

christ, already

The Urth list — 67 messages, 13 voices, 15 Dec 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5826>

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Lee Berman — 15 Dec 2010, 20:09

Dan'l D. Oakes: The Outsider is the Christian God, to be sure

I don't know enough to debate yea or nay on this. But RttW seems to explicitly define The Outsider as The God of Wine, son of Thyone. i.e. a version of Dionysus. I think there are some who here have knowledge which suggests there is religious justification for considering Dionysus as a version or precursor of Christ.

the stories analogous to those of Jesus are attributed to "a fortunate man whom the Outsider had both enlightened and possessed" -- an Jesus-analogue in the Briahitic Universe.

I think it was Andrew who recently pointed out the Long Sun story of a legendary figure who got busy with moneychangers in a temple.

In one interview, Gene Wolfe quips that since Jesus used a scourge during that temple episode, even he knows what it is to be a torturer.

Some interesting conjoining of concepts here. I'm interested how y'all might sort them out.

DAVID STOCKHOFF — 15 Dec 2010, 21:11 · in reply to Lee Berman

Well, whoever the "fortunate man ... possessed by the Outsider" was, he must not have been crucified. Not very fortunate, that.

--- On Wed, 12/15/10, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:

From: Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com>
Subject: (urth) christ, already
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Date: Wednesday, December 15, 2010, 3:09 PM
Dan'l D. Oakes: The Outsider is the Christian God, to be sure

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Son of Witz — 15 Dec 2010, 21:12 · in reply to Lee Berman

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In one interview, Gene Wolfe quips that since Jesus used a scourge during that temple episode, even he knows what it is to be a torturer.

Some interesting conjoining of concepts here. I'm interested how y'all might sort them out.

I always liked Scorsese's Last Temptation portrayal of Jesus making crucifixes. (I don't know if that is valid to the tradition) but it says the same thing. Jesus knows what it is to be a torturer.

I don't know about Dionysus. I need to read those again, but I thought that Outsider=Christ was about as unambiguous as Gene Wolfe gets.

DAVID STOCKHOFF — 15 Dec 2010, 21:20 · in reply to Son of Witz

I'd say Outsider=God was about as unambiguous as Gene Wolfe gets.

--- On Wed, 12/15/10, Son of Witz <Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org> wrote:

From: Son of Witz <Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org>

Subject: Re: (urth) christ, already

Son of Witz — 15 Dec 2010, 21:35 · in reply to DAVID STOCKHOFF

Are you forgetting the tripartite nature of Christ?

The Father, The son, and The Holy Ghost. Christ is an aspect of God and is used by Christians interchangeably with God.

On Dec 15, 2010, at 1:20 PM, DAVID STOCKHOFF <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:

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From: Son of Witz <Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org>

Subject: Re: (urth) christ, already

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 15 Dec 2010, 21:36 · in reply to Son of Witz

In Catholic (and most Christian) theology, Christ is not tripartite; He is one of the three persons of the Triune God. He does, however, have a _dual_ nature, thus the Theanthropos.

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From: Son of Witz <Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org>

Subject: Re: (urth) christ, already

Matthew Weber — 15 Dec 2010, 21:39 · in reply to Son of Witz

Christ is used exclusively in Christianity to refer to the second Person of the Trinity. Nobody refers to the Father or the Holy Ghost as Christ.

Here's a handy photographic mnemonic :

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/aozuas/2404074070/>

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Subject: Re: (urth) christ, already

DAVID STOCKHOFF — 15 Dec 2010, 21:48 · in reply to Son of Witz

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DAVID STOCKHOFF — 15 Dec 2010, 21:49 · in reply to Matthew Weber

Scary!

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Son of Witz — 15 Dec 2010, 22:21 · in reply to DAVID STOCKHOFF

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Son of Witz — 15 Dec 2010, 22:25 · in reply to Matthew Weber

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Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 15 Dec 2010, 22:33 · in reply to Son of Witz

I believe that the Outsider is the first Person of the Trinity, God the Father, and thus distinct from Christ.

On Wed, Dec 15, 2010 at 2:25 PM, Son of Witz <Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org> wrote:

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Matthew Weber — 15 Dec 2010, 22:35 · in reply to Son of Witz

Christ is indeed "Very God of Very God," but Christ didn't alight upon himself in the form of a dove at his baptism, nor did he speak by ventriloquism "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The Persons of the Trinity aren't pseudopods of God-stuff extended at need to fulfill functions; they are separate persons who are all of the same substance (substantia, ousia). The Son was incarnate as Jesus; neither the Father nor the Holy Ghost were ever incarnate. Christ is God; the Father is God; the Holy Ghost is God. But the Father is not Christ, nor is Christ the Holy Ghost, nor is the Holy Ghost the Father.

We can say that the Outsider is the God we find in Christianity, but to say that he is Christ makes assumptions about the correspondence of Christianity to Briah that we don't have data to support. An argument might be made that the Conciliator is Christ, although again the details of Urthian religion are a bit too sketchy to make that very convincing. On the other hand, Christ's mission was certainly conciliatory; to repair, by means of his sacrifice, the broken relationship between God and Man.

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Adam Thornton — 15 Dec 2010, 22:44 · in reply to DAVID STOCKHOFF

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Scary!

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Wow!

A Tetrahedral Teratoid Trinity!

Adam

Son of Witz — 15 Dec 2010, 22:55 · in reply to Matthew Weber

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Well, I didn't say Christ was the Father.

Again, I said that this is true: Outsider=Christ=God (not The Father) I don't think we are in disagreement.

We can say that the Outsider is the God we find in Christianity, but to say that he is Christ makes assumptions about the correspondence of Christianity to Briah that we don't have data to support. An argument might be made that the Conciliator is Christ, although again the details of Urthian religion

are a bit too sketchy to make that very convincing. On the other hand, Christ's mission was certainly conciliatory; to repair, by means of his sacrifice, the broken relationship between God and Man.

Again, I think that this is only a problem if you feel that there is no Christ without the Man Jesus. (sorry, I don't know Dark Tower cosmology, but I read that name in one of the comics) Pope Benedict XVI or whatever he's called recently, (within the last few years) affirmed that "From the beginning, Christianity has understood itself as the religion of the Logos" But "Logos" is a greek term that originally meant "ratio" more than "word". The Logos was originally understood as a mediator reconciling man and god, or so some Thologians have written. In this sense, I see Severian as embodying the Logos. Now I understand Logos to be a healing ASPECT of God. Thus I equate the outsider as a non-incarnate Logos. I think I confuse people in that I often use Christ as a name for the non-incarnate Logos and only use Jesus to refer to the possibly incarnate Logos.

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David Stockhoff — 15 Dec 2010, 23:25 · in reply to Son of Witz

Oh, yes it does.

Did the Outsider die on the cross here on Earth, or did he "give his only begotten son" who did that? That's one little point of difference

On 12/15/2010 5:21 PM, Son of Witz wrote:
What I mean is that you will find Christian's saying things like "Jesus is Lord" and "Find Jesus" and "find God" almost interchangeably. My real point is that Stockhoff seemed to be implying a difference, when editing my Outsider=Christ to Outsider=God. I'm saying that this doesn't fundamentally change the meaning.

