and find the teachings of Christ deeply appealing. I attended Grace Fellowship Church for years, and accepted Jesus Christ as my savior. I'm still His if he wants me. I gave up Grace Fellowship for one reason (they said that every good Christian must vote for George W. Bush) and gave up Christianity for another reason (I could not make sense of it; for me to believe in a statement I must first understand what the statement means).

As for faith, according to Paul's Letter to the Romans, faith is a gift from God, and he decided before the creation who would get the gift of faith and be saved and who would not get the gift and be damned. Cannot the potter discard defective pots if He wants? Evidently I'm a defective pot.

Rick Norwood

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

From: Urth [mailto:urth-bounces at lists.urth.net] On Behalf Of António Pedro Marques Sent: Tuesday, October 07, 2014 9:02 PM To: The Urth Mailing List Subject: Re: (urth) resurrecting a 2002 thread that posits an alternative lineage for Sev

No dia 07/10/2014, às 14:58, Lee <severiansola at hotmail.com> escreveu:

Rick Norwood:

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António Marques — 08 Oct 2014, 16:28 · in reply to Norwood, Frederick Hudson

We're all defective pots.

Based on what you say, I'd wager that you do have faith but find the theology intellectually abstruse and some so called divines ethically questionable. To the former I can only say that maybe, like some kind of reverse Wittgenstein's ladder, any durable culture has to be upheld by seemingly uninterpretable mysteries (at least, I know of none which aren't). To the latter, well, I'm blessed to live in an environment where the clergy are wise enough not to try to tell anyone whom to vote for (I hear stories, now and then, of some priest who may have done so, but they've always come from people who I know never go to church).

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Sent: Tuesday, October 07, 2014 9:02 PM

To: The Urth Mailing List

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Gerry Quinn — 09 Oct 2014, 13:27 · in reply to Marc Aramini

On 06/10/2014 15:19, Marc Aramini wrote:

Deification is a Protestant over-reaction to the great respect offered to the saints and Mary as intermediaries on the behalf of humanity to an infinitely incomprehensible God. Reverence and awe and relative closeness to God (compared to our own existence) does not make one a literal God.

The Catholic Church doesn't generally fulminate about the theological details of the beliefs of the faithful. The saints - and Mary too - in principle intercede with the Lord when prayed to, rather than answering prayers themselves. But if somebody feels that they probably have authorisation to answer some prayers on their own, nobody is preaching hellfire and damnation just because they got the theology wrong.

I think it's fair to say there is more of a 'community of the faithful' ethos in the Catholic Church than in many or most of the Protestant churches. Bible reading, for example, is not discouraged but neither is it heavily encouraged. There's no element of 'every man his own theologian'. A simple faith and a good life are more than sufficient.

[By the way, it is my understanding that there are 'Catholics' of a slightly different colour in the US. I'm speaking of Roman Catholicism as practised in Ireland, say.]

- Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn — 09 Oct 2014, 13:48 · in reply to Lee

On 07/10/2014 14:58, Lee wrote:

I'd add to that the paradox of Free Will. How can an all-powerful, all-knowing Creator construct every molecule of a human being and claim to not know what that human being will do when faced with temptation?

Does He claim that?

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The same problem arises in science. As far as we know scientifically, a robot with a computer brain could - and perhaps soon will - be manufactured. This robot may have a determinate programming, such that we can predict by simulation how he will respond to any stimulus. Yet we know of no 'scientific' reason why he should not have free will just as much as we do.

[You could put a random number generator based on quantum decisions in his brain to make him sometimes unpredictable on principle. But making him act erratically for no good reason hardly enhances his free will!]

See also Newcomb's Paradox.

- Gerry Quinn

António Marques — 09 Oct 2014, 14:02 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

You don't need to build a robot. Humans, animals and other critters exhibit 'will', yet to a physician they work mechanically. You think you raised your arm because you wanted to? Nay, it was because some electrical current moved down some nerves, leading some muscles to change their Calcium dynamics. NB I'm not discussing the 'mind/matter interface'; I'm keeping strictly to the 'matter' side of it.

On 9 October 2014 14:48, Gerry Quinn <gerry at bindweed.com> wrote:

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[You could put a random number generator based on quantum decisions in his brain to make him sometimes unpredictable on principle. But making him act

erratically for no good reason hardly enhances his free will!]

See also Newcomb's Paradox.

- Gerry Quinn

Marc Aramini — 09 Oct 2014, 14:10 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Your assessment fits my understanding of American roman Catholicism in general (I am Catholic). The catechism has a clause that says one need never have heard of Jesus to be saved, but that belief in Him is the path we know to be true.

I remember kids arguing with me when I was in grade school "you worship Mary" and I thought it asinine. Reverence and respect and asking someone in a position of favor to intercede on your behalf is not truly worship - though it does assume that the one you address has powers and favor beyond yours.

On Thursday, October 9, 2014, Gerry Quinn <gerry at bindweed.com> wrote:

On 06/10/2014 15:19, Marc Aramini wrote:

Deification is a Protestant over-reaction to the great respect offered to the saints and Mary as intermediaries on the behalf of humanity to an infinitely incomprehensible God. Reverence and awe and relative closeness to God (compared to our own existence) does not make one a literal God.

