

Jonas & black beans

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 14 Apr 1997

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m.driussi — 14 Apr 1997, 16:43

Reply: Item #3929797 from URTH at LISTS.BEST.COM@INET00#

Re: Nessus, fwiw I agree with much of what Scott Dalrymple writes.

That is to say, the great strength of alga's map is symbolic. Having looked into plate tectonics, I'm afraid the movements required for a literal rendition are more imaginary than plausible (barring the crutch of "terraforming" which I myself use far too often <g>); and as Scott points out so succinctly, landmarks like the Library of Alexandria (palace of Knossos, etc.) are already gone in our time. So any reconstruction is just that--a reconstruction; and as such can happen anywhere on the globe.

Part of the "problem," such as there is, is that Wolfe is very sneaky and slippery. In the interview with James B. Jordan (our Nutria), Wolfe seems to be pretty clearly saying that Briah is in another universe than ours, that Urth is not our Earth. But I'm pretty sure I can show you other interviews and Wolfe-written articles where Wolfe says that the Commonwealth is in South America and Ascia is in North America; and in the appendices to TBOTNS Wolfe alludes to Earthbound buildings linking Earth to Urth; and in the text the astronaut on the Moon and missionaries in the jungle garden likewise link Earth to Urth.

All of this means that in order to make a statement that isn't too nebulous, an essayist is going to have to focus on some points and ignore others. The corollary being that the other readers can pick up these ignored points to hurl at the essayist.

(Scott: as for Urth "flipped on her axis," I think it was more along the lines of Urth flipping her magnetic poles, which would serve as a time benchmark of some sort, since we do know--or profess to know--that this has happened on Earth, and how often it tends to happen. It would be a benchmark if such a hint can be found in the text.)

Now then, here's a wish-list topic of my own:

I want to know the rest of the story that Jonas was telling at the end of THE SHADOW OF THE TORTURER, the tale of a woman who went to the stars and returned with some black beans. I'd like any scraps: motif index references, fairy tales, legends, myths, anything. (To me it seems like a cross between the beginning of "Jack and the Beanstalk" and the ending of CAT'S CRADLE, and/or maybe the Sibyl offering her volumes of future history to the Roman Emperor.)

I also want the name of the German fairytale about the man who had no shadow.

=mantis=