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## Serving the Dark One is morally OK? or Struggle over Suicide

Submitted by [Souvramael](#)  
Posted on 10/7/2007 8:21:35 AM

Following on from my last theory, "Serving the Dark One is morally OK? Or how I learned to stop worrying and love Ishamael"...I present this - the story of how Ishamael slept the butterfly dream, scorning suicide and embracing struggle.

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The Age of Legends sounds to me like a final end of history (in the Hegelian-Kojevan sense). Descriptions of that Age would fit the label of a 'universal and homogenous state'. According to Plato, the human soul is divided in desire, reason (a fusion of which drives economic progress, i.e. natural science in the service of appeasing material wants) and thymos (roughly understood as a 'desire for recognition').

The AoL is basically a communist society, because virtually every material need can and is met through co-ordinated usage of the Power. What sets people apart - what gives them recognition - is their social status as a result of their works, accomplishments, etc. The official side of this is the grant of a third name.

Hence desire is satisfied, but thymos is impossible to ever adequately satisfy. For in a society there always exist tensions between two different kinds of people - megalothymiatics (those who want others to recognize them unequally), and isothymiatics (those who pride themselves on equal recognition). When there are no more wars to be fought FOR equality, the only object of rebellion becomes the tolerant, posthistorical society from whence the megalothymiatics came.

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A separate branch of the whole process of moving up Maslow's hierarchy, achieving self-realization, etc, is the dawning of the concept of moral relativism, which negates our normative ethics. Is universal recognition IN ITSELF a worthy goal? That is the contradiction at the heart of liberal democracy. If everyone has an inherent right to freedom of thought and of speech, who is to say that there will not appear a violent revolt against the very conditions that allowed such concepts to take root in the first place?

### Quote of the Moment

Blood and bloody ashes!  
-Gitara Moroso

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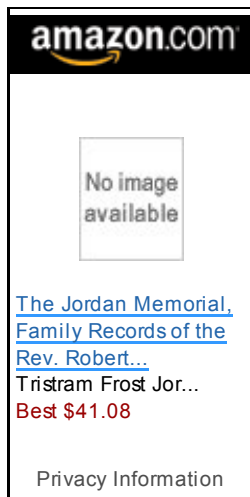
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We've identified two factors - the rise of moral relativism, and the boredom of megalothymiacs in a posthistoric society. The edifice of Kojeve's 'universal and homogenous' state strains under the weight of its own contradictions. If it rains megalothymiacs, who freeze in the coldness of moral relativism, the whole structure comes tumbling down on the 'men without chests' who in vain try to shelter within it and unleashes 'immense wars of the spirit' between Supermen who go 'beyond good and evil'. OK, I'll tone down on the Nietzschean rhetoric...where was I going with this?

Oh, yes. We also have to consider the cosmology of the WoT. As pointed out in my previous theory, there have been turnings of the Wheel beyond number. Hawkwing makes reference to the hundred times he made battle with, or against, Lews Therin. Frankly, such a long period of exploitation of the earth's resources, for one, is impossible without there being very visible degradative effects. OK, maybe the planet is Healed with the One Power? Maybe. Suppose it is. But how to explain the One Power in terms of physics? How to explain the Dark One, his True Power, the World of Dreams, The Worlds That Might Be, etc?

What I am getting at is that the chances that such a system has evolved by itself, before settling into a constant cyclical steady state that we observe now, with its revolutionary rises and cataclysmic falls, are next to nil. The alternative to evolution is that the WoT is an artificial construct; a playground for the thymos.

Let me advance a theory of the origins of WoT...by extrapolating OUR own future. According to Kojeve, history (in the dialectical, not events-based) senses, ended in 1806 at the Battle of Jena, which brought the products of the French revolution - equality and liberty - to the corner of Germany where Hegel lived. Since then, liberal market democracy has consolidated its grip on the world, enveloping most of the America's, Europe, Japan, South Korea and south and southeast Asia.

Fast forward. Barring a major disaster like a global thermonuclear war or environmental collapse, and liberal democracy is the norm throughout the whole world, reality as well as ideal. War and struggle have petered out - democracies, based on rational principles, rarely fight each other. Technological progress has enabled us to simulate virtual realities, including minds and virtual universes.

Yet the old paradox creeps up. How to reconcile equality and freedom, isothymia and megalothymia? And why not commit suicide, in a world of no values?

The existentialist view is that while there is no inherent meaning to life, it DOES NOT mean that each individual cannot create his or her own values to give that meaning.

