

Silk Out of Time?

The Urth list — 5 messages, 3 voices, 17 Dec 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3682>

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James Jordan — 17 Dec 2002, 15:14

At 04:19 PM 12/16/2002, Blattid wrote:

Don Doggett wrote:

So again I ask, why did time stop on the Whorl?

Ummm ... I don't think it did. Silk had an experience which took place outside of Time, i.e., in Eternity, the perspective from which the Outsider (==the Christian God) views spacetime. Thus, while he experienced the passage of time in his personal consciousness, the "time" that passed for him had no meaning on the Whorl or, presumably, the rest of spacetime.

Think of it like this. Silk (like the rest of us) watches spacetime occurring in an orderly fashion, rather like someone participating in an interactive computer game, one where the player participates as a character. Then the phone rings -- the Outsider "calls," and the game goes into "pause" mode, while the Outsider tells Silk a number of things -- including, as it happens, some "spoiler" information about the game itself. When the call ends, the game comes out of "pause" mode, and continues exactly as it had been. No time has passed in the game, but no time has been skipped or lost in the game either; the time the player has spent on the call has nothing to do with the internal time of the game. Similarly, the seeming duration of Silk's enlightenment has nothing to do with the "passage" of "time" in the spacetime universe.

I'm not sure we're supposed to think time "passed" for Silk either. He had an instantaneous and transcendent "moment" that sorted itself out in his mind afterwards into its various components, some of which he could not remember. This may not be correct, but I don't see any reason what it is not.

Moreover, if something happened to the ship at this moment, like dipping through a black hole and coming out a white fountain (or whatever), and everyone went "out of time," then everyone should have had a transcendent moment.

Time did not "stop" for anyone. Silk had an transcendent moment, and the only way a temporal being can understand such a thing afterwards is to sort it out into various pieces and temporal events.

Nutria

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 17 Dec 2002, 17:53 · follows James Jordan

Nutria wrote:

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"You may be right about this, and certainly I would not go so far as to say that you were wrong, but still ...!" (Place _that_ quote for double credit.)

What makes me think that Silk's experience has some kind of internal sequentiality: he has the sense of someone (the Outsider) speaking into both his ears. Now, I may simply put too much emphasis on that detail, but it seems to me that speech has a kind of inherent sequentiality to it.

Of course, this may simply mean that he _remembers_ it that way.

Wafflingly,

James Jordan — 17 Dec 2002, 18:21 · follows Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

At 11:53 AM 12/17/2002, you wrote:

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Yeah, that's how I took it. The event looked like a moment of "eternity," and having nothing to do with the passage of time, but Silk could only understand it in temporal terms. I can go with the other option, that Silk had a minute or two of "sempiternality," but I thought the instantaneous view was simpler. Perhaps a very close reading of the text would solve the issue.

Nutria

Chris — 17 Dec 2002, 18:18 · follows James Jordan

Both seem reasonably compatible, if one looks at it from the perspective that "sequentiality" is a function of our perception of time - a limitation the Outsider does not share. Silk perceives it as sequential because his mind sorted things out that way, true, but then again Silk (and we) perceive normal events in the universe as sequential for the same reason. In that sense, as far as Silk's impressions, the sequentiality of his enlightenment is just as "real" as the sequentiality of the real world.

Is that quote Silk speaking to Dr. Crane in response to his theory about Silk's enlightenment?

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--Blattid

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 17 Dec 2002, 18:35 · follows Chris

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H'mmm ... I occasionally make my brain hurt by trying to understand this stuff, the idea of a Being with an eternal nature becoming incarnate in-Time and the idea of creatures with a temporal nature taken up into Eternity. How any of this might actually "feel" I really do not know.

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Thank you; you remind me of my fundamental principle of "binocular vision," attempting to understand such things simultaneously from the eternal and temporal points-of-view ... a way of understanding which offers insight not only for religious purposes, but also for grokking some of the implications of modern physics.

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... noooo ... It's about seven decades older than that, and not Lupine a-tall, though a writer I suspect Wolfe of in all probability enjoying.