

A case of relativity

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 19 Feb 2003

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Nigel Price — 19 Feb 2003, 17:14

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote...

That's an interesting point ... and one that I find extremely difficult to understand, especially in the aftermath of the Long/Short books, in which over and over God/the Outsider repeatedly intervenes in subtle but active and difficult-to-ignore ways.

I don't think we're disagreeing at all. That's pretty well the sort of thing I meant to say when I was maundering on late last night!

In my view, there is a shift in style and emphasis between TB/UotNS and TBotLS, but if the level of "explicitness" rises, then it is only relative to his other works. By the standards of most other authors, he's still pretty indirect and subtle. Reading a lot of Wolfe, I find it easy to forget just how utterly odd and deeply cryptic his stories are.

For example, I've just finished reading Margery Allingham's "Tiger in the Smoke", which I heartily commend to list members who like Golden Age detective stories and, for want of a better name, "Christian fiction". Without giving too much away, the plot is all about the hunt for a serial killer who is knifing his way through a post-war London in the grip of a deep smog. It's also very much about salvation and damnation in an explicitly Christian sense, and by the standards of the genre the religious subtext is pretty subtle stuff. But compared with Wolfe!!

Nigel