

Some problems if the Pancreator/Outsider is the Holy

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 10 Jun 2002

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 10 Jun 2002, 19:05

Andrew writes again...

... 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...

Well, I'd say "it's pretty clear that the Outsider is the God of Christianity." The entire theology of the Trinity seems to be untouched by the texts (though the Person of Jesus is, as you observe, mentioned without name in a few places).

So what is happening here? There is some reason in the Long/Short Sun texts to suppose that some form of church which worshipped the God known in the _Whorl_ as the Outsider, was present in the world from which the _Whorl_ was launched. The Chrasologic Writings mention, briefly, the man whom the Outsider had both enlightened and possessed, and wound up crucified.

So Typhon and his brood create the _Whorl_, a place in which they can be as gods; they brutally try to suppress all memory of the religions of Urth. Yet hints of these religions creep through, so that the "Vironese Faith" rather resembles Temple Judaism, albeit with many Gods; so that the Trivigauntes have a religion very similar to Islam, except with the sexual roles reversed; and so that there is even some vague memory of the Incarnation.

In the protagonists of the Long and Short Sun books, the Outsider (that is, God) begins once again to break through to a captive people, to tell them the truth about who He is and what He wants of them. These protagonists fill prophetic roles, and participate in varying ways in reinstituted and reconstituted sacraments.

But what _is_ the Incarnation that is so vaguely remembered?

Wolfe has on several times suggested that the world of the _Sun_ books is _not_ our future, but a past "cycle" of creation; if so, then the Incarnation that we know of has not yet happened. It would be theologically difficult to suggest that the Incarnation, and especially the once-for-all Sacrifice happens again and again in successive universal cycles ... though, in fact, it happening "again and again" could, from at least a Catholic point of view, be simplified to it happening once, and the other "occurrences" are "participation" in the one occurrence, as the sacrifice of the Mass participates in it.

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.

Well, I don't want to get into a religious debate; I'd say that Wolfe most likely has an attitude similar to that of many Catholics, especially many American Catholics: which is that the eschatological sayings of the New Testament are to be taken in a different light from their

obvious literal sense.

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.

Well, yes; but then, Christians of many stripes seem to have no problem with that idea. Some Protestants seem to have the idea that there was no real Church from shortly after the death of the Apostles until the Reformation. Some Catholics seem to have the idea that the real Church was suppressed at (or until) one or other of the Vatican councils. Etc. And if my hypothesis is true, that there was some such church in the time of Typhon, then there probably has been no lapse at all, except on board the _Whorl_. (Even Severian, if I am not mistaken, has heard rumors of the Incarnation; but we get no real details of the religious beliefs and practices of his time.)

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.

Again, assuming that this is an earlier universal cycle, one can weasel even easier by saying that the promise hasn't yet happened ... but I think that the Urth isn't _destroyed_ by water, it's renewed by water. In fact, one could claim that it's baptised, as Severian himself is in the opening chapter of tBotNS, "Death and Resurrection."

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)

Well, if I recall, Tzad is a Hierogrammate. But I could be wrong.

matthew.malthouse — 11 Jun 2002, 06:23 · follows Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

On 10/06/2002 15:56:39 James Jordan wrote:
.... remember that Urth is a universe-cycle before ours. These events predate the promise to Noah by about 50 billion years maybe.

What tells us this?

Matthew