

random thoughts: aldiss / pandora / short sun

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 29 Jan 2002

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maa32 — 29 Jan 2002, 22:59

A while ago someone mentioned that Aldiss and Wolfe may harbor some unconscious ill will for each other, especially in light of Aldiss' characterization of The Book of the New Sun in Trillion Year Spree. Recently, Wolfe recommended "Report on Probability A" to me, but stated "I normally don't like Aldiss." I think that can be taken a couple of ways.

Also, as I've written to Mr. Borski a few times since the list has been down, I've been looking at Pandora (the most abused of Wolfe's works) again. There are a lot of German people running around: Larry Lief, the man who is killed; Bill Hake, H. Hollander's servant; and a few others. Lief means run, Hake means hook. Interestingly enough, a bill hook is a scimitar. In light of the myth of Aladdin in which a man pretends to be Alladin's uncle to get the lamp (kind of like "Uncle" Sinclair uses Aladdin Blue to find books to sell to Mr. Hollander), I am proposing that something dubious is going on with Uncle Sinclair, whose demise is reported in the introduction of the book. Additionally, Holly herself seems to love to emphasize with italics and I am trying to come up with a cogent assimilation of all italics in the book. The two men who hang out with Aladdin correspond nicely to the genie of the ring and the genie of the lamp that Aladdin has in the traditional myth. I'm not sure where to overlay the two myths; are the Hollander brothers Epimetheus and Prometheus, or are they like the evil brothers from the Aladdin myth who almost destroy Aladdin? There are a ton of German artifacts in Hollander's house: a german special forces knife, a special police Walter pistol, the german cartridge that supposedly causes the explosion, and a german servant in the form of Bill Hake who is the only one with Mrs. HOLLander when she goes to pick up Pandora's box. I would like to think of Bill Hake as a weapon of destruction, but I haven't found the "key" to this novel; I'm not sure there is one. (also, check out the scenes where Holly and her mother interact: they are the only indications we get that Holly smokes and how rebellious she is - also, she says the oil that Lief's family sells is a great cover up for pot - yet she says she won't tell us about the first time she tried pot. I think Lief's death is a good cover up for something - but I don't know if overanalyzing Pandora is a good idea.)

On another note, has anybody come up with a plausible description for the inscription on the white ring that Horn and Silk use in The Book of the Short Sun? If I re-read those books again anytime soon I'll try to pay attention to it. Anybody figured out why Beroep is so "poor"? Or who that dude with the colorless cape is on the moon ... (I mean, Green).

Everybody knows Douglas Adams died last year, right? I just saw that on the internet last week and I was pretty surprised. He was kind of young (I'm not sure if many people who enjoy Wolfe's work would like Adams, but he was certainly funny - I liked his books when I was younger.)

I don't know if I posted these ideas to the general lists, but I came up with a plausible excuse for the eucharistic ceremonies in In Green's Jungles and Return to the Whorl. If you buy that the trees are eating people and recombining with their DNA, then a transubstantiation is going on that mirrors the Catholic belief that wine (made from grapes) and bread ACTUALLY become blood and flesh (as opposed to the consubstantiation of many protestant religions in which

symbolic resonance supersedes actual changes in matter). This occurs when he is in the forest and he feels the trees watching him, and when he is with Olivine on the Whorl. In her case, we have seen how her mother was able to incorporate some of Maytera Rose's soul with her parts, another kind of transubstantiation (vegetable to human to mechanical ... strange, huh?) I think there was more to the gesture than just the direct evocation of an overtly Christian and Catholic ceremony. I'm sure I've already shared that with Mr. Borski, Mr. Jordan, and Mr. Robertson.

I hope everyone is doing ok, I'm glad the list is back up.

Marc Aramini

Questions or problems: write ranjit at urth.net