~Witz

Son of Witz — 15 Dec 2010, 23:34 · in reply to David Stockhoff

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Ryan Dunn — 15 Dec 2010, 23:38 · in reply to DAVID STOCKHOFF

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Christ and God are explicit, though part of the Holy Trinity. God is within Christ, and Christ symbolizes God. And God created the symbol.

Something about symbols inventing us echoes in my mind.

:)

...ryan

On Dec 15, 2010, at 4:48 PM, DAVID STOCKHOFF <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:
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Craig Brewer — 15 Dec 2010, 23:51 · in reply to Ryan Dunn

I get the point about the Outsider being "God" but not "Christ" in the sense that the Outsider didn't deliver the sermon on the mount or actually be the body that died on the cross, etc.

But isn't there a bigger point here that the Outsider is the Outsider. "It" is the "real" God outside of man-made mythology. We can assume that it's ultimately the God of Christianity because of what we know of Wolfe, and, textually, because of its close association with Kypris/love/etc. and because of what *we* know those thematic relationships suggest to non-fictional theology outside of the made-up world in the books.

But, in the book, I always assumed that the real point of having the Outsider be called very deliberately "the Outsider" was that its actual nature remains largely unknown and mysterious, even to Silk after his vision. The books stress how difficult gnosis can be to come to terms with, even after direct revelation. Silk continually misunderstands the nature of the Outsider throughout the books, still trying to understand it through the "dark glass" of Pas' cobbled-together mythology at times, even as he learns how false that mythology actually is. At no point is Silk given a Bible in which he can read the gospels, etc. in any way that makes the identification of the Outsider as God/Holy Spirit/Christ really meaningful within the world of the book.

In Long Sun, the Outsider is the real God, sure, but none of the characters ever really understands what that means in the same way that Wolfe might believe he understands it. That truth remains difficult and distant even after revelation seems to be much the point of the books.

So I'll stick with calling it the Outsider.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Christ and God are explicit, though part of the Holy Trinity. God is within Christ, and Christ symbolizes God. And God created the symbol.

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To post, write urth at urth.net

Subscription/information: <http://www.urth.net>

Jeff Wilson — 16 Dec 2010, 00:03 · in reply to Ryan Dunn

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Christ is the Logos, sure, but doctrinally the Logos (symbol or word) is uncreated; co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. He is also the Son, though he's not the Son until Mary conceives. This makes the Son something of a temporal state, but that's okay, since Christ as the Son is supposed to partake of man's mortal nature so man can have a personal relationship with God.

Jeff Wilson — 16 Dec 2010, 00:04 · in reply to David Stockhoff

Oh, yes it does.

Did the Outsider die on the cross here on Earth, or did he "give his only begotten son" who did that? That's one little point of difference

Christian Atheism for the win!

Son of Witz — 16 Dec 2010, 00:06 · in reply to Craig Brewer

I pretty much agree with you but I feel like I'm hitting my head against a wall. Jesus of Nazareth delivered the sermon on the mount and died on the cross. Christians essentially title Jesus of Nazareth with the title Christ to denote that he is the Messiah. Christ means Messiah (redeemer) ("Anointed one" comes after Messiah") Every time I use Christ no one can ever seem to separate it from Jesus. I have not EVER said the Outsider or Severian has any connection with the man Jesus of Nazareth or his sermons or sacrifice.

SURELY, if the universe repeats itself, each universe will need a Christ / Messiah / Redeemer / Conciliator to help it from Outside creation, if it can be said that any of the creations have this.

~witz

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To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
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Hey, you're the one who said Outsider=Christ.

And no, Christians do not "use Christ interchangeably with God." Even I know that.

--- On Wed, 12/15/10, Son of Witz <Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org> wrote:

From: Son of Witz <Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org>
Subject: Re: (urth) christ, already

Jerry Friedman — 16 Dec 2010, 00:13 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Interesting, Dan'l. I was going to ask which Person the Outsider was.

Is it correct in Catholic theology to say that the Second Person or Logos has existed eternally but didn't become Jesus Christ till he incarnated?

If so, and taking Wolfe's word that Briah is a previous cycle, I think one could say that the Logos existed in (or in relation to) Briah, but Christ didn't. What that means for grace and salvation I

don't know; I think it's been suggested that Jesus's incarnation had a retroactive effect and thus saved, for example, Abraham.

I assume that the Conciliator and the man who scourged the merchants are retroactive "echoes" of Jesus the way the scene at Baldanders's castle echoes /Frankenstein/. I don't know whether these echoes happen by some kind of "automatic" process, like morphic resonance, or by divine intervention. If the Outsider did possess the merchant-beater, that must have been a deliberate decision on His part.

(By the way, somebody, David Stockhoff I think, suggested that the man wouldn't have been "fortunate" if he'd been crucified later, but Silk is the one who calls him fortunate. I think Silk might have thought being enlightened or possessed outweighed being crucified, or even that martyrdom was also good fortune.)

David asked about the point of similar repeated universes. One possibility that's been mentioned here is that the author might want to have a Flood without having God violate his promise to Noah.

Jerry Friedman

Matthew Weber — 16 Dec 2010, 00:16 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Quibble, irrelevant to this discussion, but :

The Fatherhood & Sonship of the Father & Son are coeternal. The Son was the Son from eternity, as the Nicene Creed saith. "Father" and "Son" in this case suggest a relationship, not temporal precedence. Logos = Son. The discussion of Wisdom in Proverbs & elsewhere in the OT is taken by Christians as typifying the Son as Logos.

On Wed, Dec 15, 2010 at 4:03 PM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Christ and God are explicit, though part of the Holy Trinity. God is within Christ, and Christ symbolizes God. And God created the symbol.

Christ is the Logos, sure, but doctrinally the Logos (symbol or word) is uncreated; co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. He is also the Son, though he's not the Son until Mary conceives. This makes the Son something of a temporal state, but that's okay, since Christ as the Son is supposed to partake of man's mortal nature so man can have a personal relationship with God.

Craig Brewer — 16 Dec 2010, 00:17 · in reply to Son of Witz

Strangely enough, I think that's actually a point of debate in the history of theology: namely, does the universe only need one redeemer? Does every planet need its own Christ? Would every iteration of a cyclical universe need its own Christ to be saved? Or was one enough to get the job done, as it were? Seems like I remember reading once that this argument has popped up a number of times in places FAR removed from science fiction. (I'm no theology expert, so I couldn't tell you where I read this.)

As for separating Christ from Jesus, though...for a Christian, that's splitting hairs, isn't it? Christ/"annointed one"/the "Messiah" isn't an abstraction. It had an actual, personal, historical occurrence in Jesus of Nazareth and that SPECIFIC instantiation matters. I mean, if Christ is the

Word/Logos made flesh, then the flesh of Jesus isn't an accidental property. The whole point was that god became a specific, historical man, not just a man in general.

Again, I'm no theologian, so I've probably got all kinds of things wrong...and in the end, like I said about the Outsider, I'm not sure how much any of this really matters to Long Sun.

