

Quadrifons

The Whorl list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 14 Feb 2001

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Christopher Culver — 14 Feb 2001, 23:37

Hello all,

My first post after reading RttW. I'll admit that I'm somewhat disappointed; the BotSS is no BotNS, but it's certainly much better than the BotLS. Tormented first-person accounts are really Wolfe's forte, and I missed them in the BotLS.

One of my biggest hopes was that RttW would clear up the mystery of who Quadrifons is, but I admit I'm pretty stumped. My suspicion in OBW was that he was the apotheosized Severian, who now is enjoying his own gifts of teleportation. But IGJ totally discarded that theory.

Is Quadrifons the Son, i.e. historical Christ? Being the god of crossroads, its understandable that he could also be the god of crosses. Horn's performance of a quasi-Eucharist in Olivine's quarters supports this idea.

In IGJ, Horn mentions Quadrifons "whispering in his ear" in the Whorl. I didn't catch any reference to this in RttW. What is it supposed to mean?

Reading again Horn's Eucharist scene at the Neighbor's altar in IGJ, which I believe is one of the most moving things Wolfe has ever written, I was suprised to see him mention that he "sacrificed for Olivine." I think it will be interesting to go back through the first two books and put together all the pieces now that we have RttW.

Christopher CULVER <new_sun at hotmail.com>

James Jordan — 17 Feb 2001, 12:59 · follows Christopher Culver

Quadrifons is a cherub. (Ezekiel chapter 1). Also, thus, a sphinx.

The cherubim guard the gate of Eden, which is now the Church. Passing into the Edenic garden, we pass by the cherub Quadrifons. It is Olivine's garden, the Garden on Mount Olivet, where Jesus so often met with His disciples.

Then we have a full liturgy. We must wash ourselves, a symbol of cleansing, so Horn takes a bath, removing his old soiled clothing and receiving new ones. We have the opening of the word (the writings) and a sermon. Then we have holy communion. Also, since we are present with all the saints, living and departed, we have reflections on Horn's encounter with his father, whom he had thought was dead. Finally, moved and transformed a bit by the liturgy, Olivine is enabled to make a sacrifice of her own as a response.

Now, who or what is a Quadrifons? Well, there are two basic theories regarding the cherubim. The first is that they are mighty angels, and this is the majority read. But a minority maintains that the cherubim are theophanies of God, and not creatures. Wolfe says that Quadrifons is an aspect of the Outsider, so it seems he is using this second theory.

Patera Nutria

*This is WHORL, for discussion of Gene Wolfe's Book of the Long Sun.

David DiGiacomo — 17 Feb 2001, 17:09 · follows James Jordan

Quadrifons is a cherub...

Thank you! I had no idea why Quadrifons appeared in the text, so this was very helpful

Why do you think that Quadrifons's name is not to be mentioned?

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