

crucifixion

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 24 Feb 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/2989>

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.

maa32 — 24 Feb 2002, 21:16

Someone commented a little while ago on the obvious lack of a crucifixion in the allegorical schema of the Sun books... and it depends how allegorical you want to get. Terminus Est is obviously a cross, and it causes Severian to stumble three times when he is fleeing thrax through the underground dungeon which is being flooded. When little Severian dies, Severian plants the sword in the ground and uses it to step up, just like the cross allows Jesus to ascend (indirectly, of course; I am aware of his 3 day detour). The sword really does seem like a cross planted in the ground on that particular occassion, especially in light of the "sacrifice" of little Severian. Indeed, I think Sword of the Lictor in its entirety is about 70% allegory. Jeez, Typhon even asks the same questions as Satan. When Severian is walking around the ship on The Urth of the New Sun, he is suddenly grabbed by some force and his arms are brought out to both his sides as he is suspended in the air. This is also a type of crucifixion scene, where his eidolon is disbursed before being reconstituted elsewhere. (I would also argue that Wolfe tries to tie in the symbol of crucifixion with that of the flood by constantly having Severian lose his sword in water; eschatology and genesis, as it were). In the Short Sun books, I would argue that the crucifixion imagery (and let us not forget the saving aspects of crucifixion) occur when can you see where I'm going? Horn gets eaten by a tree (remember the Dante allegorical association: the tree of knowledge of good and evil was used to make the cross of Jesus) and falls into a pit where he is trapped, before he rises. He is probably killed and resurrected there. Ultimately, resting at the base of a tree at the end of On Blue's Water is a more gentle and affirming way for Horn's spirit to move on into Babbie. But the idea that being strung up on a tree, followed by being cast into hell, matches that Horn scene on the island pretty well, after which he seems to be part of "another world" in his perceptions. It also creates the "saved people" (in my analysis, anyway). Marc Aramini

Joshua A. Solomon — 25 Feb 2002, 10:27 · follows maa32

From: maa32 <maa32 at dana.ucc.nau.edu>

Date: Sun, 24 Feb 2002 14:16:23 -0700

When little Severian dies, Severian plants the sword
in the ground ... The sword
really does seem like a cross planted in the ground on that particular
occassion, especially in light of the "sacrifice" of little Severian.

In "The Changeling" (1970) Wolfe also uses (toy) swords in the ground to imply crucifixions (Calvary, in particular).

js

Joshua A. Solomon
Department of Optometry and Visual Science
City University
London EC1V 0HB
Voice: (44) 20 7040 0192
Fax: (44) 20 7040 0182
J.A.Solomon at city.ac.uk

<http://www.staff.city.ac.uk/~solomon>

--