I pretty much agree with you but I feel like I'm hitting my head against a wall. Jesus of Nazareth delivered the sermon on the mount and died on the cross. Christians essentially title Jesus of Nazareth with the title Christ to denote that he is the Messiah. Christ means Messiah (redeemer) ("Anointed one" comes after Messiah") Every time I use Christ no one can ever seem to separate it from Jesus. I have not EVER said the Outsider or Severian has any connection with the man Jesus of Nazareth or his sermons or sacrifice.

SURELY, if the universe repeats itself, each universe will need a Christ / Messiah / Redeemer / Conciliator to help it from Outside creation, if it can be said that any of the creations have this.

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On Dec 15, 2010, at 3:51 PM, Craig Brewer <cnbrewer at yahoo.com> wrote:

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Matthew Weber — 16 Dec 2010, 00:18 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

On Wed, Dec 15, 2010 at 4:13 PM, Jerry Friedman <jerry_friedman at yahoo.com> wrote:

Is it correct in Catholic theology to say that the Second Person or Logos has existed eternally but didn't become Jesus Christ till he incarnated?

That is precisely the case.

Matt +

The seaman's story is of tempest, the plowman's of his team of bulls; the soldier tells his wounds, the shepherd his tale of sheep.
Sextus Propertius (54 B.C.-A.D. 2), Elegies, II, i, 43

Craig Brewer — 16 Dec 2010, 00:22 · in reply to Matthew Weber

Just curious, then: if the Logos was eternal, why did it have to enter history in the form of an actual living man?

(Not arguing...honestly curious. And sorry to get away from Wolfe. Theological discussions on this list sometimes seem to get contentious.)

Matthew Weber — 16 Dec 2010, 00:36 · in reply to Craig Brewer

The Incarnation can be seen in a number of different ways. According to St Gregory Nazianzen, the entrance of an incarnate God into his fallen creation has a ripple effect which gradually re-sanctifies the world--an idea later appropriated by contemporary Catholic theologian Karl Rahner. As St Clement of Alexandria writes : "The Word of God became man, that you may learn from man how man may become God." Eastern Christians refer to this as theosis.

In Western Christianity, it is seen as necessary in order for God to be able to suffer and die (God by nature being impassible and immortal) in order to pay the price for humanity's sins. The Epistle to the Hebrews compares the sacrifice of Jesus (God incarnate) to the sacrifices of the Temple, and poses the question that if God is willing to accept mere birds and bullocks as sacrifices for this or that sin, how much more could the sacrifice of God Himself be worth to blot out the sins of all humanity?

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Jeff Wilson — 16 Dec 2010, 00:41 · in reply to Craig Brewer

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Craig Brewer — 16 Dec 2010, 00:45 · follows Jeff Wilson

So I get all the sacrifice stuff and redemption, etc.

But why is that aspect of God also identified as the Logos/Word?

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I'm not suggesting that this force that sometimes incarnates intemporal reality is an abstraction. It is a real force. And if humanity can lose it's way again and again, it needs a saviour again and again.

Man, I'm no theology expert either, nor do I believe in Jesus of Nazareth, though when my son asks me if I believe in Jesus the simplest answer seems to be "Yes". I believe that God sends an aspect of itself into temporal reality to heal us and show us the way. If you think the Nazzarene was the an example of this, well fine. I think there are or can be more than one instance of this

help.

Again, I'm no theologian, so I've probably got all kinds of things wrong...and in the end, like I said about the Outsider, I'm not sure how much any of this really matters to Long Sun.

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To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
Cc: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
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Subject: Re: (urth) christ, already

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This goes back to the idea I'm always harping on that the Vertical represents the Eternal and the Horizontal representing The Temporal World.

With that in mind, what is the central image of Christianity? A man crucified on a cross that is (seemingly historically innacurately structured) an intersection of the vertical and horizontal. So then, we have a man nailed to the intersection of the Eternal and the Temporal, such as any Good Man is.

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From: Matthew Weber <palaeologos at gmail.com>

Son of Witz — 16 Dec 2010, 01:06 · in reply to Craig Brewer

Well, see my point about Logos originally meaning ratio. It makes more sense that way. A ratio is a relationship. If we have a relationship between Man and God (God: Man or God / Man) then the ratio is that which relates them.

To take that to an almost ridiculous extreme, look at the second way I wrote that ratio, as a division problem. Now Jesus said he came to bring the sword. Does anyone know of a christ-figure in these books carrying a sword around with the inscribed quote "Here is the line of division"

It's pretty funny actually.

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The vertical meeting the horizontal is also a way of looking at the Incarnation. God, who exists outside of Time and even of Space, enters human history at a specific point as a human being. The horizontal (time-based humanity) meets the vertical (God, who is OUTSIDE--eh?). And of course, the symbol you refer to is the instrument of death.

All through the Fourth Gospel Jesus refers to his impending "glorification". The Apostles think he's talking about being crowned King of a reunited Judah & Israel, but he's referring to another kind of elevation entirely--his raising-up upon the wood of the Cross.

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Good stuff, Weber!

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It's not terribly different from "Increate." We can guess what that term includes but not so easily what it excludes.

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David Stockhoff — 16 Dec 2010, 02:03 · in reply to Son of Witz

I understand what you're saying. I just disagree. This is a fictional universe---it need follow no laws but those of its Creator. ;)

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So I'll stick with calling it the Outsider.

From: Ryan Dunn <ryan at liftingfaces.com <mailto:ryan at liftingfaces.com>>
To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net <mailto:urth at lists.urth.net>>
Sent: Wed, December 15, 2010 5:38:34 PM
Subject: Re: (urth) christ, already

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Christ and God are explicit, though part of the Holy Trinity. God is within Christ, and Christ symbolizes God. And God created the symbol.

Something about symbols inventing us echoes in my mind.

:)

...ryan

On Dec 15, 2010, at 4:48 PM, DAVID STOCKHOFF <dstockhoff at verizon.net <mailto:dstockhoff at verizon.net>> wrote:

Hey, you're the one who said Outsider=Christ.

And no, Christians do not "use Christ interchangeably with God."
Even I know that.

--- On *Wed, 12/15/10, Son of Witz /<Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org
<mailto:Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org>>/* wrote:

From: Son of Witz <Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org
<mailto:Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org>>
Subject: Re: (urth) christ, already

David Stockhoff — 16 Dec 2010, 02:07 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

On 12/15/2010 7:13 PM, Jerry Friedman wrote:
(By the way, somebody, David Stockhoff I think, suggested that the man
wouldn't have been "fortunate" if he'd been crucified later, but Silk
is the one who calls him fortunate. I think Silk might have thought
being enlightened or possessed outweighed being crucified, or even
that martyrdom was also good fortune.)

---Yes, that's how I took it. Surely Wolfe was being ironic, if Silk was not.

David asked about the point of similar repeated universes. One
possibility that's been mentioned here is that the author might want
to have a Flood without having God violate his promise to Noah.

---That would make sense in a universe in which that promise was made.
I'm not saying it wasn't made in Briah, but I'm increasingly thinking that.

Jeff Wilson — 16 Dec 2010, 02:29 · in reply to Craig Brewer

On 12/15/2010 6:45 PM, Craig Brewer wrote:
So I get all the sacrifice stuff and redemption, etc.

