

Rajan and Food-Wolfe overview?

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 30 Apr 2009

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5423>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

b sharp — 30 Apr 2009, 15:13

In following this debate I find myself stepping back a few paces to try to discern a larger pattern. In 5HoC we have Shadow Children who take on the form of what might be called their prey, humans, to varying degrees. Their original form was too ambiguous to really comprehend but those Shadow Children who become most fully human lose their memory and sense of identity.

Then we have BotNS (and perhaps the Latro books) in which I (perhaps alone) detect a back story which tries to give a scientific (or science fiction) reality to the origin of ancient mythology. This involves the intrusion on Urth (and Earth) of interstellar entities which are capable of shape shifting to human and other forms, perhaps budding off small portions, etc. As is common in mythology this shifting (which includes DNA changes) allows mating and even reproduction between aliens/gods and humans.

And we have Long/Short Sun books which perhaps try to tie some of these ideas together. Though not religious myself, I have always had a puzzling religious question- If God did all this work to create Earth and people and provide Salvation, what is the rest of the universe for? Are there alien Bibles and Jesuses? I can imagine Gene Wolfe pondering the same question.

Perhaps Wolfe's idea is that there are these shape shifting entities, some malevolent, some benign, travelling through the universe, finding all inhabited planets. This leads to a necessary spiritual progression on each planet which involves infestation and corruption through interbreeding with the natives, a purifying flood, and the appearance of a Saviour in the form of a native with god-like power but partial or full amnesia regarding his connection to universe traversing entities.

Could this idea be applied to explain the Bible, Jesus, Urth, Severian, Blue and Silk under a single umbrella of thought? I dunno, but I'm trying. I'm the sort who solves a jigsaw puzzle by trying to get the outer framework solved first before tackling the difficult inner workings. Any help is appreciated!

-bsharp

David Stockhoff — 30 Apr 2009, 17:47 · follows b sharp

I think that's an excellent and provocative summary. I think Wolfe ponders questions of belief like yours constantly, always focusing on the precise details of who and what perfectly intelligent people believe or have believed, and what we believe or are willing to believe now. To him, they are all true, in that they all may lead to truth.

So gods/Gods, angels/demons, and ghosts/aliens are naturally going to be a theme for him. If there are forces out there, almost but not quite unseen, are they independent forces, or manipulated forces/manifestations, or somehow projections of our own capacity for evil/desire for good?

See Crowley's Aegypt tetralogy, btw, for an example of a godlike character first seen striding

across the universe, then (perhaps, if it is he) trying to remember his origin beyond Earth---exactly as you describe.

For Crowley, the same question works out not to How does God show himself to us/hide himself from us, but more how does the true nature of the universe do the same. How do we overlook it/how do we discover it? At least that's how I see it.

Message: 7

Date: Thu, 30 Apr 2009 11:13:56 -0400

From: b sharp <bsharporflat at hotmail.com>

Subject: (urth) Rajan and Food-Wolfe overview?

To: <urth at urth.net>

Message-ID: <COL109-W3755A2B47C05B75A6FBBCCD76C0 at phx.gbl>

Content-Type: text/plain; charset="Windows-1252"

In following this debate I find myself stepping back a few paces to try to discern a larger pattern. In 5HoC we have Shadow Children who take on the form of what might be called their prey, humans, to varying degrees. Their original form was too ambiguous to really comprehend but those Shadow Children who become most fully human lose their memory and sense of identity.

Then we have BotNS (and perhaps the Latro books) in which I (perhaps alone) detect a back story which tries to give a scientific (or science fiction) reality to the origin of ancient mythology. This involves the intrusion on Urth (and Earth) of interstellar entities which are capable of shape shifting to human and other forms, perhaps budding off small portions, etc. As is common in mythology this shifting (which includes DNA changes) allows mating and even reproduction between aliens/gods and humans.

And we have Long/Short Sun books which perhaps try to tie some of these ideas together. Though not religious myself, I have always had a puzzling religious question- If God did all this work to create Earth and people and provide Salvation, what is the rest of the universe for? Are there alien Bibles and Jesuses? I can imagine Gene Wolfe pondering the same question.

Perhaps Wolfe's idea is that there are these shape shifting entities, some malevolent, some benign, travelling through the universe, finding all inhabited planets. This leads to a necessary spiritual progression on each planet which involves infestation and corruption through interbreeding with the natives, a purifying flood, and the appearance of a Saviour in the form of a native with god-like power but partial or full amnesia regarding his connection to universe traversing entities.

Could this idea be applied to explain the Bible, Jesus, Urth, Severian, Blue and Silk under a single umbrella of thought? I dunno, but I'm trying. I'm the sort who solves a jigsaw puzzle by trying to get the outer framework solved first before tackling the difficult inner workings. Any help is appreciated!

-bsharp