Those who avoid committing suicide, play games. Perhaps each individual has so much calculating power at their disposal that each can create a universe to play with themselves. Maybe the central government, whatever it means by that time, creates a simulation to relieve social pressures by providing an outlet for emissions of superfluous megalothymic energies.

But what values are powerful enough to give value to life in an absurd world devoid of an ultimate Reason? In my view, it is the emotion of love, and consequently hate, since the two are inextricably intertwined. And how best to give opportunities to vent love and hate? By reintroducing, in an artificial world (but whose denizens will find it very hard to figure out that it IS an artificial world), the idea of good and evil, for that lies at the root of thymotic emotions, since thymos itself is like one's inner sense of justice.

So you're a superintelligence, with very high bandwidth connections to trillions of other superintelligences. But the world is profoundly boring. Oh you might engage in chitchat over tea about trivialities like the proof of Fermat's Theorem, but the central fact will remain that existence, i.e. computation, in itself has no value. Reason will always end with a glass ceiling. So what do you do?

You play a game. In particular, you downgrade yourself to an intellectual level where you can have deeply held values again. And you do it in a world where good and evil exist, not as abstract concepts, but as embodiments. Shai'tan is a superhuman creation, programmed to do normatively evil things, in order to arouse the passions, the thymos, of the players (souls) inside the system. He wants to break free and destroy Time, and believes he can. He never will. The powers above will not allow it, by increasing the weight of the ta'veren function, or as a last resort deleting back in time and debugging.

It is also interesting that in WoT they are also humans, very similar to us, except for the coolness factor of the One Power, general gender equality and a semblance of immortality thru the whole death and rebirth thing. Roughly what one might expect from early 21st century Americans...

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Here's another possible if farfetched interpretation of our favorite Forsaken...

"Great Lord, at first a nihilist, and it made me depressed. Our civilization is so advanced, so developed, yet is overlaid by

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contradictions."

THIS STATEMENT IS FALSE

"Yes, ultimately it could be reduced to that. But when You were revealed to the world, I had a revelation. We can create our own, new values. Surely that is life's highest purpose?

YOU SEE DEEPLY, ISHAMAEL. SO WHAT DO YOU CHOOSE?

"I choose struggle over suicide."

WILL YOU BE NAE'BLIS?

"It will be a honour, Great Lord. So, shall we play another round?"

Ishamael dreamed on. In reality, he was still a butterfly.

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Whatever happens in the WoT is irrelevant. It is the futuristic equivalent of government sanctioned temple prostitution of the future for reasons of social stability.

There is no difference between revolt or conformity, mastery or slavery, love or hate, good or evil, Light or Shadow.

One has to make his or her own values, or commit suicide.

Or go mad.

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This section is to address some of the more prominent criticisms of the previous theory.

1. It is evil! Why don't you go kill some people if in the long run, we're all dead?

Firstly, there's a difference between our world, and the WoT. In the latter, it is patently obvious that it is a) an artificial creation, whatever its purpose, and b) eternal return means that over enough turnings of the Wheel, whatever guilt (in the Judeo-Christian sense) you have will dissipate by Time's corrosion.

Secondly, the rather important principle that a) most people are hardwired, partly thru nature, partly thru nurture, not to randomly kill people.

Thirdly, doing so will typically involve some serious consequences for

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 your own person, which goes against the instinct of self-preservation.

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Another point that I wish to elaborate on here is the fact that in the first theory, I said serving the DO is good from a utilitarian perspective. I take that back. It is completely meaningless and therefore neutral. Even if you succeed in making Time linear and a copy of our world, it will still be pointless since not all the resources of our own world will be dedicated to computing the WoT, hence the WoT-turned-linear world will be a subset of our own world in scale and/or complexity, hence it will be but an inferior copy.

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The whole point of WoT is Struggle. Human beings are agents who follow simple rules, to create interesting Patterns. But to quote 50 Cent in Many Men Wish Death, "Sunny days wouldn't be special, if it wasn't for rain Joy wouldn't feel so good, if it wasn't for pain Death gotta be easy, 'cause life is hard". You NEED both good and evil so as to allow the actual struggle to take place.

So I suppose ultimately, balance is the most important thing, so that Armageddon can go on forever. Freeing the Dark One is still a noble cause. For what can be more challenging, more life affirming, more thymotically engaging, than defeating the Evil One / sacrificial lamb in an intense battle to the death?

Like Ishamael, I choose Struggle, but affirm myself as a crusader for the Light. So on my knees I beg your forgiveness for my former heresies and ask to rejoin the Light.

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*Rand lost his temper in the 0.0308 seconds it took this page to load.*