But why is that aspect of God also identified as the Logos/Word?

I think it is because the Son is the Person who addresses all of mankind; He communicates, He
is the good news.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
Computational Intelligence Laboratory - Texas A&M Texarkana
< <http://www.tamut.edu/CIL> >

Jeff Wilson — 16 Dec 2010, 02:42 · in reply to Craig Brewer

On 12/15/2010 6:17 PM, Craig Brewer wrote:
Strangely enough, I think that's actually a point of debate in the
history of theology: namely, does the universe only need one redeemer?
Does every planet need its own Christ? Would every iteration of a
cyclical universe need its own Christ to be saved? Or was one enough to
get the job done, as it were? Seems like I remember reading once that
this argument has popped up a number of times in places FAR removed from
science fiction. (I'm no theology expert, so I couldn't tell you where I
read this.)

As for separating Christ from Jesus, though...for a Christian, that's
splitting hairs, isn't it? Christ/"annointed one"/the "Messiah" isn't an
abstraction. It had an actual, personal, historical occurrence in Jesus
of Nazareth and that SPECIFIC instantiation matters. I mean, if Christ

is the Word/Logos made flesh, then the flesh of Jesus isn't an accidental property. The whole point was that god became a specific, historical man, not just a man in general.

I think this is best explained by reconciliation between the former and new covenants; Jesus as the sacrifice of God's essence validates the new covenant for all time on its own terms, but He is born of David's line in the final generation of the Temple to honor the old covenant and dissolve it on its own terms so the Israelites can enjoy the kingdom of heaven like the rest of mankind, rather than continuing to atone for all the broken covenants past.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
Computational Intelligence Laboratory - Texas A&M Texarkana
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Lee Berman — 16 Dec 2010, 05:13 · follows Jeff Wilson

In reading Long Sun, I also got the impression that The Outsider was to be considered the same as our God, creator of all universes. Even if this Briah universe never had a Jesus Christ, the Outsider could enlighten Silk with his story from another universe.

Then I read Short Sun, and specifically, RttW, and my impression got turned on its head. Wolfe goes through a long and dramatic exposition which dramatically resolves in revealing that the Outsider is, essentially, Dionysus. It isn't just a hint, he brings the Guy's mother (Thyone) into it!

For me this says either Briah has a different God than we do or Gene Wolfe is willing to extend the identity of our God to encompass some pagan/gnostic ideas of Him. I say this in light of quotes below from the Gene Wolfe-James Jordan interview.

(Here is the link to the whole thing: <http://mysite.verizon.net/~vze2tmhh/wolfejbj.html#sold>)

JJ: Which is another way of saying, do we have fallen angels here or some type of power that really was operative in the world before the kingdom of God?

GW: That is my personal belief. I think that the gods of paganism were real. But what I tried to do was to write about that pagan world as the pagans themselves wrote about it. If we read modern historians we are reading a very rationalistic viewpoint of this which says that all of these people were absolutely wasting their time by building temples to Ares or Apollo or you name it. And by offering sacrifices in worship and all that it was nothing there. Nothing at all there and that whether it is true or not that certainly is not the way the people who were doing it felt. They were convinced that there was something there and they had all sorts of legends and so forth about the appearances of the god and in fact there is one place in the Acts where Paul and another one of the apostles are mistaken for Zeus and Mercury. Zeus and Hermes, we are mixing the Latin and the Greek which is what I was trying to get away from. They are mistaken for Zeus and Hermes in human form because people in those days expected that you could see Zeus and Hermes in human form. I am not so sure they were wrong. I am not convinced that they were wrong. We love to think how much smarter we are than people of ancient times or biblical times or so forth but I am very dubious about that.

That was in regard to a question about the Soldier books but as Wolfe talks about his "personal belief" I think it applies to the Sun series also. It may be relevant that many pagans believe that Christ was an

aspect of
the One True God, Dionysus/Pan, but Jahweh of the Old Testament is more of an evil demiurge.

Okay more from that interview:

JJ:Okay, you do seem to have some symbolic overtones in The Soldier of Arete. Certainly with Latro, or Lucius,' I guess that was a real name and that means wolf, there is a wolf aspect in him being from Rome being a descendant of Romulus or at least in some way and then Ares being primary agricultural and marshall god of Rome, Marias. He actually seems to incarnate Ares on occasion.

Impressive actually. In one paragraph, James Jordan (in 1996) manages to pre-sage Borski's werewolfe theory and hint at James Wynn's ideas on Typhon, Mars, Romulus, etc. Wolfe does not comment in his reply.

Also perhaps a clue to BotNS:

GW: We vastly underestimate the importance of Jesus. We think we don't. We have all these churches and we say how can we be underestimating Jesus? We don't **until we start trying to figure out what it would be like if he had never lived**.

It's a shame James Jordan doesn't contribute to this Board anymore. I enjoyed a few conversations with him. The whole long interview is SO worth reading. I think he got more out of Gene Wolfe than all other interviewers combined.

David Stockhoff — 16 Dec 2010, 12:28 · in reply to Lee Berman

For me, that is the basic premise of BOTNS. It supersedes any scheme of universes, in that the correct scheme must allow the Father to be separated from the Son.

If the Logos is the "good news," then plainly it is possible for the news to never come.

Don't ask me about the Holy Ghost. ;)

On 12/16/2010 12:13 AM, Lee Berman wrote:
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Gerry Quinn — 16 Dec 2010, 15:06 · in reply to Lee Berman

From: "Lee Berman" <severiansola at hotmail.com>

In reading Long Sun, I also got the impression that The Outsider was to be considered the same as our God, creator of all universes. Even if this Briah universe never had a Jesus Christ, the Outsider could enlighten Silk with his story from another universe.

I agree that they are the same. On Urth, God is known as the Increate (emphasizing, I think, that he created all but was not himself created). On (in!) the whorl, he is known as the Outsider, for a variety of reasons:

*The Whorl is ruled by (created) Gods; Typhon is not quite a god on Urth, but in the Whorl he has ascended to godhood, along with all his retinue. The Increate could not be banished from the Whorl, but he is labeled a minor god, an Outsider. (Typhon and his family are the Insiders, I guess...)

*He is the god of all outside the Whorl. Silk recognises this when he views the outside universe from inside the lander. He recognises the smallness of Pas compared to the greatness of the Outsider/

*He is the god of the poor, the weak, the hunted... the Outsiders. (This is the aspect that can be most closely related to Jesus as an aspect of the Outsider.)

As for Jesus as enlightened human man, I think that's how Silk would inevitably understand it, given his background. Theories of homoousia and such are foreign to him. (Though in fact possession does mix the substances of god and man to a degree, so there may be an echo here.)

Silk's Outsider has multiple voices, either two or many - the number three is not mentioned. I do not think Wolfe is emphasising the doctrine of the Trinity, although there is an element of multiplicity here.

The Outsider is defined in the character lists of books 2, 3 and 4 of the Long Sun. As I've noted earlier, it's not quite clear whether Wolfe or Horn is speaking. It may not be all that important, of course, except that Wolfe has more authority on the subject! I interpret this as our (or Silk's) progression of understanding the Outsider:

1: No character list.