The Catholic Church doesn't generally fulminate about the theological details of the beliefs of the faithful. The saints - and Mary too - in principle intercede with the Lord when prayed to, rather than answering prayers themselves. But if somebody feels that they probably have authorisation to answer some prayers on their own, nobody is preaching hellfire and damnation just because they got the theology wrong.

I think it's fair to say there is more of a 'community of the faithful' ethos in the Catholic Church than in many or most of the Protestant churches. Bible reading, for example, is not discouraged but neither is it heavily encouraged. There's no element of 'every man his own theologian'. A simple faith and a good life are more than sufficient.

[By the way, it is my understanding that there are 'Catholics' of a slightly different colour in the US. I'm speaking of Roman Catholicism as practised in Ireland, say.]

- Gerry Quinn

Norwood, Frederick Hudson — 09 Oct 2014, 14:19 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

I didn't find even a hint of free will in the Bible. God decided who would be damned and who would be saved before he created the universe. That doesn't leave much room for free will.

On the other hand, I once published a paper proving that action by an effort of will is at least possible, else consciousness would never have evolved. It couldn't contribute to survival and reproduction if it couldn't do anything.

Rick Norwood

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

From: Urth [mailto:urth-bounces at lists.urth.net] On Behalf Of Gerry Quinn

Sent: Thursday, October 09, 2014 9:48 AM

To: The Urth Mailing List

Subject: Re: (urth) resurrecting a 2002 thread that posits an alternative lineage for Sev

On 07/10/2014 14:58, Lee wrote:

I'd add to that the paradox of Free Will. How can an all-powerful, all-knowing Creator construct every molecule of a human being and claim to not know what that human being will do when faced with temptation?

Does He claim that?

I am not at all religious myself. But I know Gene Wolfe is. So when I enter his worlds and try to understand them, unlike the real world, I have to become something of a Christian and take leaps of faith and accept essential contradictions and otherwise become a bit religious. I think that is necessary when you are trying to understand a fictionally created world. Intent and meaning become more important than logic and science. For the natural world, I think science works better.

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[You could put a random number generator based on quantum decisions in his brain to make him sometimes unpredictable on principle. But making him act erratically for no good reason hardly enhances his free will!]

See also Newcomb's Paradox.

- Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn — 09 Oct 2014, 14:19 · in reply to António Marques

On 09/10/2014 15:02, António Marques wrote:

You don't need to build a robot. Humans, animals and other critters exhibit 'will', yet to a physician they work mechanically. You think you raised your arm because you wanted to? Nay, it was because some electrical current moved down some nerves, leading some muscles to change their Calcium dynamics. NB I'm not discussing the 'mind/matter interface'; I'm keeping strictly to the 'matter' side of it.

Yes, but it would be difficult or impossible to make predictions for a biological organism. There's even wiggle room for some quantum chaos to work its way up into decision making. A deterministic robot in a virtual environment could be simulated exactly.

- Gerry Quinn

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 09 Oct 2014, 16:37 · in reply to Norwood, Frederick Hudson

Frederick, no. God did not "decide" who would be damned/saved; He *knew* who would be damned/saved. There is a key difference. He creates beings with free will, but because of omniscience and His position outside of Time, he knows in advance what they will do and how He will respond to those actions.

On Thu, Oct 9, 2014 at 7:19 AM, Norwood, Frederick Hudson <NORWOODR at mail.etsu.edu> wrote:
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- Gerry Quinn

David Stockhoff — 10 Oct 2014, 11:39 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

His position outside Time also prevents his becoming terminally bored from all that omniscience, I hope.

On 10/9/2014 12:37 PM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

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Sent: Thursday, October 09, 2014 9:48 AM
To: The Urth Mailing List
Subject: Re: (urth) resurrecting a 2002 thread that posits an alternative lineage for Sev

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Norwood, Frederick Hudson — 10 Oct 2014, 12:06 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

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Rick Norwood

From: Urth [mailto:urth-bounces at lists.urth.net] On Behalf Of Dan'I Danehy-Oakes Sent: Thursday, October 09, 2014 12:38 PM

Norwood, Frederick Hudson — 10 Oct 2014, 13:18 · in reply to David Stockhoff

If He gets bored, he can always smite a few Philistines.

There is a Psalm where God fights a dragon, and another Psalm where God sits in a pantheon of Gods, sort of like a primitive Justice League.

I trust you are all familiar with the South Park pantheon which, if memory serves, consists of Jesus, Mohammed, Buddha, Krishna, and Aquaman.

Rick Norwood

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From: Urth [mailto:urth-bounces at lists.urth.net] On Behalf Of David Stockhoff

Sent: Friday, October 10, 2014 7:40 AM

To: The Urth Mailing List

Subject: Re: (urth) resurrecting a 2002 thread that posits an alternative lineage for Sev

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Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

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António Pedro Marques — 10 Oct 2014, 13:21 · in reply to Norwood, Frederick Hudson

The Bible is big enough to have a bit of everything in it. Catholics consider that faith is what sustains the Bible, rather than the reverse, so they're happy to read everything in it in light of Matthew 22:40. (That's an important difference from other religions on the approach to Scripture. Yes, it isn't always lived up to, but you can end any argument with it.)

