

Theodicy

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 01 Jul 1997

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Alice Turner — 01 Jul 1997, 09:23

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

This does not parse.

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).

[skip]

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 "Theanthropos." 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.

Almost certainly, Agia's Theanthropos does refer to JC, though probably not consciously. (If it were conscious, and she a believer, that would be interesting, considering her character.) But he's not the only hero with such claims. Gilgamesh was 2/3 god and only 1/3 human; Herakles was 1/2 god. And so on. Urth is very old, and ancient stories tend to conflate, as the Brown Book shows us again and again. The Theanthropos could be taken as a composite figure, as indeed Silk's Outsider seems to be. In any case, he doesn't seem to register with Severian.

As for Severian's being a Christian, well, let's agree to differ. Your idea (and perhaps Wolfe's) of

what constitutes a Christian, even allegorically (whatever that may mean in this context), is not mine, nor, it seems, that of many of the rest of this group.

[skip: kittens as baseballs]

Well, that's (a) an irrelevant ad hominem argument, and (b) at least as false as true.

(a) Granted. (I did put it in parens.) (b.) How so?

BTW, are you the authoress of a book on hell that I happen to have on my shelf?

I haven't looked at your shelf recently, but probably. Quaint term.

-alga-

Jim Jordan — 01 Jul 1997, 17:43 · follows Alice Turner

At 09:23 AM 7/1/97 -0400, you wrote:

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

ALGA:>This does not parse.

I took you as writing that if Wolfe had an anti-idolatry polemic in his works, they would not be literature.

ALGA: >Almost certainly, Agia's Theanthropos does refer to JC, though probably not consciously. (If it were conscious, and she a believer, that would be interesting, considering her character.) But he's not the only hero with such claims. Gilgamesh was 2/3 god and only 1/3 human; Herakles was 1/2 god. And so on. Urth is very old, and ancient stories tend to conflate, as the Brown Book shows us again and again. The Theanthropos could be taken as a composite figure, as indeed Silk's Outsider seems to be. In any case, he doesn't seem to register with Severian.

Well, I agree about Agia as a person. And I cannot gainsay your other points as well. But I don't think Wolfe believes that Christianity will disappear in the far future, so the assumption that Christianity is simply unknown at that time does not "parse." Silk's religion certainly has a good deal of it in the background, and his enlightenments clearly show Christ.

As for Severian's being a Christian, well, let's agree to differ. Your idea (and perhaps Wolfe's) of what constitutes a Christian, even allegorically (whatever that may mean in this context), is not mine, nor, it seems, that of many of the rest of this group.

Sure. We can lay it to rest, FOR NOW!!!!!!

The Rat