2: The minor god who enlightened Silk.

3: The god of the broken and disparaged, whose realm lies outside the Whorl.]

4: The god of gods.

Makes things clear enough, I believe. Although there is a hint of the Trinity here in reverse order; the Holy Ghost, the Son and the Father.

Then I read Short Sun, and specifically, RttW, and my impression got turned on its head. Wolfe goes through a long and dramatic exposition which dramatically resolves in revealing that the Outsider is, essentially, Dionysus. It isn't just a hint, he brings the Guy's mother (Thyone) into it!

For me this says either Briah has a different God than we do or Gene Wolfe is willing to extend the identity of our God to encompass some pagan/gnostic ideas of Him. I say this in light of quotes below from the Gene Wolfe-James Jordan interview.

I think you may be reading too much into this. Certainly, Silk accepts as possible Hound's theory that Dionysus and the Outsider may be the same. But this is not the first time that such an observation has been made. In Calde of the Long Sun, Quetzal mentions Ah Lah. In the list of characters, he is defined thusly.

Ah Lah: A forgotten god. (Perhaps an alternative name for the Outsider.)

So we have both Dionysus and Allah mentioned in similar contexts. Both are forgotten (nobody even remembers the name of the son of Thyone), while the Outsider is nearly forgotten on the Whorl. On Urth (at least at Severian's time - which is simultaneous but in a sense later due to relativistic time distortion) - the Increate is somewhat less forgotten. Typhon has built a closed universe in the Whorl, and expelled, as far as he is able, non-subservient gods. But he was not able.

I think Wolfe is just saying that the Increate has been worshipped in different ways under different names, as men have groped towards the truth. This is not really terribly controversial or heretical. I don't think there is any strong reason to import specific characteristics of Dionysus, any more than specific characteristics of Allah (if Allah has such, he seems austere in this regard).

There remains the question of Jesus. I think this aspect of the Increate is strongly emphasised in the persona of the Outsider. Allah and Dionysus, not so much.

- Gerry Quinn

Marc Aramini — 19 Dec 2010, 03:49 · in reply to Lee Berman

Okay, the problem with the syncretism of Wolfe's universe is multifold for interpreting whether a "Jesus" exists. Some of Silk's "Enlightenment" seems to have scenes of the life of Christ, without a doubt. Unfortunately, they have a secular explanation. They are pre-recorded in his head from his father?Pas and his mother the blue eyed Kypris, or?Typhon and his mistress, who I believe to be the blue eyed dark haired sleeper Mamelta. The two voices speaking in his head is the voice of the Outsider, who is for all intents and purposes both our God and Typhon in conjunction with his Mistress, the goddess of love. Wolfe makes Crane's explanation seem lame but there is a real physical explanation for it since Silk is a planted grown embryo specially chosen by?Typhon who?"wants an heir". All the enlightenment is secular, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT ISN'T DIVINE TOO.

This is why Wolfe is so amazing and all these divergent interpretations are possible. Sure, the Outsider seems to be the Christian God, but he is all the pagan gods, and Typhon in love, the Satan figure redeemed by the love that sets free. The degraded and the downcast become something much more, whether it be Severian becoming the Conciliator or Typhon becoming the Outsider, or at least a very important agent of the Outsider whose plan is indistinguishable.

Marc

David Stockhoff — 19 Dec 2010, 13:53 · in reply to Marc Aramini

Exactly. You just can't separate these things, and Wolfe doesn't want us to.

On 12/18/2010 10:49 PM, Marc Aramini wrote:

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James Wynn — 19 Dec 2010, 15:19 · in reply to David Stockhoff

I wouldn't want anyone to miss the subversiveness of Marc's theory. He's saying the Outsider is actually Typhon and Kypris manipulating him.

u+16b9

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Marc

Lee Berman — 19 Dec 2010, 17:11 · follows James Wynn

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I agree that it is subversive but I get the opposite impression of Marc's theory. If anything, The Outsider as the One True God is manipulating Typhon and Kypris. Quite a brilliant theory/concept, actually (and Marc correct me if I'm wrong, but risk dimming the brilliance, ;-))

It is subversive in that it suggests the almighty, incomprehensible God of Briah, at times, will split Himself into pieces which can operate directly at the human level. Proper (and inevitable) human action will reunite the pieces in the proper way to provide a miraculous, human-level ephiphany

or synergy or something which truly expresses God in a way we can almost comprehend and understand.

Kypris + Pas. Severian + Apheta. etc.

This is subversive in that it might suggest our Earthy God does the same thing; splitting himself into ancient nature gods, then reforming. Then splitting into Olympian gods then coalescing again.

Could it be that Jesus was just one such synergy among many in our history. Dionysus, Buddha, Muhammed

etc. Could it mean we are due for another?

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Marc

Lee Berman — 19 Dec 2010, 17:24 · follows Lee Berman

Just had to add something which occurred to me and may sound crazy or may have occurred to others. The means by which Wolfe suggests the motherhood of Catherine and Mamelta are similar, requiring a non-logical intuition. In one case Severian is staring at a pool of clear water in the woods and her face "tears at his heart", etc. In the other, Silk is disconcertedly staring at the crotch of a woman for whom the very sound of her name invokes motherhood.

For me there is just a lot of similarity there though it's hard to say exactly why.

Son of Witz — 19 Dec 2010, 18:50 · in reply to Marc Aramini

On Dec 18, 2010, at 7:49 PM, Marc Aramini <marcaramini at yahoo.com> wrote:
Okay, the problem with the syncretism of Wolfe's universe is multifold for interpreting whether a "Jesus" exists. Some of Silk's "Enlightenment" seems to have scenes of the life of Christ, without a doubt. Unfortunately, they have a secular explanation. They are pre-recorded in his head from his father Pas and his mother the blue eyed Kypris, or Typhon and his mistress, who I believe to be the blue eyed dark haired sleeper Mamelta. The two voices speaking in his head is the voice of the Outsider, who is for all intents and purposes both our God and Typhon in conjunction with his Mistress, the goddess of love. Wolfe makes Crane's explanation seem lame but there is a real physical explanation for it since Silk is a planted grown embryo specially chosen by Typhon who "wants an heir". All the enlightenment is secular, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT ISN'T DIVINE TOO.

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Marc

Marc Aramini — 20 Dec 2010, 02:13 · in reply to Lee Berman

Thanks James and Lee for your comments. If a theory is perceived at first as brilliant, it can be dangerous to elaborate too much to risk sounding ordinary once again, but let me try to take a slightly better thematic stab at it.

The sun books overarching, unifying trope beyond even salvation is that imitation begets truth. Severian says time turns our lies into truth, and the process of creating a closed universe of the whorl with himself as a god within it made something much more noble out of Typhon (ie - the immortal computerized intellect of Pas is morally more respectable than Typhon even though it is the culmination of Typhon's attempts to become a God, the height of his hubris.)?