(Being a Catholic is very different from being a Protestant when it comes to the 'ethos'. Gerry's account of what it means to be Catholic in Ireland is in line with what I know of being Catholic everywhere else. NB that Gerry, last time I heard, was not a believer in God or Church.)

In Exodus there is the part where God tells Moses He will abandon His people, because otherwise He'll become so angry at their behaviour that He'll smite them all. Moses reasons with Him not to do that. I find that throws an interesting light on the issue of free will.

And I actually think free will is central to an understanding of God and Catholic doctrine. In that regard, have you read St Augustine's book on the issue?

No dia 10/10/2014, às 13:06, "Norwood, Frederick Hudson" <NORWOODR at mail.etsu.edu> escreveu:

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Rick Norwood

From: Urth [mailto:urth-bounces at lists.urth.net] On Behalf Of Dan'I Danehy-Oakes
Sent: Thursday, October 09, 2014 12:38 PM

Norwood, Frederick Hudson — 10 Oct 2014, 13:27 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

Of course God has free will. But not Moses, as far as I can tell.

I'm of course talking ideal religious philosophy. Most of the people I know couldn't give a good god damn what the Bible says. They think the Bible is inerrant, which means that what conservative talk radio says the Bible says is inerrant, and never mind the words in the Book. On Conservapedia they have a version of a Bible with all the Liberal Lies removed. (For example, Jesus didn't forgive the Second Thief, because He wasn't Soft On Crime.)

Rick Norwood

From: Urth [mailto:urth-bounces at lists.urth.net] On Behalf Of Ant?nio Pedro Marques Sent: Friday, October 10, 2014 9:22 AM To: The Urth Mailing List Subject: Re: (urth) resurrecting a 2002 thread that posits an alternative lineage for Sev

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 10 Oct 2014, 15:23 · in reply to Norwood, Frederick Hudson

Frederick - if Moses didn't have free will, he wouldn't have smote the rock a second time...

On Fri, Oct 10, 2014 at 6:27 AM, Norwood, Frederick Hudson <NORWOODR at mail.etsu.edu> wrote:
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<urth-bounces at lists.urth.net>] *On Behalf Of *Dan'I Danehy-Oakes
Sent: Thursday, October 09, 2014 12:38 PM

Jeffery Wilson clueland.com — 11 Oct 2014, 02:39 · in reply to Norwood, Frederick Hudson

On 10/10/2014 8:27 AM, Norwood, Frederick Hudson wrote:
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I believe this is somewhat backwards. God's omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal character exclude any process of decision or choice-making on His part. He is changeless and perfect, so there is no change of mind possible or necessary, and being eternal this is always the case.

Ironically, this also means that people **do** have free will, as my friend Bill Stoddard explains it:

"Now, if physical reality is essentially deterministic if each fundamental physical entity, based on its nature, state, and relationships, is capable of only one specific next state and one specific action then human mental processes are deterministic too, and we don't have free will. But if physical reality is essentially indeterministic?if there are occasions when an entity can enter one of two or more next states, or perform one of two or more actions, and which comes next is not merely unpredictable but truly random then that doesn't give us any more free will, either. Having our actions changed from time to time by the throw of a set of cosmic dice does not equate to our being free to choose among different actions, or to determine our own destiny; it amounts to our being at the mercy of chance. So in a physicalistic view, genuine free will doesn't seem to make much sense. It's hard even to describe what it would consist in.

"In theism, on the other hand, we have a model where God knows all of our actions, past, present, and future, in a single timeless instant of comprehension. In effect, the entire history of the cosmos is a vast simulation model that God is running except that God has infinite computational capacity and does not need time to run the simulation. But God is also able to interpret the thoughts and feelings and choices that the simulated particles constitute, and thus to simultaneously know the cosmos as a story. And as an author, God can enter into the story and identify with its characters. The capacity to do so is, in Christian terms, the Holy Spirit. But every author has the experience of characters saying, 'No, I wouldn't do that thing, I would do the other thing.' And God, having complete control over the whole narrative, can rewrite it instantaneously to conform to our saying that rewrite it not on the basis of physical determinism, but on the basis of the content of our thoughts and feelings and desires. God can, if necessary, look back to the big bang and adjust the place where one specific quark appears to give rise to a cosmic history in which we choose salvation or damnation; or, if you prefer indeterminism, God can decide which random particle motions will occur in our brains instant to instant for the same purpose. What we want miraculously but subtly changes the whole cosmos to enable us to be more fully the characters we are. Free will is the gift of the Holy Spirit."

