

A note from the Antichrist

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 25 Jun 1997

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/72>

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Alice Turner — 25 Jun 1997, 19:33

A quote from Peter Cash, aka le lapin riche:

people seem to be
too quick to find Christian associations for symbols in Wolfe's work,
just because they know he's Catholic.

Words that ought to be tattooed across the flea-bitten back of a certain rat-fink.

And what Peter has to say about paganism, if hasty, makes sense. To portray Wolfe as inveighing against idolatry is to portray him as a maker of tracts, not novels. And it should be evident that his knowledge of and love of the (idolatrous) Classical world is not superficial; I think he would object to a rat's calling it simplistic and destructive. But:

Slimey Alga wrote:

Ratty,

I define a Christian as someone who believes that he or she will attain eternal salvation through Jesus Christ. Severian has never heard of Jesus Christ, and he himself has brought salvation (through destruction) to Urth.

Whoa! Agia refers to the Theanthropos in 1:21. Also, in that chapter the woman missionary (Marie - Mary) is reading from the Urth equivalent of Deuteronomy 34. (1:21 = Shadow, ch. 21).

Agia's casual reference to the Theanthropos (the only such reference in the quintet) is equivalent to one of us saying "Jumping Jehosaphat!" Bzzzzt! And yes, indeed, Marie is reading from Deut. 34, but Marie is an exhibit, and Severian examines her as we would examine a tableau vivant at the Museum of Natural History. There isn't the slightest indication anywhere that one ancient religion of the early 20th century means more to him than that of Apu-Punchau.

There's a great deal more to your post (thanks, by the way, for moving it over here), but it's based on *such* flimsy evidence. I have to admire your dedication to your calling, but it certainly gets loopy at times. (One of the oddest things in your interview with Wolfe was the two of you deploring the non-Christian use of kittens as baseballs. If you had been Buddhists or Jainists, you might correctly have congratulated yourself on your religious abhorrence of such behavior. But Christianity takes no such tack; even your own reformed branch had a mighty poor record when it came to destitute old women of the 16th through the 19th centuries.)

-slimeball-

Jim Jordan — 30 Jun 1997, 17:11 · follows Alice Turner

At 07:33 PM 6/25/97 -0400, you wrote:

[Posted from URTH, a mailing list about Gene Wolfe's New Sun and other works]

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Gimmeabreak! Was Shakespeare writing tracts instead of plays, because he had messages for
the monarchs?

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anywhere that one ancient religion of the early 20th century means more to
him than that of Apu-Punchau.

Well, there are two questions here: 1. Is there a "Jesus Christ" in the Urth/Whorl universe; and 2.
Is Severian a self-conscious follower of that person? The answer to "1" is what I was dealing
with. Some wrote that Jesus is unknown in the Urth/Whorl universe. I pointed out that he clearly
is, because of "Theoanthropos." The more obvious line of evidence is the Silk quartet, where
references to the crucifixion, to the sign of the cross, etc. are more in evidence.
As for question 2., I don't know. Wolfe says that Severian is not what he regards as a Christ
figure (allegory of Christ, I take it), but a Christian figure (allegory of a Christian, I take it). I
don't understand why anyone wants to insist that Wolfe intends something he has stated clearly
that he does not intend.

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abhorrence of such behavior. But Christianity takes no such tack; even your

own reformed branch had a mighty poor record when it came to destitute old women of the 16th through the 19th centuries.)

Well, that's (a) an irrelevant ad hominem argument, and (b) at least as false as true. BTW, are you the authoress of a book on hell that I happen to have on my shelf?

Nutria