And even though he is clearly Satanic, his attempts to become god-like and his creation of a closed system with the possibility of a messiah/heir already built in make him a positive force (ie- the whorl is ready for Silk to come and take over because it has been programmed that way by its demiurge Typhon, just as in the Christian view of the B.C. world the world was ready and waiting for its messiah)

I am not sure that teasing out the actual implications matter, because Silk was the result of all that tampering, and he is probably the most morally unambiguous hero Wolfe has ever created. (and the imitation goes even further - Horn is only good at all because of his respect for Silk, while the truly good Silk, guilty over the demise of Horn, spends all of In Green's Jungles and Return to the Whorl denying who he is so that the less noble and less righteous Horn might really still be alive). (or conversely, did the truly good Silk only exist in Horn's mind and in his account of the salvation of the people of the whorl?)

Now, as far as your implications, Lee, whether the Christian God is some kind of amoeba like proteus may be symbolically presaged by several personages in the text: the mother and her little break away parts, tzadkiel waiting in the brook madreget, etc. So, whether or not I want to say that Wolfe's picture of God is really that way, symbolically your analysis seems right, anything that imitates the divine enough, even with BAD OR SELFISH INTENTIONS, can still wind up serving the greater good.

However, there is certainly a negative side to Silk's enlightenment having a rational physical explanation, and once again this is attached to hubris and the malleability of our perceptions on morality and absolute goodness and evil.

Wolfe is the trickiest of authors, because even basic questions about identity, good, and evil are very very complicated. However, there is one thing I want to point out from the Soldier books as well.

"I ran across a tribe years ago who believe that the War God's none other than Ahura Mazda - Ahura Mazda incognito, as it were. Perhaps they're right. How did you know where to look for me?" (472)?

This progression from Ahura Mazda to Pleistorus to Latro himself is important to my theory of what is going on in those books (ie - the war god manifests himself as a mortal warrior, becomes jaded with war and death, and actually allows the paradigm shift in the amorphous divinity that allows Christ to come into creation, since Ahura Mazda's avatar Latro is tired of war).

Don't know if that applies, but that is DEFINITELY more like what you were talking about, Lee. And I think it definitely applies at least to my own interpretation of what is really going on in the Soldier books if not the Sun books.

Thanks for taking the time to read all that!

Marc

--- On Sun, 12/19/10, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:

From: Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com>

Subject: (urth) the voice of the outsider is the conjunction of pas/kypris

To: urth at lists.urth.net

Date: Sunday, December 19, 2010, 9:11 AM

I wouldn't want anyone to miss the subversiveness of Marc's theory. He's saying the Outsider is actually Typhon and Kypris manipulating him.

I agree that it is subversive but I get the opposite impression of Marc's theory. If anything, The Outsider as the One True God is manipulating Typhon and Kypris. Quite a brilliant theory/concept, actually (and Marc correct me if I'm wrong, but risk dimming the brilliance, ;-))

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human action will reunite the pieces in the proper way to provide a miraculous, human-level epiphany or synergy or something which truly expresses God in a way we can almost comprehend and understand.

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Marc

??? ???????? ?????? ??? ?

Lee Berman — 20 Dec 2010, 04:47 · follows Marc Aramini

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I personally agree about Silk. But I'm not sure Wolfe does. Or at least I suspect Wolfe has created Silk as a symbolic expression of why outward "goodness" (and even charisma) are not

the best traits to admire.

This may be in debate, but I agree with those who think Silk committed suicide over Hyacinth's death. I once characterized Silk as a bit of a mama's boy/metrosexual and it may be that Gene Wolfe, even if he felt he shared some of these characteristics, might not find such traits the most admirable; more like signs of weakness (not to mention the mortal sin of suicide within Catholicism).

In contrast, Horn is, as you say, less good, less noble than Silk. But he is tougher, more resilient. More of a survivor. Compare with Severian who is described as "a weed which grows best when stepped upon". And perhaps more to the point, as a construction of *horn* and boiled leather. I wouldn't be shocked if Gene Wolfe ever divulged that Horn's name was derived from that earlier description of Severian.

(are you familiar with James' theory regarding the actual tri-partite nature of SilkHorn?
[apologies to James for the "partite" I know it is supposed to be 100% of all 3])

The sun books overarching, unifying trope beyond even salvation is that imitation begets truth.

I couldn't agree more. (in fact I see little evidence of true salvation anywhere in the story but I'm not itchn' for a fight on that).

But I sense another, perhaps secondary, unifying trope: that God (gods?) is(are) too damn overwhelming and awesome to appear in their true form to human beings. We know that Zeus had to appear in smaller bite-sized pieces, like bulls, swans, women's husbands, etc. to carry on his affairs with human women. He killed Dionysus' mother Semele/Thyone when forced to reveal himself in full glory to her. Likewise the Judeo-Christian God needed to take the form of a burning bush or pillar of smoke or, I guess, Jesus the Theanthropos?

Likewise we never see Abaia or Erebus in BotNS. Nor the full glory/size of Tzadkiel, imho. We just see pieces of them in the form of undines or Zaks or godlings or.. (well, I can't mention a certain F.I. here). Pieces of gods interacting with humans is surely a strong theme in the Long/Short Sun stories also.

Marc your post got me thinking about how joinings of such pieces at a human level may be how Wolfe sees God's work being done on Urth (and maybe Earth). It seems to offer new avenues to view some of the interactions we see. I mentioned Severian-Apheta as one possibility. Perhaps Severian-Juturna was a failed attempt by the "bad guys"?

James Wynn — 20 Dec 2010, 17:18 · in reply to Marc Aramini

Marc Aramini-

The sun books overarching, unifying trope beyond even salvation is that imitation begets truth. Severian says time turns our lies into

truth, and the process of creating a closed universe of the whorl with himself as a god within it made something much more noble out of Typhon (ie - the immortal computerized intellect of Pas is morally more respectable than Typhon even though it is the culmination of Typhon's attempts to become a God, the height of his hubris.)

Marc hasn't received any push-back on his "Pas/Kypris=Outsider" theory so I figure I'll provide some.

The fundamental characteristic of the Outsider from Silk's POV is that He is OUTSIDE the Whorl as opposed to the other gods of the Whorl who (as Silk is well aware at the beginning of Nightside) are ONLY in the Whorl. Silk knows that the gods of the Whorl were not worshiped in Urth. He knows the Outsider /was/. Horn knows that the gods of the Whorl did transport to Blue in any normal sense.

So, the fundamental problem with this theory, as I see it, is that it casually flicks to the gutter the most fundamental attributes of the Outsider. By this theory, Silk's Outsider is NOT a god outside of the Whorl. Instead he is ACTUALLY and existentially _only_ an INSIDER. This seems to be a serious betrayal of everything going on in the books.

Now there is an alternate theory, as I see it, in which the Outsider MIGHT be other than the Increate. But, I have serious problems with that one as well. But I'm willing to discuss it after we addressed some of the problems with /your/ theory.

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James Wynn — 20 Dec 2010, 17:35 · in reply to James Wynn

On 12/20/2010 11:18 AM, James Wynn wrote:

Horn knows that the gods of the Whorl did transport to Blue in any normal sense.

did NOT

Lee Berman — 20 Dec 2010, 18:33 · follows James Wynn

James Wynn: So, the fundamental problem with this theory, as I see it, is that it casually flicks to the gutter the most fundamental attributes of the Outsider. By this theory, Silk's Outsider is NOT a god outside of the Whorl. Instead he is ACTUALLY and existentially _only_ an INSIDER.