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

David Stockhoff — 11 Oct 2014, 17:35 · in reply to Jeffery Wilson clueland.com

On 10/10/2014 10:39 PM, Jeffery Wilson clueland.com wrote:
On 10/10/2014 8:27 AM, Norwood, Frederick Hudson wrote:

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Interesting, but crude. Human decisions are not always either deterministic or random. I suppose you could make a case for either if you limit the decisions under study to either crucial moral problems (will I kill my wife in a fit of rage? No, because I'm not insane; yes, because I'm insane) or routine, habitual decisions (should I eat that bag of potato chips at lunch? 40% gleefully; 40% guiltily; 20% no). But you'd need a general theory to predict it, and no such theory exists. However, I happily concede that 100% free will as philosophy frames it is a pernicious myth, and biology presents all sorts of arguments against it.

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Not only is this not an argument for free will---rather, it argues for supernatural puppetry and goes to bizarre lengths to do so---it completely ignores biology (see above). Unless we're to

believe God automatically adjusts that too.

Marc Aramini — 11 Oct 2014, 18:00 · in reply to David Stockhoff

I've for the most part stayed out of this, but I wanted to bring up some Wolfe stuff here. It seems there are several points where nature and free will are vital to his narratives, and Book of the New Sun has in some way created the deterministic exegesis of Wright in Attending Dedalus, which I think is fundamentally opposed to Wolfe's world view.

Wolfe's Pirate Freedom is the most direct exploration of Free Will in his work. You have a Catholic priest engaging in naturalistic philosophy and casuistry, justifying his actions through environment (you would have done the same thing if you were there ...) . That's an extremely complicated moral element to the narrative that is easy to misread: sympathize with Fr. Chris too much and you are denying his freedom of choice.

I am sure Wolfe believes in free will and the ability to make meaningfully good and meaningfully evil decisions. Fr. Chris might achieve less absolution than Typhon in the grand scheme of things if he holds onto the idea that he never had a choice.

On Sat, Oct 11, 2014 at 10:35 AM, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:

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Ironically, this also means that people *do* have free will, as my friend Bill Stoddard explains it:

"Now, if physical reality is essentially deterministic if each fundamental physical entity, based on its nature, state, and relationships, is capable of only one specific next state and one specific action then human mental processes are deterministic too, and we don't have free will. But if physical reality is essentially indeterministic? if there are occasions when an entity can enter one of two or more next states, or perform one of two or more actions, and which comes next is not merely unpredictable but truly random then that doesn't give us any more free will, either. Having our actions changed from time to time by the throw of a set of cosmic dice does not equate to our being free to choose among different actions, or to determine our own destiny; it amounts to our being at the mercy of chance. So in a physicalistic view, genuine free will doesn't seem to make much sense. It's hard even to describe what it would consist in.

Interesting, but crude. Human decisions are not always either deterministic or random. I suppose you could make a case for either if you limit the decisions under study to either crucial moral problems (will I kill my wife in a fit of rage? No, because I'm not insane; yes, because I'm insane) or routine, habitual decisions (should I eat that bag of potato chips at lunch? 40% gleefully; 40% guiltily; 20% no). But you'd need a general theory to predict it, and no such theory exists. However, I happily concede that 100% free will as philosophy frames it is a pernicious myth,

and biology presents all sorts of arguments against it.

"In theism, on the other hand, we have a model where God knows all of our actions, past, present, and future, in a single timeless instant of comprehension. In effect, the entire history of the cosmos is a vast simulation model that God is running except that God has infinite computational capacity and does not need time to run the simulation. But God is also able to interpret the thoughts and feelings and choices that the simulated particles constitute, and thus to simultaneously know the cosmos as a story. And as an author, God can enter into the story and identify with its characters. The capacity to do so is, in Christian terms, the Holy Spirit. But every author has the experience of characters saying, 'No, I wouldn't do that thing, I would do the other thing.' And God, having complete control over the whole narrative, can rewrite it instantaneously to conform to our saying that rewrite it not on the basis of physical determinism, but on the basis of the content of our thoughts and feelings and desires. God can, if necessary, look back to the big bang and adjust the place where one specific quark appears to give rise to a cosmic history in which we choose salvation or damnation; or, if you prefer indeterminism, God can decide which random particle motions will occur in our brains instant to instant for the same purpose. What we want miraculously but subtly changes the whole cosmos to enable us to be more fully the characters we are. Free will is the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Not only is this not an argument for free will---rather, it argues for supernatural puppetry and goes to bizarre lengths to do so---it completely ignores biology (see above). Unless we're to believe God automatically adjusts that too.

Gerry Quinn — 11 Oct 2014, 19:04 · in reply to Marc Aramini

On 11/10/2014 19:00, Marc Aramini wrote:

I've for the most part stayed out of this, but I wanted to bring up some Wolfe stuff here. It seems there are several points where nature and free will are vital to his narratives, and Book of the New Sun has in some way created the deterministic exegesis of Wright in Attending Dedalus, which I think is fundamentally opposed to Wolfe's world view.

There's also the issue of Master Ash, who says he thinks his future is improbable, but clearly his existence suggests that the future of Severian's world is not cast in stone.

- Gerry Quinn

Jeff Wilson — 12 Oct 2014, 00:51 · in reply to David Stockhoff

On Sat, October 11, 2014 12:35, David Stockhoff wrote:

So in a physicalistic view, genuine free will doesn't seem to make much sense. It's hard even to describe what it would consist in.

