

# Typhon's concessions

The Urth list — 20 messages, 5 voices, 04 Sep 2018

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6803>

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incanto at mtecom.net — 04 Sep 2018, 01:27

Readers,

When Typhon takes Severian to the head of his mountain, he demands that Severian must swear utter submission to him on the claw. I have two questions about this. First, why must Typhon require Severian to hand over the claw at first, then accede to his reluctance and allow him to simply display it in his own hand, rather than just taking it from him? Second, Typhon cajoles S by saying, "It is no more than a form we must follow." Why must Typhon follow any form at all? Does Typhon indirectly acknowledge a power greater than his own to which obeisance is owed? If he were a tyrant like those in our own culture, he may very well do lip service to religious dictates; but here, it seems that for him there is necessity. Any ideas?

Fred Weiner

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Marc Aramini — 04 Sep 2018, 04:24 · in reply to incanto at mtecom.net

Well, this scene is so allegorical that it seems to be highly predicated upon the thematic implications of the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. Much like the adversary in Job, who abides by an agreement with God, the Satan in the wilderness is concerned with subverting the will of his prey rather than in purely destroying him by force. For the plot itself this has little relevance, but the theme relies upon an examination of choice even in the face of unbearable thirst and need, to deny the desires of the flesh and maintain control. So ... Typhon is not merely Typhon here, but an echo of that particular theological moment, even down to offering the same exact things to Severian. Allegory is occasionally not a great fit for realistic novels - Typhon has no reason to acknowledge a greater power save that Satan knows the only way he can truly defeat a greater power is by proving that the authority vested in the man he tempts is ill-placed.

On Monday, September 3, 2018, <incanto at mtecom.net> wrote:  
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Marc Aramini — 04 Sep 2018, 04:28 · in reply to Marc Aramini

Also, I find Wolfe's setup of the problem of evil and death to be overwhelmingly orthodox in its theodicy, but readers raised on Naturalism rather than Augustine tend, for whatever reason, to see overt manipulation in all things rather than freedom in the face of extreme duress.

On Monday, September 3, 2018, Marc Aramini <marcaramini at gmail.com> wrote:

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incanto at mtecom.net — 04 Sep 2018, 23:18 · in reply to Marc Aramini

the theme relies upon an examination of choice even in the face of unbearable thirst and need, to deny the desires of the flesh and maintain control

Was Christ trying to maintain control? Or was he so firmly resident in the Divine Presence that personal advantage had no traction? And if that is so, is that also Severian's status? It hardly makes your allegorical interpretation less germane. Everyone accepts that Wolfe has written Christ saturated novels.

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Marc Aramini — 04 Sep 2018, 23:36 · in reply to incanto at mtecom.net

Well, as “fully human” I think it implies that Christ is also capable of making human mistakes - Adam had, at least according to the most orthodox position, everything he needed to stand firm with his prelapsarian gifts but fell regardless. One of the biggest themes of Urth of the New Sun as far as I can tell is that evil will ultimately serve a purpose (Severian passes the trial because his enemies fight for him - he treated them justly.) the fall of man, too, allows greater glory in the standing firm of Christ against temptation and in salvation. I don't know how much we want to insist that this scene has the same theological implications as Christ's human triumph over temptation but it certainly suggests that Severian faces a similar obstacle in denying the needs of the flesh and personal aggrandizement - Typhon and the adversary both, in the long term, still serve the greater good in traditional theodicy.

On Tuesday, September 4, 2018, <incanto at mtecom.net> wrote:  
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incanto at mtecom.net — 05 Sep 2018, 05:56 · in reply to Marc Aramini

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Agree. I think GW used his Catholicism as a template but created the Solar Cycle universe a "quarter turn" (who knows the exact geometry?) further and into a fresh creation. Thanks for this dialog.

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 05 Sep 2018, 14:21 · in reply to incanto at mtecom.net

Actually I think of the Solar Cycle as a \*previous\* cycle of the Universe. This explains the "archaeological" approach in the BotNS afterwords, and I believe that Wolfe would say that in a Universe \_after\_ ours, no Fall would take place because Jesus.

This also explains things like Baldanders/Frankenstein: Mary Shelley didn't premember Baldanders, it was a haunting from the previous Universe cycle. Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

When faced with two alternatives, I always like to choose the fourth.

On Tue, Sep 4, 2018 at 11:14 PM <incanto at mtecom.net> wrote:  
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Marc Aramini — 05 Sep 2018, 15:36 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

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Against that ... well, a flood. Time travel backwards exists in this world. If the cycles are this similar why have more than one? I really don't think Jesus is absent at all in the solar cycle.

On Wednesday, September 5, 2018, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 05 Sep 2018, 16:09 · in reply to Marc Aramini

...except, again, that we have auctorial statement that Jesus \*is\* absent from the Solar universe.

That doesn't actually bother me a great deal, as I am inclined to "the text is the text and the author has no privileged position in its interpretation." But only inclined...

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**Marc Aramini — 05 Sep 2018, 16:20 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes**

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Marc Aramini — 05 Sep 2018, 16:21 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Who is that criminal on the scaffold in Silk's enlightenment? Besus, the Sumerian protochrist? (Gilgamesh joke, sorry)

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Marc Aramini — 05 Sep 2018, 16:28 · in reply to Marc Aramini

My nuclear hot take on the solar cycle: Severian doesn't lie; Wolfe almost does - but not to me. I just can't imagine Wolfe would take out the most important person in history and have it change nothing in that history. We still get Alice in wonderland and a Catholic Church and drinking matte in South America and pope's translation of the odyssey. Jesus didn't have any impact on history if the solar cycle doesn't have him.

