

Father Inire and the Deluge

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 21 Apr 1999

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Ori Kowarsky — 21 Apr 1999, 00:18

Certain things said about the Deluge, Hierodules and the Increate have inspired me to de-lurk and vent a bit about what I consider to be a rather uncritical acceptance of the "religious" or "divine" ideology propogated by, for want of a better term, the Briah elements on Urth. Unless I've forgotten or misread TBONS, which is of course eminently possible, the Hierodules and their masters are not angels or cherubim come down from Heaven; they are a genetically altered "master" species sufficiently advanced to be able to travel throuh time and space to the nth degree. Despite this great power, they are material, and I believe fallible and wrongheaded, creatures, no different from any other "superior" alien species in science fiction with political or strategic interests in the Terran sphere. They have interfered with Urth's sun for their own purposes (which possibly include hobbling the ability of Urrth's tyrants -- or more importantly, her extra-solar "guests" -- to wage wars of interstellar conquest) and they are now prepared to interfere with Urth's sun and destiny once again, allowing Urth to rejoin the family of planets now that some sort of human expiation has been served.

I think the best summation of this state of affairs -- and, IMHO a much better encapsulation of the themes of TBOTNS than "Empires of Foliage and Flower" -- is Melito's Story -- "The Cock, the Angel and the Eagle" from Citadel, wherein the Angel (Briah) sends down the Eagle (the worm in the heart of the Old Sun/the fountain in the heart of the New Sun) to kick the ass of the Cock (humanity) in a neat bit of overkill, apparently in response to the cock's vanity and ambition. Two very interesting things happen at the end of the slaughter -- the Cock, speaking perhaps of all human nature, says it wouldn't, and couldn't, have acted any differently (or as Sev tells us, twice, "That we are only capable of being what we are remains our unforgiveable sin") and that the Angel has no more idea of God's will or the nature of divine justice than any of us do ("The Pancreator is infinitely far from us,' the angel said. 'And thus infinitely far from me, though I fly so much higher than you. I guess at his desires -- no one can do otherwise.'").

Whether Sev was right to do what he did -- or whether he was anything more than a puppet in what transpired -- is open to debate. If we do accept that somehow he was a necessary element for the gestation of the New Sun (which I doubt) I'm guessing he made his choice for personal reasons: The Green Man from Ushas was curious, honourable and brave. Master Ash from Ragnarock was withdrawn, passive and aloof. I hope that, given the death toll involved, Sev made the right decision.

Ori

CRCulver — 21 Apr 1999, 23:24 · follows Ori Kowarsky

In a message dated 4/21/99 2:25:20 AM EST, orik at sprint.ca writes:

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Well, kind of sort of. In "The Key to the Universe" Severian mentions that the Hieros are the master species, the ones created by man and who escaped to Yesod. The Hierodules were

"found" by the Hieros and are their servants. Famulimus and Barbatus appear to be Hieros, while I would assume that many of the watchers of "Eschatology and Genesis" at the House Absolute were Hierodules.

<<Despite this great power, they are material, and I believe fallible and wrongheaded, creatures, no different from any other "superior" alien species in science fiction with political or strategic interests in the Terran sphere.>>

I think that the "judge" version of Tzadkiel, analogous to the Archangel Michael, would be certainly be divine. Whether or not he receives communication directly from the Pancreator is one of the more interesting mysteries of _Urth_.

<<They have interfered with Urth's sun for their own purposes (which possibly include hobbling the ability of Urrth's tyrants -- or more importantly, her extra-solar "guests" -- to wage wars of interstellar conquest>>

Refer to "The Key to the Universe" again. Severian explains that the Hieros are shaping us as they were formed, a payback (but not necessarily negative), and the appearance of the New Sun would mean that "at least the earliest operations of this shaping are complete." It means Severian is a puppet, but there is no such thing as free will when dealing with the Divine, I would guess.

<<"The Pancreator is infinitely far from us," the angel said. 'And thus infinitely far from me, though I fly so much higher than you. I guess at his desires -- no one can do otherwise.'">>

This is preceded in "Eschatology and Genesis" in the dialogue between Gabiel and Nod. Also, there is the story of how the Pancreator was behind a curtain, but when one peaked behind this curtain, he saw open space, because the Pancreator is infinite (and perhaps thus infinitely remote). I wonder in what other Wolfe works this idea that God is infinitely remote is mentioned.

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