Interesting, but crude. Human decisions are not always either deterministic or random.

What third options do you offer?

What we want

miraculously but subtly changes the whole cosmos to enable us to be more fully the characters we are. Free will is the gift of the Holy

Spirit."

Not only is this not an argument for free will---rather, it argues for supernatural puppetry and goes to bizarre lengths to do so---it completely ignores biology (see above). Unless we're to believe God automatically adjusts that too.

He adjusts everything; this is the sort of theism where nothing happens or even exists without God willing it the way nothing changes or appears on a TV screen without the raster drawing it.

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

Lee — 12 Oct 2014, 12:25 · follows Jeff Wilson

David Stockhoff: I happily concede that 100% free will as philosophy frames it is a pernicious myth, and biology presents all sorts of arguments against it.

Heh. I've seen the unpredictability of sub-atomic physics as an argument for free will.

I don't think our behavior choices boil down to that level (biochemistry seems sufficient)

but hey, its an argument.

Marc Aramini: I am sure Wolfe believes in free will

I think the question is the nature of it. Are there degrees? Does an ape have it? A bacterium? A rock?

And from what perspective? What about God's? It is a logical fallacy to say He knew Adam and Eve would eat forbidden fruit but they still had free will. If God constructed them, molecule by molecule in such a way that they would eat the fruit. then they cannot be said to have free will.

Marc, I didn't see that you weighed in on the question of whether God has free will. What is your opinion?

I get the sense from Wolfe's work that he recognizes how choices become more and more restricted as one approaches godhood. Various Wolfean characters start human (or something) and as they approach godhood, become less able to make evil/human choices.

Gerry Quinn: There's also the issue of Master Ash, who says he thinks his future is improbable, but clearly his existence suggests that the future of Severian's world is not cast in stone.

Master Ash, for all his wisdom, is the product of one timeline. Severian eventually surpasses that. When Severian travels the Brook Madegot, I think the answer is revealed. This river of time only branches as you travel forward in time, not backward. But since there are branchings, Master Ash's and The Green Man's future both exist.

The structure of Brook Madregot demonstrates that choices always pertain to moving forward to the future. The path of your past is fixed. Thus I would argue that the Increate, who can see all paths simultaneously, is denied the "freedom" of choice. He can't choose a left or right path on Brook Madregot. For Him, everything just IS.

Unlike Master Ash, The Increate can't just can't travel to the left or to the right in time (to frozen

Urth or
sunny Ushas). He is constantly aware of the existence of both. Perhaps the Increate actually
embodies
both. Somewhere in BotNS it is implied that the infinite complexity of the universe(s) IS the very
substance
of the Increate.

Marc Aramini — 12 Oct 2014, 12:46 · in reply to Lee

Since you asked, I do not limit God by human understanding. The Bible cannot circumscribe him, nor can any theology adequately describe a being for which all powers are conceivable. But the very prevalent idea of "God's will be done" implies that He has one, even if it is beyond human understanding. I am obviously not an agnostic, but my words and philosophy cannot encapsulate the existence of such a power. The only statement I am willing to make is that our universe operates under reasonable and seemingly consistent physical laws - if existence is an amusement, it seems to be operated with, overall, reliable rules. If God desires free will, He can certainly have it, if desire is even applicable in describing Him or His motivations.

On Sun, Oct 12, 2014 at 5:25 AM, Lee <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:

David Stockhoff: I happily concede that 100% free will as philosophy
frames it
is a pernicious myth, and biology presents all sorts of arguments
against it.

Heh. I've seen the unpredictability of sub-atomic physics as an argument
for free will.

I don't think our behavior choices boil down to that level (biochemistry
seems sufficient)

but hey, its an argument.

Marc Aramini: I am sure Wolfe believes in free will

I think the question is the nature of it. Are there degrees? Does an ape
have it? A bacterium?

A rock?

And from what perspective? What about God's? It is a logical fallacy to
say He knew Adam and

Eve would eat forbidden fruit but they still had free will. If God
constructed them, molecule by

molecule in such a way that they would eat the fruit. then they cannot be
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Marc, I didn't see that you weighed in on the question of whether God has
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as they approach godhood, become less able to make evil/human choices.

Gerry Quinn: There's also the issue of Master Ash, who says he thinks his future is improbable, but clearly his existence suggests that the future of Severian's world is not cast in stone.

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branches as you travel forward in time, not backward. But since there are branchings, Master Ash's

and The Green Man's future both exist.

The structure of Brook Madregot demonstrates that choices always pertain to moving forward to the

future. The path of your past is fixed. Thus I would argue that the Increate, who can see all paths

simultaneously, is denied the "freedom" of choice. He can't choose a left or right path on Brook

Madregot. For Him, everything just IS.

Unlike Master Ash, The Increate can't just can't travel to the left or to the right in time (to frozen Urth or

sunny Ushas). He is constantly aware of the existence of both. Perhaps the Increate actually embodies

both. Somewhere in BotNS it is implied that the infinite complexity of the universe(s) IS the very substance

of the Increate.

