

Wounded Feet; The Outsider

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 04 Apr 1997

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Jim Jordan — 04 Apr 1997, 22:27

At 09:44 AM 4/4/97 -0500, you wrote:

Wounded Feet:

I just reread Lewis's *Perelandra*, and interestingly enough the protagonist Ransom is wounded in the foot by the Un-Man (the Devil), and the wound doesn't heal until cleansed by the Perelandran Adam. I think the Fisher King motif is operative here.

Sure, but where does the Fisher King motif itself come from? Lewis's book is not only an answer to Wells's "Time Machine," but also a thoughtful expansion of Genesis 2-3. The Messiah receives the foot wound while crushing the serpent's head. The Fisher King motif comes more to the fore in the sequel, "That Hideous Strength." Of course, behind this is Christ, who sent His disciples forth as fishers of men, and who is the Fisher King. Whatever similar stories may have played into the larger FK mythos, the basis in Christendom is the Biblical material. Notice for instance Jacob's limp, received after wrestling with God in Genesis 32. Of course, how all these various streams are mediated into Wolfe is another question.

Scourging the Moneylenders:

I have to believe, potential for Wolfean heresy or no, that the description of the fortunate man "enlightened and possessed" by the Outsider is a clear reference to Jesus scourging the moneylenders. Wolfe has remarked on this story before (in *Castle of the Otter*, I think), where he points out that the only thing we are specifically told that Jesus (by profession a carpenter) made is a whip.

-vizcacha

Wolfe ain't no heretic. He intends to be fully orthodox in terms of general conservative Christianity and specifically Roman Catholicism. Remember that one of the biggest themes of "Long Sun" is ... enlightenment. That's where it starts, and the large story is that of Silk's gradual deliverance from idolatry. (Wolfe told me that idolatry would be a major theme in "Long Sun," so I don't think we have to debate that; besides, it's really obvious.) The false gods "possess" people like the demons in the Bible. Since demons are fallen angels, possession by good gods in the Whorl has the same basic root. Now, what does poor, ignorant Silk know about all this? He starts out thinking that the Outsider is just a minor deity, but suddenly realized He is much more, and gradually realizes that He is the only real God there is. So, for Silk to give an inadequate expression to the incarnation is not Silk speaking for Wolfe, but Silk using the vocabulary he is familiar with (enlightenment and possession) to describe something he is only in the process of beginning to comprehend.

Nutria

Questions or problems to whorl-owner at lists.best.com