

Blue as Ushas

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 17 Nov 2002

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Roy C. Lackey — 17 Nov 2002, 09:11

Let us posit--strictly for the sake of argument--that Blue is Ushas. How does that affect the overall picture Wolfe has drawn in the 12 SUN books? That is, is it consonant with the religious underpinnings Wolfe has given the extended series?

Taking the long view, let me summarize: God created the world, didn't like the way things turned out, wiped the slate clean with a big flood and started over. Enter Noah. Things still didn't turn out right. Strike two. Enter Jesus. Things still didn't work out right. Bad Man was worse than ever; he spread his corruption to other worlds. What to do, what to do? Wipe the slate clean again with a big flood. Strike three. Enter Severian, the New Sun. Well, hell, things *still* didn't work out right. Odilo's flock evidently evolved into the Neighbors (or was supplanted by them), who had their own foibles. They were so plagued by the inhumani that they fled the planet (and Lune), leaving behind, not exactly a clean slate, but one wiped of mankind. Strike four. The Outsider hijacks Typhon's Ark. Enter the Moses/Christ-like, latter-day Noah/Pas with an ark full of goodies. Within *one* generation, the new peoples of Ushas-come-Blue are at it again--feuding, fussing, and fighting--rotten sinners, every bit as bad as those who got snuffed in the first flood. What to do, what to do? "Let's get Moses/Jesus/Noah/Pas down here to set things right." Enter Silkhorn. He samples a few of Blue's settlements, conducts a couple of wars, consorts with an old nemesis of Urth, realizes he is Silk, wrings his hands, and says, nope, this ain't for me; I'm outta here. Then he adjusts his halo and sails off in a worn-out starship for ports unknown with his former student/alter ego's wife and girlfriend.

Meanwhile, the Neighbors, some iteration or other in mankind's evolution within God's creation, dodged the bullet. They seem to have escaped the Outsider's wrath when they abandoned Ushas for other worlds. And the Outsider is left in the awkward position of having the same damn planet steeped once again in iniquity, and so soon! Did he hijack Typhon's ship for nothing? Didn't he see it coming? What to do, what to do?

Parts of the above scenario we are stuck with, such as twice-flooded Urth. After that point, even an atheist's sense of righteousness gets offended. How are the Neighbors any less morally culpable than the ignorant, hard working, innocent peasants who got drowned in the second flood? If Blue is Ushas of the far future, what was accomplished by the wounding of the old sun and the coming of the New? Nothing. Mankind is still as rotten as ever, even on the home planet. The descendants of the First Empire are still spread all over the galaxy. The Neighbors are out there, somewhere. And Silk is on his way to . . . spread mankind's sins around to more worlds? This doesn't make sense to me.

-Roy

Chris — 17 Nov 2002, 11:30 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Thanks for the welcome, Roy

I agree with your point here, though perhaps for different reasons. The religious aspects are open to a very wide amount of interpretation, and whether you believe Blue is Ushas or not you can choose to take it negatively and nothing stops you.

I look at the question like this: asking if Blue is Ushas is somewhat akin to asking if Ushas is Urth. Perhaps, in a sense, they are? But in the most important sense they're different, and have different meanings, which go along with the different names. This, to me, is far more important than the argument over the means of how Blue might be Ushas. In this sense I feel you're dead on in bringing the "higher" level into it.

To Don: Thank you for your welcome as well.

Unfortunately I think your red star is another red herring. Silk did see this star at least once, in the enlightenment given him by the Outsider, along with a lot of other knowledge of history, etc. One can easily argue that Silk's enlightenment is false or partially mistaken (certainly Crane would agree). But to attack that is to attack a lot of other things, some of which are integral to all of our understanding of the novels.

CP

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