David Stockhoff — 12 Oct 2014, 16:17 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On 10/11/2014 8:51 PM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

On Sat, October 11, 2014 12:35, David Stockhoff wrote:

So in a physicalistic view, genuine free will doesn't seem to make much sense. It's hard even to describe what it would consist in.

Interesting, but crude. Human decisions are not always either deterministic or random.

What third options do you offer?

Well, the whole range in between seems pretty huge. Especially in decisions that are not binary.

What we want

miraculously but subtly changes the whole cosmos to enable us to be more fully the characters we are. Free will is the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Not only is this not an argument for free will---rather, it argues for supernatural puppetry and goes to bizarre lengths to do so---it completely ignores biology (see above). Unless we're to believe God automatically adjusts that too.

He adjusts everything; this is the sort of theism where nothing happens or even exists without God willing it the way nothing changes or appears on a TV screen without the raster drawing it.

OK, but I don't recall the laws of chemistry changing. Then again, I suppose I wouldn't.

Regardless of one's position on this, it's certainly relevant to Wolfe, especially the "instantaneous simulation" bit.

David Stockhoff — 12 Oct 2014, 16:24 · in reply to Lee

On 10/12/2014 8:25 AM, Lee wrote:

Unlike Master Ash, The Increate can't just can't travel to the left or to the right in time (to frozen Urth or sunny Ushas). He is constantly aware of the existence of both. Perhaps the Increate actually embodies both. Somewhere in BotNS it is implied that the infinite complexity of the universe(s) IS the very substance of the Increate.

Indeed, since the Increate was not created, not to mention existing (apparently) outside any dimensional space, he/it has no chance of variability whatsoever, not even controlled.

Creation = chance.

Jeffery Wilson clueland.com — 16 Oct 2014, 04:54 · in reply to Lee

On 10/12/2014 7:25 AM, Lee wrote:

The structure of Brook Madregot demonstrates that choices always pertain to moving forward to the future. The path of your past is fixed. Thus I would argue that the Increate, who can see all paths simultaneously, is denied the "freedom" of choice. He can't choose a left or right path on Brook Madregot. For Him, everything just IS.

I think rather the Increate need not take a direction because He wills the directions into being, and is already omnipresent along all the directions thusly created.

However, Severian, Tzadkerbell, and the Green Man each turn to face into the past, so they may make choices that branch into the past as that is where their personal futures lie. Master Ash pointedly does not enjoy this privilege, and vanishes when Severian tries to force it on him.

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

Jeffery Wilson clueland.com — 17 Oct 2014, 06:40 · follows Jeffery Wilson clueland.com

On 10/16/2014 2:20 PM, Lee wrote:

I don't think so. Severian only sees one path as he travels Brook Madregot to the

past. It only branches when he reverses direction and travels to the future.

Branching is not the only form of choice for Sev.

Juturna enunciates his choice of direction in URTH XLVIII: "Juturna pointed like a village woman directing some lost traveler, her hands and arms extending in directions I had not seen until she indicated them. 'That way the future, this way the past. '"

Tzadkerbell explicitly points out in URTH XL that Sev has a choice about how far to travel along the brook Madregot, and when to start walking away from it.

The green man says he runs up and down the Corridors of Time looking for a time to help Severian, so that's him using reverse time travel to retrace his steps and access other branches previously ruled out.

So while there are multiple futures branching from a single past, that past still has many ages and many lands in each. Our Severian doesn't explore too many of them, but that's probably why he's our Severian and not young Tzadkiel's Severian, or one of the coffin Severians. He can choose from several branches when moving forward, but most all people have that privilege from the Increate.

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

Lee — 17 Oct 2014, 12:00 · follows Jeffery Wilson clueland.com

Jeffrey Wilson: Branching is not the only form of choice for Sev.

Agreed. Severian chooses to take seven steps backward (upstream to the past)

on Brook Madregot. But the brook does not have any branchings in this direction

implying that there are not multiple pasts for Severian, only multiple futures.

The green man says he runs up and down the Corridors of Time looking for a time to help Severian, so that's him using reverse time travel to retrace his steps and access other branches previously ruled out.

I am not sure this is so. As the Green Man moves to the past he may be exploring only one pathway of time and just trying to find the right spot (5 steps? seven steps?) on that single line to help Severian. It is my opinion that the Green Man probably couldn't explore the Ragnarok future. I think he can only travel on the line from far-future Ushas back to Urth, not other branchings.

"Juturna pointed like a village woman directing some lost traveler, her hands and arms extending in directions I had not seen until she indicated them.
'That way the future, this way the past. '"

This may be an example of a character who can explore multiple branchings of both the past and future. I suspect Tzadkiel can also do this. These are superhuman beings who perhaps can explore time more flexibly than human beings.

Tzadkiel compares Severian, as a human, to a pawn. I take the chessboard to be the symbol for time. Humans (normally) like a pawn on a chessboard, can only move forward and one space at a time.