James you are often a step or two ahead of me in reasoning, so it can be hard to keep up. I don't see this conclusion within Marc's theory. How is the Outsider restricted to being inside the Whorl?

Horn knows that the gods of the Whorl did not transport to Blue in any normal sense.

I agree though I think one is present on Blue, in the form of The Mother. Some think she is Scylla but I think Scylla is her daughter, who manifests as a monster on Urth. On Blue we have Gaon worshipping Echidna, the mythological "Mother of all Monsters". And the names of her 7 children are all derived from either monstrous or somewhat malevolent mythological beings.

So my guess is that Blue is the home planet for the monsters in Urth's oceans. Perhaps they arrived on Urth in "black bean" form...inhumi disguised as human? I get the sense they started in human form anyway, but some grew really big, into monsters. Thus at the end of RTTW we

have the appearance of human girl Scylla but also Great Scylla, the monster in the sea.

DAVID STOCKHOFF — 20 Dec 2010, 20:26 · in reply to James Wynn

Hmm. What's wrong with the Outsider actually being an Insider?

I mean, it's awkward, but he's not a god that "plays by the rules," is he? He's everywhere; "Outsider" is an ironic moniker.

--- On Mon, 12/20/10, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:

From: James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com>

Subject: Re: (urth) the voice of the outsider is the conjunction of pas/kypris

To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>

Date: Monday, December 20, 2010, 12:18 PM

Marc Aramini-

The sun books overarching, unifying trope beyond even salvation is that imitation begets truth. Severian says time turns our lies into truth, and the process of creating a closed universe of the whorl with himself as a god within it made something much more noble out of Typhon (ie - the immortal computerized intellect of Pas is morally more respectable than Typhon even though it is the culmination of Typhon's attempts to become a God, the height of his hubris.)

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u+16b9

Gerry Quinn — 21 Dec 2010, 15:09 · in reply to Marc Aramini

From: Marc Aramini

Okay, the problem with the syncretism of Wolfe's universe is multifold for interpreting whether a "Jesus" exists. Some of Silk's "Enlightenment" seems to have scenes of the life of Christ, without a doubt. Unfortunately, they have a secular explanation. They are pre-recorded in his head from his father Pas and his mother the blue eyed Kypris, or Typhon and his mistress, who I believe to be the blue eyed dark haired sleeper Mamelta. The two voices speaking in his head is the voice of the Outsider, who is for all intents and purposes both our God and Typhon in conjunction with his Mistress, the goddess of love. Wolfe makes Crane's explanation seem lame but there is a real physical explanation for it since Silk is a planted grown embryo specially chosen by Typhon who "wants an heir". All the enlightenment is secular, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT ISN'T DIVINE TOO.

I don't think Mamelta fits the part of Kypris well. She seems to remember an ordinary life on Urth. She doesn't speak like Kypris. She gives no evidence of special concern with her appearance. She is trained as a computer technician.

Without any obvious evidence to vthe contrary, I assume she was just an ordinary Sleeper, one

of an indeterminate but large number which may run into millions.

During her brief appearance does she give any clues to suggest she is someone special? She was awakened by Mucor, certainly, but she was not the first to be so awakened.

- Gerry Quinn

Marc Aramini — 21 Dec 2010, 15:15 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Well, Gerry, this depends how much credence you put in dreams and throw away comments in the text. Here are some quotes that outright say Kypris is Mamelta, and I infer that Kypris is just possessing Hyacinth.

This is a cut and paste from a very old post of mine to the archives.

vision on page 534 of Litany of the Long Sun

"the woman who slept in the glass tube, the tube in which he himself now slept beside Chenille, who was Kypris, who was Hyacinth, who was Mamelta, with Hyacinth's jet-black hair,"

Chenille and Hyacinth were both possessed by Kypris - and since Mamelta has Hyacinth hair, and Kypris had Hyacinth hair, and they are all related here, I figured it would be neat if Mamelta were Kypris. Then I found this bit of niftiness: p 424

"But quite soon now, as the swift floater sailed over a landscape grown liquid, his mother would come to kiss him good-night; he liked to be awake for it, to say distinctly, 'good night to you, too Mama,' when she left. He resolved not to sleep until she came"

Here, Silk resolves not to sleep until his mommy comes (here, it is Mama). Well, who does he meet in the next chapter? Mamelta! And later, what do we get in Epiphany of the Long Sun (Calde, actually) on page 220: "The Outsider was the dancing man on a toy, and the water the polished toy-top on which he danced with Kypris, who was Hyacinth and Mother, too."

Kypris is Mother!? and she is probably Mamelta, too. Now I understand why the Mamelta scene is so familiar - it is like the Dorcas scene in Shadow of the Torturer - except instead of Grandma, we get Silk's mom! In the scene where he leaves his body, I am certain that the tall man with blue eyes is Pas, and the mother (not the one who raised him) was Mamelta.

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-----Inline Attachment Follows-----

Gerry Quinn — 21 Dec 2010, 18:41 · in reply to Marc Aramini

You mention three points in favour of Mamelta being Kypris, or Silk's biological mother, or both. Possibly a few more can be found too. But none of them seem very definitive:

The first can easily be interpreted as just sleep imagery, lots of faces and people running together.

In the second, while it can certainly be argued that Silk's dream and Mamelta's name are tips to the reader, it is inescapable that Silk himself is thinking of his non-biological mother, and therefore not Mamelta. (Also, he does fall asleep before he meets Mamelta.)

In the third, it may be that Kypris is - in Silk's thoughts - representing all women.

As against these, we must weigh the evidence of what Mamelta actually does and says. Surely these speak very heavily against the notion that Mamelta is Kypris? Kypris was Typhon's favourite courtesan. She speaks in a very characteristic voice, which Mamelta does not share. Kypris herself says that she was scanned and her previous self remained on Urth. Mamelta is a computer technician who was forced on board the Whorl. She dreams of returning home to her mother, brothers and pet parrot. She remembers the Monarch and his family, but those memories do not seem intimate.

Could all this be reconciled with her being Kypris? Only if one assumes that Typhon has for some perverse reason had her memory and personality wiped and replaced by another's, and loaded her on the whorl as a sleeper! Why on Urth would he do such a thing?

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Kypris is Mother! and she is probably Mamelta, too. Now I understand why the Mamelta scene is so familiar - it is like the Dorcas scene in Shadow of the Torturer - except instead of Grandma, we get Silk's mom! In the scene where he leaves his body, I am certain that the tall man with blue eyes is Pas, and the mother (not the one who raised him) was Mamelta.

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Gerry: The first can easily be interpreted as just sleep imagery, lots of faces and people running together.

Easily only if there was a real person sleeping. There is not. There is an author creating this scene with carefully chosen words. It is actually quite difficult for me to interpret this as Gene Wolfe randomly throwing faces and people together with no meaning to it other than conveying a dream atmosphere.

