

Christians and Christs: A new RPG?

The Urth list — 4 messages, 4 voices, 12 Jun 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3311>

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Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 12 Jun 2002, 16:27

Crush declaimed:

... Actually, I think the operative sentence here is "Severian is a Christian rather than a Christ." Although, to me for some reason, saying Severian is a Christian is a more jarring statement than saying he's a Christ.

Well, here you fall afair of the common Catholic theological concept of the "anonymous Christian" -- the person who, for whatever reason, is not given the grace to know and believe in Christ in this life, but believes in what the closest conception available to him/her. This is a hair, but a critical hair, separater from syncretic universalism: it doesn't say that everyone will be saved; rather, it says that God plays fair and that everyone has the opportunity to be saved.

How many hit points does a Jesus have, anyway?

James Jordan — 14 Jun 2002, 17:13 · follows Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

At 09:27 AM 6/12/2002 -0700, you wrote:

Crush declaimed:

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Well, here you fall afair of the common Catholic theological concept of the "anonymous Christian" -- the person who, for whatever reason, is not given the grace to know and believe in Christ in this life, but believes in what the closest conception available to him/her. This is a hair, but a critical hair, separater from syncretic universalism: it doesn't say that everyone will be saved; rather, it says that God plays fair and that everyone has the opportunity to be saved.

--Blattid

I'm inclined to think that there is Christianity in the Urth world, but that we don't see it except very indirectly. Wolfe has left it in the background, but hinted at it with his Byzantine setting, the Byzantine theological terminology (Increate, Pancreator, Theoanthropos), the confused but still somewhat faithful nuns of the Pelerines (sp?) with their saint-relic shrine, etc. Severian utters a prayer as he commits his first book to the stellar winds. So I don't think we're supposed to think of Sev as an "anonymous Christian" but as a person living in a confused and compromised Christian world (as all Christian worlds are, because of sin, and Byzantium certainly was) and as having a background that makes him a very "undisciplined" Christian of some sort. He's a believer, but a weak one. He shares the common faith of his society. BTW, when Wolfe told me that he was thinking of Briah as a previous universe, I took it at face value. Maybe all this means is that this is what he was thinking when he started out. He was "playing" with the notion of a cyclical universe. I certainly don't have anything invested in it,

and the 11 or 12 volume super-novel is in a lot of ways simpler if we assume it is "our" universe. I don't think it matters much, for I have not been able to see that it is some kind of major interpretive clue -- except that it does allow him to have a flood over the earth, which in our universe would be problematic because of the promise to Noah. That aspect of the narrative is "cleaner" if this a pre-Noah universe.

FWIW.

Nutria

Jeff Wilson — 17 Jun 2002, 00:55 · follows James Jordan

From:

James Jordan <jbjordan4 at cox.net>

BTW, when Wolfe told me that he was thinking of Briah as a previous universe, I took it at face value.

The transcript does not render your question clearly at all; what exactly =did= you ask him, if you can recall at 11 years' remove?

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Is it possible to dodge the promise some other way? Was Urth ever abandoned by humanity? Could the flood be local in nature, or due to some other cause, perhaps Abaia? The flood lasts far too long to be due to the White Fountain alone.

Jeff Wilson

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James Wynn — 17 Jun 2002, 14:39 · follows Jeff Wilson

The thought occurs to me that the Deluge of Ushas **could** be the Deluge of Noah - that the Story of Noah could be the a mythological telling of the Ushas Deluge...OR the Noah story could be a PROPHECY of the Ushas Deluge!!!

...or (as I'm inclined to believe) Wolfe was toying with the idea of the ultimate beneficial intent of even G-d's most punitive actions - and took up the icon of the world-wide flood to show it (I'm pretty certain that Wolfe does not believe in a historical Deluge).

Seen this last way, Wolfe's NS, LS, and SS books stories are "mythological" sci-fi rather than "speculative" sci-fi. That is, one cannot expect to draw a line from the Messiah's Earth to the Conciliator's Urth. You can do it technologically, linguistically, geographically, and in literature. But Biblically? No. That's just too much to ask even from Wolfe. Even Tolkien balked at attempting to create such a world - insisting that there is NO religion in Middle Earth (except the false worship of Sauron by the Swarthy Men).

C. S. Lewis DID draw such a connection in both his Space Trilogy and the Narnia series. But when he attempted to add a tenuous connection (in the space trilogy) to Middle-Earth, Tolkien deeply resented it.

If Wolfe IS bringing into the Long Sun and the Short Sun books the actual G-d he worships at

Mass, then I'll bet a dollar he does not see Silk's world and history as any more potentially "actual" than Tolkien saw Middle-Earth when he included in it the origin of "Hey-diddle-diddle".

I'm not sure I'm making myself clear. Sorry about that.

-- Crush

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

From: Jeff Wilson [mailto:jwilson at io.com]
Sent: Sunday, June 16, 2002 7:55 PM
To: urth at urth.net
Subject: Re: (urth) Christians and Christs: A new RPG?
From:
James Jordan <jbjordan4 at cox.net>

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