

Some problems if the Pancreator/Outsider is the Holy Trinity

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 09 Jun 2002

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Andrew Reeves — 09 Jun 2002, 01:36

Hello again. I was just thinking of the events in the _Short_ and _Long_ sun books. One thing that I've found fairly interesting is the fact that by the end of the _Short Sun_ it's pretty obvious that the Outsider is the Holy Trinity, especially with the (re) introduction of the eucharist. That aside, this leaves some concerns...

During his enlightenment, Silk sees what one could well assume is Jesus being taken down from the cross. Now, if this is the case, it seems that He has taken his time about returning, to say the least. After all, it's been going on close to a million years with no parousia in sight. Indeed, it also appears that the sacraments and Church have lapsed, and it seems rather unlike the Nicene God to allow His Church to fade out for several hundred thousand years.

Furthermore, it seems that at the end of _Urth of the New Sun_, he's somewhat violating His promise never again to destroy the world again by water. I guess one could weasel out of this by saying that it's Severian who did it, but since the Hierodules (who serve Tzadkiel, who being an angel is under the Increate) at least twice had to slap together a new body for Severian when he was out of range of the New Sun, then it seems that it was the Increate who was flooding the continents. So it rather seems that God is going back on His word.

Just some random thoughts.

Andrew

Steve Strickland — 09 Jun 2002, 16:45 · follows Andrew Reeves

Here are some thoughts.

Generally, I agree that the Outsider represents the Christian God, particularly in contrast to the mainframe gods. In my view, an important part of what Wolfe is doing is developing a futuristic world somewhat like the ancient western world, with the contrast between the one God and the polytheism of the ancient western world.

I don't think it's accurate or helpful, however to think of Wolfe as trying to create a perfect correspondence between Christ and the Outsider. More likely, he's trying to focus on a few aspects of the divinity while not worrying about everything or even whether there are aspects of the work that might be viewed from a Christian perspective as theological errors. (Some have noted that Silk is also an Odin-like character, and part of what Wolfe may be trying to do is take a look at Norse mythology in relation to classical mythology and Christianity).

Not sure I understand the problem with the time spanning Christ's return.

In the first century I'm sure few Christians would have envisioned another 200 years passing before the parousia, much less another 2000. "I am coming soon" is clearly from God's point of

view, not man's. Discouraging, perhaps; but theologically incorrect? I don't see it.

The lapsing of the church and of the sacraments would be more troubling, theologically, I agree. But it hasn't necessarily happened in Wolfe's world. For one thing, the race of mankind has spread to other stars. That the Christian church may have died on one planet would not preclude the possibility that a remnant remains. Part of what Wolfe is writing about is a society caught up in idolatry and the breaking in of the Outsider (as a thief) into that world; the lapse of the church into idolatry and the diminution of the Outsider's role in the culture's worldview is an component of that endeavor.

Don't know if I have anything to add to your point about the flood. Maybe, the idea is that the world was already destroyed, had run down, and the New Sun is its rebirth, not destruction.

Steve Strickland

----- Original Message -----

From: "Andrew Reeves" <ABReeves at mail.utexas.edu>

To: <urth at urth.net>

Sent: Saturday, June 08, 2002 8:36 PM

Subject: (urth) Some problems if the Pancreator/Outsider is the Holy Trinity

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