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Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 05 Sep 2018, 17:36 · in reply to Marc Aramini

The criminal on the scaffold in Silk's enlightenment? Obviously Jesus. Who says enlightenment only works backwards?

I suspect that Severian does lie, or at least makes mistakes. There are little contradictions in his account that don't jibe with him having perfect memory *\*and\** truthfulness.

As for all the things "just like" our world; I don't know. That's not easy to explain.

H'mmm. What justification do you have for Araminian Exceptionalism (i.e., he won't "almost lie" to you)?

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

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Marc Aramini — 05 Sep 2018, 17:39 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

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**Marc Aramini — 05 Sep 2018, 17:41 · in reply to Marc Aramini**

With a few notable exceptions he ignores my questions on his work, honestly. But he won't misdirect me as I feel some interview questions really border on.

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Jeffery Wilson clueland.com — 07 Sep 2018, 15:21 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

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The narrative has Sev flat out lying to Vodalus, despite having taken his coin and sworn allegiance, and to his brothers in the Guild.

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Ordinarily I would agree with that hypothesis but it's based on a materialistic, objectively causal theory of history. After the first Edenic manvantara where everything goes right and mankind begets the Hierodules before becoming the sublime Hieros and vanishing, the Hierodules are left behind but use their access to Briah to try to make history conform to the first go-round so

they can follow.

So if there is no Jesus, they can supply one. If there is no Gospel, they can supply a set. But if there is no LOGOS in them, or him, that's up to the Increate. I think Wolfe's notion is that the imitation of goodness can mitigate the crapsack world of the Christless future, but it's just not the same and the best you can hope for is someone to become a vessel for real goodness to influence divine judgement.

Jeffery Wilson - <jwilson at clueland.com >  
RIP - A&M Texarkana Computational Intelligence Lab  
< <http://clueland.com/demo/interact/> >

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Marc Aramini — 07 Sep 2018, 15:39 · in reply to Jeffery Wilson clueland.com

I don't think the solar cycle is really worse than our reality in nature at all, merely a progression of human freedoms. There are news stories every day that make the events of the commonwealth, except for the catastrophic flood, seem quite close to our world.

Regarding lies- Because time turns our lies into truth - I really the lies or misdirections in Wolfe become twisted to reflect a deeper reality. Almost all of my analysis of Wolfe is based on taking everything super literally, or taking some things that seem to be mere dressing as allegorical. A dream in WK says "I" knew my baby would die and could not breathe. Able's story is a projection by Michael into his mother's dreams - the dreams are real but the "whole story" is a dream. Now at the end of my project I really cant help but see how Wolfe keeps turning badness into good and things that seem to be impossible or inexplicable become logical when taken literally.

There are Christian missionaries in the solar cycle. Well then, despite all the over rationalization and hints at a cyclic reality, quite simply, there is Christ in the solar cycle. About sixteen years ago everyone kept pulling out Occam's razor on me when I talked about Short Sun. I don't think fiction has to conform to that, but in my mind having no Christ in New Sun serves little to no thematic purpose if it is at all involved in interrogating human agency and fate versus free will. Even in my reading of WK developing embryo Able has a choice, and the absence of Christ in Mythgarthr save for that sole cross which comes to resonate with eterne and actual birth at least makes a tragic sense.

On Friday, September 7, 2018, Jeffery Wilson clueland.com <jwilson at clueland.com> wrote:

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**Marc Aramini — 07 Sep 2018, 15:49 · in reply to Marc Aramini**

“Really think” - might have some other missing words in that sorry

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**David Stockhoff — 07 Sep 2018, 16:55 · in reply to Jeffery Wilson clueland.com**

Well put. I was thinking along the same lines as far as materialistic assumptions about history, but was unable to develop the idea further.

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“On Wed, Sep 5, 2018 at 9:28 AM Marc Aramini <marcaramini at gmail.com <<mailto:marcaramini at gmail.com>>> wrote:

???" My nuclear hot take on the solar cycle: Severian doesn't lie; Wolfe  
??? almost does - but not to me.

The narrative has Sev flat out lying to Vodalus, despite having taken  
his coin and sworn allegiance, and to his brothers in the Guild.

Why not to us?

??? I just can't imagine Wolfe would take  
??? out the most important person in history and have it change nothing  
??? in that history. We still get Alice in wonderland and a Catholic  
??? Church and drinking matte in South America and pope's translation of  
??? the odyssey. Jesus didn't have any impact on history if the solar  
??? cycle doesn't have him.

Ordinarily I would agree with that hypothesis but it's based on a  
materialistic, objectively causal theory of history. After the first  
Edenic manvantara where everything goes right and mankind begets the  
Hierodules before becoming the sublime Hieros and vanishing, the  
Hierodules are left behind but use their access to Briah to try to  
make history conform to the first go-round so they can follow.

So if there is no Jesus, they can supply one. If there is no Gospel,  
they can supply a set. But if there is no LOGOS in them, or him,  
that's up to the Increate. I think Wolfe's notion is that the  
imitation of goodness can mitigate the crapsack world of the  
Christless future, but it's just not the same and the best you can  
hope for is someone to become a vessel for real goodness to influence  
divine judgement.

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incanto at mtecom.net — 24 Aug 2019, 21:47 · in reply to Marc Aramini  
. . . and would the claw carry what the one ring in Tolkien carried: irresistibility?