The Green Man and, eventually Severian can move backward and forward in time in more than

one step. But they are both human and thus perhaps still limited in their movement through time compared to superhumans like Juturna and Tzadkiel. I think they can only travel a single pathway while multiple pathways may be open to angels, they being closer to God (who has access to all possible timelines, past and future) and plural beings.

(I think that Severian is best described as a human-derived demi-god and the Green Man also, given the mystical associations of his name http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_Man)

Jeffery Wilson clueland.com — 17 Oct 2014, 14:51 · in reply to Lee

On 10/17/2014 7:00 AM, Lee wrote:

This may be an example of a character who can explore multiple branchings of both

the past and future. I suspect Tzadkiel can also do this. These are superhuman beings

who perhaps can explore time more flexibly than human beings.

Tzadkiel admits to it access of the numerous futures and pasts of his purview and articulates a bit of his use of them on a couple of occasions, so, yes.

The Green Man and, eventually Severian can move backward and forward in time in more than

one step. But they are both human and thus perhaps still limited in their movement through

time compared to superhumans like Juturna and Tzadkiel. I think they can only travel a single

pathway while multiple pathways may be open to angels, they being closer to God (who has

access to all possible timelines, past and future) and plural beings.

Negative, Severian clearly takes multiple paths in the person of the "other" Severians. Of course, this may qualify Severian as a plural being.

Jeff Wilson - <jwilson at clueland.com >

A&M Texarkana Computational Intelligence Lab

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

DAVID STOCKHOFF — 17 Oct 2014, 15:09 · in reply to Jeffery Wilson clueland.com

"Tzadkiel compares Severian, as a human, to a pawn. I take the chessboard to be the symbol for time. Humans (normally) like a pawn on a chessboard, can only move forward and one space at a time."

That's a handy analogy, if not a complete system. There do seem to be essential limitations on all the time-traveling characters. One may imagine knights, rooks vs bishops, and of course queens. Even pawns can capture en passant. On the other hand, no chess pieces travel only backward as do Ossipago et al.

Knights are especially prominent (Jonas) and yet especially limited. Which best represents the Green Man?

Note that kings are basically important pawns that can move backward as well as castle.

On Friday, October 17, 2014 10:52 AM, Jeffery Wilson clueland.com <jwilson at clueland.com> wrote:

On 10/17/2014 7:00 AM, Lee wrote:

This may be an example of a character who can explore multiple branchings of both the past and future. I suspect Tzadkiel can also do this. These are superhuman beings who perhaps can explore time more flexibly than human beings.

Tzadkiel admits to it access of the numerous futures and pasts of his purview and articulates a bit of his use of them on a couple of occasions, so, yes.

The Green Man and, eventually Severian can move backward and forward in time in more than one step. But they are both human and thus perhaps still limited in their movement through time compared to superhumans like Juturna and Tzadkiel. I think they can only travel a single pathway while multiple pathways may be open to angels, they being closer to God (who has access to all possible timelines, past and future) and plural beings.

Negative, Severian clearly takes multiple paths in the person of the "other" Severians. Of course, this may quality Severian as a plural being.

--

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

Lee — 17 Oct 2014, 15:38 · follows DAVID STOCKHOFF

Jeffrey Wilson: Tzadkiel admits to it access of the numerous futures and pasts of his purview and articulates a bit of his use of them on a couple of occasions, so, yes

Okay, yes agreed on that.

Worth noting that Tzadkiel is a plural being with multiple iterations. But we know (I think) that the tinker bell version is cut off and does not share any consciousness or memory with the bigger, source Tzadkiel.

Negative, Severian clearly takes multiple paths in the person of the "other" Severians. Of course, this may quality Severian as a plural being.

Well, yes, when I speak of "Severian" I am only referring to the narrator of BotNS, who does not seem to share any consciousness or memory with other versions of himself.

Perhaps there is some unseen larger being who is the "source" of all the Severians. And perhaps this source being is capable of exploring multiple branching pathways of the past as well as the future.

But from the perspective of the narrator of BotNS, it seems to me that he, personally, can only see branchings of timelines as he moves to the future, not as he moves to the past.

Lee — 17 Oct 2014, 15:56 · follows Lee

"Tzadkiel compares Severian, as a human, to a pawn. I take the chessboard to be the symbol for time. Humans (normally) like a pawn on a chessboard, can only move forward and one space at a time."

David Stockhoff:

That's a handy analogy, if not a complete system.

Yes, I think Wolfe meant it only as a rough starting point. I've made some of the extrapolations you make myself but you raise some interesting questions.

There do seem to be essential limitations on all the time-traveling characters.

Except for The Increate? (who may not be a "character" and probably doesn't need to "travel" being in all places and all times simultaneously).

One may imagine knights, rooks vs bishops, and of course queens. Even pawns can capture en passant.

Plus, if a pawn makes it to the end of the board, they can be brought back as a more powerful piece. I think Wolfe intends this analogy for Severian (The Conciliator/New Sun) after he returns from Yesod.

On the other hand, no chess pieces travel only backward as do Ossipago et al.

True although it has been argued that B, F and O must travel forward in time at least long enough

to converse with Severian and watch a play, etc.

