

Biblical Criticism (was: Fallible Narrators)

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 14 Jun 2001

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/1444>

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Betty, Brian — 14 Jun 2001, 09:32

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote: "The issue here is not how a hypothetical Bluish reader might respond when faced with the Books of Silk and Horn; the issue is how we respond when faced with the Books of the Suns of Various Lengths

-- [snip] -- specifically, the question "How the hell are we supposed to know what actually happened?" How are we to make (narrative) sense of this welter of provenances and possible provenances, this scribbling of narrators and editors, interpolators and (maybe) copyists, any one of whom may be almost-arbitrarily unreliable?"

Okay, let's think about this in a different way. Let's pretend that Wolfe, like me, recognises in the Bible a problem: aren't these same questions to be posed about the Hebrew Bible and/or the Christian Bible? In fact, this is what I study. How are we, either as unbelievers or believers, to interpret what actually happened when the Bible is insane? No offense meant - I love reading the Bible and am reading it in Hebrew, but it is self-contradictory
- from Genesis 1 on! This is not questioned by the Catholic Church, either - Catholics are permitted to engage in Biblical criticism.

So imagine approaching the Bible, which has little cohesion or coherence, but clearly makes some narrative sense, even though it trails off, veers off course, repeats itself, etc. Imagine you believe it is attempting to impart the truth of what happened, an important truth that changed the world forever. Repeat and rinse.

"My point (All together now... "and I do have one") is that the position into which Wolfe places us, vis-a-vis the events which hypothetically underlie the LONG/SUN books, is homologous to the position in which an engaged and thoughtful reader, even a skeptical one, finds herself when vis-a-vis the events which hypothetically underlie the Gospels -- "Layer 1 of Gospel formation," to use the RCC terminology: the actual events, whatever they were, that occurred in Judaea and the surrounding area ca. 4BC-33AD. (That "fairly unthoughtful" reader, in fact, would be in a position homologous to that of of a "every word of Scripture is literally factual" fundamentalist.) I am not, of course, prepared to state that this was Wolfe's intent. I do not claim to know his intent. I am stating that this is an interesting homology, a use to which the Books can be put, if you will; and that I would not be surprised to learn that this was one of Wolfe's reasons for writing them the way he did, rather than some other way. In an ideal world I should like to ask him about it, but this is not an ideal world, and I don't expect the opportunity to arise any time soon."

I see you also appreciate this opinion!

I would go so far as to state this was an exploration of these issues, and it is hard to imagine Wolfe did it unthinkingly...

Anna June

Surah 101: The Calamity (al-Qari'a)

The qari'a

What is the qari'a?

What can tell you of the qari'a?

A day humankind are like moths scattered

And mountains are like fluffs of wool

Whoever's scales weigh heavy

His is a life that is pleasing

His mother is Haayiyat

What can tell you what she is?

Raging fire