

AEG only semi-spoilish

The Urth list — 5 messages, 5 voices, 20 Nov 2008

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5229>

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 20 Nov 2008, 00:03

Here goes Dan'l with his nutty theory again...

My ongoing theory is that one of Wolfe's basic themes/memes/working methods is to embed non-Christian cosmologies into larger Christian contexts. That is, in these novels Christianity is ultimately true but some other belief system functions locally as if it were true.

The most blatant example of this is "Long Sun," which is explicitly a Gnostic world (the Whorl) contained inside a larger universe in which Christianity is true (i.e., the Outsider is the Christian God). Only slightly less straightforward are his embedding of Norse (TWK) and Greek (Latro I & II) pagan cosmologies into the Christian ur-context.

I've argued this at length.

So I don't suppose anyone on this list will be terribly surprised when I suggest that, in AN EVIL GUEST, Wolfe has similarly embedded Lovecraft's cosmology into the Christian ur-context. That Squiddie (Cthulhu) and R'lyeh and other Lovecraftiana are real in the novel seems beyond dispute. The cultists practice Lovecraftian nihilism, and it is "locally true" -- as long as they are under the influence of the GOOs, it may as well be true.

This needs fleshing out, but I'm putting it out as a starting point to be attacked and developed.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes, writer, trainer, bon vivant

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<http://www.danehyoakes.com>

I once absend-mindedly ordered Three Mile Island dressing in a restaurant and, with great presence of mind, they brought Thousand Island Dressing and a bottle of chili sauce. -- T. Pratchett

James Crossley — 20 Nov 2008, 00:17 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On 11/19/08 4:03 PM, "Dan'l Danehy-Oakes" <danlido at gmail.com> wrote:

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I'm not going to be able to back this up in any way, but I whole-heartedly agree. In the worlds of Wolfe's books, elaborate cosmologies appear to belie Christian truth, but he always lets Jehovah peek through the cracks. I imagine that's how Wolfe thinks it worked in the real world, too, with a deepening pagan understanding of the world eventually giving way to the revealed Christianity behind the scenes.

James

Mo Holkar / UKG — 20 Nov 2008, 10:01 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

At 00:03 20/11/2008, Dan'I wrote:

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I'm happy to buy that -- I don't think Wolfe would have wanted to handle that material on any other basis -- but I'd like to see an exposition of the way the larger Christian picture might be seen to inform the events of AEG, because to me it's not all clear.

best wishes,

Mo

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WolfeWiki now at:

<http://www.wolfewiki.com/pmwiki/>

Dave Tallman — 20 Nov 2008, 12:51 · in reply to Mo Holkar / UKG

Mo Holkar wrote:

I'm happy to buy that -- I don't think Wolfe would have wanted to handle that material on any other basis -- but I'd like to see an exposition of the way the larger Christian picture might be seen to inform the events of AEG, because to me it's not all clear.

There is Christianity in Wolfe's future world. Cassie encounters it through Margaret (especially in her song "Walk in the Reign") and in her role as Mariah Brownlea. Her star-power causes her roles to become real to her, so I believe she gets in touch with real spirituality through these songs and roles. It's like the concept of "act as if" in 12-step programs. She begins to get ideas like "add nothing to God and you get good."

I believe this makes her stronger and able to face adversity in the end much better than she could have before. Her relationship with Reis has elements of allegory with Christ and the Church, though Reis is far from perfect as a Christ-figure (like Severian, his action to redeem his world involves mass flooding and destruction).

In the end, Cassie seems redeemed from a shallow, materialistic life. Her hope that Wally will somehow come back to her is like that of Christians waiting for the return of Christ.

John Watkins — 20 Nov 2008, 15:08 · in reply to Dave Tallman

On 11/20/08, Dave Tallman <davetallman at msn.com> wrote:

Mo Holkar wrote:

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Mariah Brownlea. Her star-power causes her roles to become real to her, so I believe she gets in touch with real spirituality through these songs and roles. It's like the concept of "act as if" in 12-step programs. She begins to get ideas like "add nothing to God and you get good."

That "act as if" stuff seems to be a huge part of all of Wolfe's books. Wolfe is always working with the idea that you are the thing you do, that we freely choose our actions and that we're transformed by them.

I've argued this before, but it's most explicit in the Long Sun when it's explained that a demon can't imitate a god--if it does, it will be absorbed into the god. So we see Kypris, a woman's personality masquerading as a love-goddess, becoming an instrument of the Outsider, the true God of Love, and we see the significance of Horn's imitations of Silk.

I guess it's also the point of The Wizard Knight and Pirate Freedom. The protagonists of each make a choice about who they want to be in the new world they find themselves in, and both succeed.
