

Returns

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 20 Dec 1997

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/282>

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Joel Priddy — 20 Dec 1997, 22:43

It's been what, four months since I was last on this list? MOved to the Big City and haven't made arrangements for reliable access in my new digs. Since then I've picked up the Dr. Island book and treated myself to the new editions of TBONS. This is the first time I've read it with the Lexicon sitting next to me. Hugely informative, of course, as has been all the exposure to the ideas on this list. I've been reading with special attention to the whole question of whether Severien's Christianity is metaphorical or literal, or just what is the nature of religion in the Coomonwealth in general. Anybody up for reopening that can of worms? Also dug up The Best of Cordwainer Smith on the general recommendations of this list. Anyway, the point is that I have access for at least the next week or so, and thought I'd dip my boots into the old stomping grounds.

cephalothorax

m.driussi — 21 Dec 1997, 00:23 · follows Joel Priddy

Reply: Item #3792019 from URTN at LISTS.BEST.COM@INET#

cephalothorax,

Hey there, hi there.

Re: religion in the Commonwealth and/or TBOTNS. Sure, go ahead--document for us your interpretation and/or spin! Granted that probably no one will agree with you entirely, and possibly no one will agree with you at all, but still, the quest for self-expression is the thing in and of itself. (Like the Book of Mirrors . . . this is no map, this is the thing itself.)

Today the Conciliator seems to me to be rather a lot like John the Baptist, with his speech about, "Don't worry what happens to me--the =next= guy who comes will be the New Sun." And, of course, there are (were) heresies that consider(ed) John the Baptist to be the true Messiah, etc. Not to cloud the issue. But there are so many heretical notions--so many substitutions on the cross of the ship Tzadkiel (double-cross, triple-cross), so many indications that everything is just for show (ala THE PASSOVER PLOT, et al.), that all fights are rigged (the winner has been chosen ahead of time), that all judicial trials are shams (the case has already been decided ahead of time), and so on, that I begin to wonder if this is part of the point: not the gnostic route that Peter Wright more-or-less describes (using most of the items I've just listed), but instead a sort of "compilation of worst case scenarios" that begins with the outrageous notion of Jesus being a torturer (making a whip and a cross, we are told in the Bible according to Wolfe) and then piling on every juicy heresy that can be shoehorned in. Including issues of a twin, etc. To what end? As if to say, "With all this working against him, the guy can =still= be Christian."

Meanwhile I've just received a note from Polly Morris of San Diego area. She asks,

"Is it possible to include more timeline tables for the `torturer' series? And a map of the ship's journey in URTH OF THE NEW SUN? I simply can't understand the path of the ship. Not enough astronomy in my background I guess. I know Wolfe is writing sci-fi not fantasy, but I just can't understand the thrust of the narrative. I love the book, though."

I don't quite understand the first request--does she want more details added into the existing framework? Probably! Or does she just want text citations? Not unreasonable! (I'll just ask her.) Well, who doesn't?! Then again there probably is some stuff I've already worked out, notes gathering dust somewhere around here: time of androsphinxes, eidolon guardians, details of the Conciliator's brief visit to Urth . . .

A map of the starship's journey, now =that= would really be something! I should put in all the notes I've got on that. Diagram of Briah and Yesod as being two conveyer belts moving in opposite directions . . . All in all, more stuff for the delayed "Additions, Errata, &cetera: Volume 3."

=mantis=