

Thus Misspoke Zarathustra?

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 28 Aug 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/1760>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

Jim Henley — 28 Aug 1999, 10:18

Hi, I'm new. Somewhat to my surprise, the archives search engine for this list turns up no references to Zoroastrianism, so this may not be completely old ground.

I've been thinking for a little while that the theology of the Commonwealth has a lot of Zoroastrian feel to it. There's Dr. Talos/tr. Wolfe's use of Meschia and Meschiane in the play; there's the explicit reference to Ahura Mazda in the "Meschia" entry in Castle of the Otter. There's the very late-arriving messiah. There's the lack of a chosen people that would give more of a judaic feel. (There may be more in the Lexicon too - sorry, it's on my birthday list.)

Then this morning, the following two things slammed into each other:

"The most important thing about Zoroastrianism is the dedication to ethical and moral excellence. The motto of the faith is:
GOOD THOUGHTS, GOOD WORDS, GOOD DEEDS."
[alt.religion.zoroastrianism FAQ](#)

"And the Ascian, his voice no louder than my own had been, and perhaps even softer, answered, 'How shall the state be most vigorous? It shall be most vigorous when it is without conflict. How shall disagreement be banished? By banishing the four causes of disagreement: lies, foolish talk, boastful talk, and talk which serves only to incite quarrels. How shall the four causes be banished? By speaking only correct thought. Then shall the state be without disagreement. Being without disagreement it shall be without conflict. Being without conflict it shall be vigorous, strong and secure.' "
CITADEL V, last page

So CORRECT THOUGHTS become CORRECT WORDS which lead to CORRECT DEEDS. It seems like it could be an ironic transformation of the Zoroastrian motto, a secularized heresy if you will.

Geography Department: I have no trouble accepting that Severian et al are in the Southern hemisphere. I'm still confused, largely because of the mountains being to the _east_ of Nessus. It kills the careless impression I formed on my first reading that Nessus was Buenos Aires was a tribute to Borges. And if they're the Andes, there just doesn't seem to be enough room west of them for everything that Wolfe fits in. In Chile the Andes come right down to the ocean at present, unless my Atlas is very wrong. This is true of Peru too in the especially appealing parts (south - it would be pleasant to identify Lake Diuturna with Titicaca). After that you're way far north.

Even tilting the axis (permissible for a million years in the future, I'd say) doesn't by itself create more land. The only thing I can imagine so far is that the continents themselves have shifted (we're told the river has) in the intervening time. Can anyone help me out here?

Best,

Jim

"Sweet music makes the same old story new.

That is a lie. But it will have to do."

-- RS Gwynn, "Ars Poetica"