Knights are especially prominent (Jonas) and yet especially limited. Which best represents the Green Man?

As per my discussion with Jeffery, I see The Green Man as a rook (without horizontal abilities), able to make unlimited moves up and down one timeline (Urth to Ushas) but not able to explore alternate realities, like Ragnarok. I think this in part because The Green Man is intent on "helping"

Severian. Doesn't the concept of "helping" become superfluous if you can explore various timelines in which any outcome can happen?

Note that kings are basically important pawns that can move backward as well as castle.

Hm, that's a toughie. Maybe Severian is most like a King, at least before he reaches Yesod. He can move a space backward or forward in time when he does his healing trick with the Claw. And he being replaced by an Eidolon is sort of like castling.

DAVID STOCKHOFF — 17 Oct 2014, 16:26 · in reply to Lee

One may imagine knights, rooks vs bishops, and of course queens. Even pawns can capture en passant.

Plus, if a pawn makes it to the end of the board, they can be brought back as a more powerful piece. I think Wolfe intends this analogy for Severian (The Conciliator/New Sun) after he returns

from Yesod.

---Good one. Except he's almost more like a queen, at least after he becomes a god (see below).

Knights are especially prominent (Jonas) and yet especially limited. Which best represents the Green Man?

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---Works for me.

Note that kings are basically important pawns that can move backward as well as castle.

Hm, that's a toughie. Maybe Severian is most like a King, at least before he reaches Yesod. He can move a space backward or forward in time when he does his healing trick with the Claw.

---He already has become Autarch, which is a mundane sort of king, weaker than a queen. But almost from the beginning, he can move backward as you say, even before he elevates again after his apotheosis.

Funny how this turns some basic assumptions on their heads. A medieval king was a "temporal" power, bound by time, while popes were a sort of spiritual emperor. Severian is also a creature of time (only the Increate is not) but is not bound by it.

On Friday, October 17, 2014 12:09 PM, Lee <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:

"Tzadkiel compares Severian, as a human, to a pawn. I take the chessboard to be the symbol for time. Humans (normally) like a pawn on a chessboard, can only move forward and one space at a time."

David Stockhoff:

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Except for The Increate? (who may not be a "character" and probably doesn't need to "travel"

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And he being replaced by an Eidolon is sort of like castling.

Robert Pirkola — 17 Oct 2014, 18:22 · follows DAVID STOCKHOFF

Lee said: "Plus, if a pawn makes it to the end of the board, they can be brought back as a more powerful piece. I think Wolfe intends this analogy for Severian (The Conciliator/New Sun) after he returns from Yesod."

He has made such an analogy at least one other time, in "To the Seventh", which also contains this interesting passage that has a whiff of recent topics: "Outside its sides that were not side the universe was a point of matter vastly heavy, and a vastness beyond the reach of mathematics in which matter was so rare that it could truthfully be said not to exist." (*Strange Travelers*, Tor paperback, pg. 132).

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 17 Oct 2014, 18:29 · in reply to Robert Pirkola

An interesting quote.

We may, I think, assume that Wolfe (like me) assumes that the laws of arithmetic as we know them do not apply in infinities; after all, under the right circumstances $1=3$ and $3=1$.

But I'm not sure that this settles the idea that there is/is not a place where maths and logic don't apply. At most this suggests that different maths may apply in different circumstances, just as Euclidean geometry and Riemannian geometry both produce useful pictures of reality.

On Fri, Oct 17, 2014 at 11:22 AM, Robert Pirkola <rpirkola at hotmail.com> wrote:

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António Pedro Marques — 17 Oct 2014, 20:44 · in reply to DAVID STOCKHOFF

I think this is an example of a subthread which ought to have had its subject changed. So that folks who dozed off long ago might become interested again.

António Pedro Marques — 18 Oct 2014, 19:18 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Can someone more math-enjoying than me take up the challenge to build a system based on $(A \Rightarrow B) \ \& \ (A \ \& \ \sim B)$ — Could some insight come out of the thing?

No dia 17/10/2014, ?s 19:29, "Dan'l Danehy-Oakes" <danlido at gmail.com> escreveu:

An interesting quote.

We may, I think, assume that Wolfe (like me) assumes that the laws of arithmetic as we know them do not apply in infinities; after all, under the right circumstances $1=3$ and $3=1$.

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Jeffery Wilson clueland.com — 18 Oct 2014, 23:49 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

On 10/18/2014 2:18 PM, Ant?nio Pedro Marques wrote:

Can someone more math-enjoying than me take up the challenge to build a system based on $(A \Rightarrow B) \ \& \ (A \ \& \ \sim B)$ — Could some insight come out of the

thing?

Well, rewriting $A \Rightarrow B$ as $\sim A \vee B$ gives

$$(\sim A \vee B) \& (A \& \sim B)$$

which is not satisfiable because the right group requires A to be true and B to be false, but the left requires either A to be false or B to be true. This expression is thus false for all possible combinations of values for A & B, so it can be used to imply anything, but since the proposition is always false, the consequent can be false or true without giving any useful information:

<http://mathforum.org/library/drmath/view/55617.html>

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