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Again, we are not dealing with a real person named Silk. Therefore whatever Silk may be "thinking" is secondary in importance to "tips to the Reader". Gene Wolfe's main purpose in writing is to communicate to his readers not to create independent, imaginary characters without meaning to the reader.

Marc: on which he danced with Kypris, who was Hyacinth and Mother, too."

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Or it may be that Wolfe repeatedly connecting Mamelta and Hyacinth and Mother and Kypris in various ways is once again trying to tell the reader something. Perhaps it is something more than simply "some women = all women". I'm willing to take a hint.

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I didn't just fabricate that association between Kypris and Mamelta and Mother, you know. We know Kypris possesses Hyacinth because she reminds her of herself. And Mamelta has the same hair as Hy, is one of the only females with blue eyes which are rare in Viron, and Kypris has them too. If this isn't enough inference for you, and is just symbolic association of all women, then I don't think any close readings will quite convince you. Are you sure Eleanor Bold is Mrs. Porter, and that tree was planted on dead people? Now that I look at? Peace, that just seems like a bunch of random facts. Nothing to em.

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Subject: Re: (urth) the voice of the outsider is the conjunction of pas/kypris To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net> Date: Tuesday, December 21, 2010, 10:41 AM

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James Wynn — 21 Dec 2010, 21:02 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

On 12/21/2010 12:41 PM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

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Yeah. Why would Typhon have a perverse reason to do anything? Who ever heard of a tyrant disposing of his mistress? What could be a less convenient method than loading her on a generation ship along with thousands of others taking off at the time? How could I ask a more

obvious question?

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Gerry Quinn — 21 Dec 2010, 21:56 · in reply to Lee Berman

From: "Lee Berman" <severiansola at hotmail.com>

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Most of his dream is about the fish that swallowed Mamelta. It also includes Lemur, and certain women. The women seem to be ones Silk associates with sex to some degree. It's not randomly thrown together, but nor is it necessarily a cipher by which one can decode the meaning of the entire text. If it does mean something, maybe it suggests we should think more about that fish!

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But he is communicating by way of a novel, asnd to do this he must create characters with some element of verisimilitude. You cannot simply ignore the events of the novel in favour of what might be one of a million interpretations of apparent allusions.

Marc: on which he danced with Kypris, who was Hyacinth and Mother, too."

Gerry- In the third, it may be that Kypris is - in Silk's thoughts - representing all women.

Or it may be that Wolfe repeatedly connecting Mamelta and Hyacinth and Mother and Kypris in various ways is once again trying to tell the reader something. Perhaps it is something more than simply "some women = all women". I'm willing to take a hint.

By all means! But what about the part of my post that you didn't reply to, concerning: the acts and words of Mamelta herself? Gene Wolfe wrote those too, you know! Are you willing to take a hint from that part? If so, how do you reconcile it with your interpretations of the parts above?

I *don't* think Wolfe throws things together randomly. So I try to find an interpretation that fits

the different clues.

- Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn — 21 Dec 2010, 22:17 · in reply to Marc Aramini

But the passage that identifies Mamelta with Kypris and Kypris's mother also says that the Outsider is a toy dancer and the water is a polished toy-top. We cannot take the last part literally, so surely it is reasonable not to take the first literally either?

What you say about Pas's desire for an heir underlying the struggle in Mainframe is new to me.

As I understood it, the struggle in Mainframe is between Pas's desire to fulfil his original colonisation plan, and Echidna's desire to keep her congregation on board the Whorl. Indeed, one might argue that on Urth as well as in the Whorl, Pas has hit upon a solution to his undoubted desire for a male heir - he has decided to become immortal! I can see the logic in what you are saying; I am not clear in why it is needed to drive the plot. Silk is a special embryo, certainly, but perhaps just one with special leadership abilities and no direct biological relationship to Typhon. (Of course if leadership ability is genetic as it appears to be, this part of Silk's genome may well be the same as Typhon's anyway!)

If Mamelta has had Kypris's memories and personality removed and somebody else's put in their place, in what sense is she Kypris anyway? She doesn't talk like her or act like her. What do you think is the point?

[As for the creepiness or otherwise of a man looking up a woman's loins, I'm not sure how her being his mother would improve matters!]

- Gerry Quinn

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From: Marc Aramini

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Marc

Gerry Quinn — 21 Dec 2010, 22:24 · in reply to James Wynn

He *did* load her on the generation ship - as a god, remember? He held her hand while she was being scanned, as he had just been.

And if Urth-Typhon later had a change of heart and decided to bundle her aboard, Whorl-Typhon doesn't seem to have had any problems. You'd think they'd have talked.

Now I *can* imagine that after some falling out, Urth-Typhon decided it would be fun to play a nasty little joke on Pas and Kypris, the punchline of which wouldn't be revealed for 200 years or more. But if he did this, he would most certainly *not* wipe her memories! Where would the fun be in that?

- Gerry Quinn

----- Original Message -----

From: James Wynn

Marc Aramini — 21 Dec 2010, 22:49 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

my reply to this snippet below ?from Gerry (I would respond on the bottom but can't get rid of the quoting line for some reason, everything I type looks like a continuation of his thoughts.

Yes, that fish is one of the great mysteries of Long Sun for me, as well as the spoons and stuff Silk gets in his augury, something I am certain has significance. We NEED to talk about that Fish!

Is it a symbol too, of Christianity eating the Goddess of Love? ie - the outsider is an invention of Typhon and Kypris, but somehow a very real fish (the real Outsider)?eats them up and subsumes their substance? I have always always always been puzzled by it, and the dream as a whole. — And yes, the struggle mentions at one point what Pas really wants is an heir, I will try to find the quote, and it seems like his main motivation, one that would supersede Echidna and her brood, and is so by default their enemy.

Forgive the caps.

I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE THAT FISH ON A SYMBOLIC LEVEL. I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE SEVERIAN'S FACE IN THE MAUSOLEUM UNEXPLORED. I DON'T WANT TO IGNORE WHY MAMELTA MIGHT BE KYPRIS AND IS ON THE WHORL. THERE MUST BE A REASON. Does it have to do with the broken Seal of the Monarch? Is Mucor killing all the Monarch's real family sealed down there?

Marc

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Lee Berman — 22 Dec 2010, 02:18 · follows Marc Aramini

Marc Aramini- I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE THAT FISH ON A SYMBOLIC LEVEL.

Perhaps I am being too simplistic and naive but the answer that lies between the superficial text and deeper symbolism seems too easy a puzzle, especially given your theory, Marc.

We are told that the Whorl gods attempted to preserve themselves by possessing animals. The big nasty fish is in Scylla's lake (and doesn't at all seem like any simple Christ pun/symbol). Scylla is, after all, essentially an aquatic monster.

If Mamelta is in any way associated with Kypris, it seems no mystery at all why a monstrous fish possessed by Scylla would want to chase her down and eat her. It is just the same as Scylla and Echidna in mainframe hunting down Daddy's Mistress, but in the real world...erm... whorl.

Marc Aramini — 22 Dec 2010, 03:05 · in reply to Lee Berman

Cool I definitely buy that and need to pay attention to it next time through!? It always just seemed so random and sad :(Thanks!?

Marc

--- On Tue, 12/21/10, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:

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