

Silk out of time / Blushas? Grushas?

The Urth list — 5 messages, 5 voices, 18 Dec 2002

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ArchD'Ikon Zibethicus — 18 Dec 2002, 10:06

Don:

why couldn't Marble's clock be correct?

<snip>

3. Marble is absolutely decrepit. I find it hard to believe that an advanced chem capable of self-repair and engaged in only mildly strenuous activity would decay so soon.

Pardon my obtuseness, but is it anywhere specified that Marble's memories of her life as a secular chem are located on the Whorl? She might have had an earlier life on Urth, as did many people who were forced aboard.

Nutria:

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.

Well, when trying to establish these matters with some sort of definitiveness, I believe that an ounce of study of the actual text in question can sometimes be worth a ton of theorising in one direction or another. For that reason, allow me to quote briefly from NLS Ch1 (are there standard abbreviations for titles here?); during his enlightenment, Pa. Silk "watched outside a clockwork show whose works had stopped", and saw (among other things):

"- dead Patera Pike mumbling prayers as he slit the throat of a speckled rabbit he himself had bought."

This seems to me to represent a vision or perception of a moment in Pa. Pike's past life, rather than the appearances of his shade elsewhere in the book.

If this is the case, it would tend to support Nutria's perception of the experience as a transcendent - or transtemporal - one for Silk himself, rather than a stoppage of time for the entire Whorl, as _Silk_ is being shown things from various strands of time, the past and possible the future.

That's how I read it, anyway...

Also;

Is it possible that Blue-Green is Urth-Lune in another Banggnab? Is it possible that Silk is the Conciliator of this Banggnab, and that is why he has a link with Severian?

Of course this raises questions, such as how the Whorl made this trip, and whether astral travel back to Urth is time-travel or some kind of parallel-universe travel.

Of course such a thing is _possible_, but I don't myself know just how _probable_ it is. I base this opinion especially on IGJ Ch22, 'The Barbican and the Bear Tower', which relates the visit/return of Horn/Incanto's party to Nessus. Duko Rigoglio is one of those inhabitants of Nessus who were forced to board the Whorl. He returns to the street outside his house because of his emotional attraction to the spot (as I understand it). Throughout the chapter, it becomes obvious that the spot has aged greatly since the Duko lived there; the party guess anywhere from 1 900 to 2 500 years.

If what is involved in this sort of non-physical travel (call it 'astral' if you _must_) is a passage from one BangGnab to another, why would there be a linear progression in the local timeframe of Nessus? It seems to me that something altogether more intricate is involved here...

If this amount of time has elapsed since Rigoglio's involuntary departure, how does it synchronise with the general consensus that the Whorl has been travelling for three hundred years? And, further, this visit of the party to Nessus occurs some years before Severian brings the New Sun, which destroys Nessus and all else. If Rigoglio was abducted during the reign of Typhon, is it possible that he was kept in storage on Urth somewhere for an appropriate period of time?

It would appear likely that the lapse of time in Nessus as experienced by Rigoglio on his return actually corresponds (in Urth time) to the period for which he has been gone on the Whorl. Otherwise, why have the elapsation at all?

Blattid (tip o' the hat to archy!):

"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.)

Mundus vult decipi!

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.

Moreover, it occurs in an instant in the middle of the prosaic activity of a ball game, which is not interrupted by it. I suspect that Mr. Wolfe is relating something corresponding to the classic 'mystical' experience, which occurs _outside_ time rather than as a consequence of time somehow 'stopping'. Mr. Wolfe specifies that what Silk retains of the experience which he can consciously relate is far smaller and less profound than the totality of the experience as it was originally granted to him. Whether he relates it sequentially, or whether it occurs sequentially, it is impossible to explain it in a fashion conformant to its nature, which is, if you like, superhuman. It certainly doesn't resemble the experience of an embolism!

*

4WIW, I read a long I/V with Mr. Wolfe shortly before I joined this forum, in which he said something to the effect that _all_ the 'clues' were present in the books, but that they were only placed there _once_, as he didn't intend to insult the intelligence of his readers. Something like that, anyway. I would tend to the view that, which I would of course be greatly interested to hear anything which Mr. Wolfe had to say concerning the planning and nature of his works, he is a skilled professional author, who inserted everything necessary to have his works understood TO THE EXTENT TO WHICH HE INTENDED in the works themselves. Therefore, I support the call

to closer textual study of works which are being theorised about...speaking as a hypocrite, to be sure!

Zibethicus the Lame (thus named by a fellow New Sun reader!)

PS: While I'm here, my copy of RTW (Return to the Whorl), the TOR paperback, is absolutely crammed with the most annoying typos throughout. I've got forty-something markers in it to that effect - I just counted it. Is this just my experience, perhaps because I was reading it aloud, or has anybody else noticed it?

->Zx<-

<snip sig>

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 18 Dec 2002, 16:19 · follows ArchD'Ikon Zibethicus

Snipping wildly.

The ArchD'Ikon wrote:

"- dead Patera Pike mumbling prayers as he slit the throat of a speckled rabbit he himself had bought."

This seems to me to represent a vision or perception of a moment in Pa. Pike's past life, rather than the appearances of his shade elsewhere in the book.

Correct. A few pages later, when he explains to Blood that he is the help sent in response to Pa. Pike's prayers, Silk begins by saying that he saw Pike praying for help to save the manteion. This would be the experience of seeing that, of seeing what is clearly a moment in the "temporal" past, relative to the "temporal" moment in which Silk's timeline is interrupted by the "eternal" experience of enlightenment.

I don't think this is even open to reasonable debate; it's about as clear as anything anywhere in Wolfe.

[more snippage]

Throughout the chapter, it becomes obvious that the spot has aged greatly since the Duko lived there; the party guess anywhere from 1 900 to 2 500 years.

[...]

If this amount of time has elapsed since Rigoglio's involuntary departure, how does it synchronise with the general consensus that the Whorl has been travelling for three hundred years?

Relativistically, of course.

The duration of the Whorl's voyage _to an observer aboard the Whorl_ is 300 years. The duration to an observer at rest relative to Urth's system is on the order of one or two millenia ... from the time of the Tyrant to the time of Severian.

Blattid (tip o' the hat to archy!):

thank boss

"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.)

Mundus vult decipi!

Clearly a man of taste, if not in fact a "monstrous clever fellow."

Regarding the question of whether Silk's enlightenment has any subjective sequence or duration to him as it occurs ...

... it occurs in an instant in the middle of the prosaic activity of a ball game, which is not interrupted by it.

Right. We agree, I presume, that it takes no "objective" time.

I suspect that Mr. Wolfe is relating something corresponding to the classic 'mystical' experience, which occurs outside time rather than as a consequence of time somehow 'stopping'.

Well, Mr Wolfe has gone so far as to state openly that it is a purely supernatural experience (leaving Crane's "embolism" theory kind of high and dry).

Mr. Wolfe specifies that what Silk retains of the experience which he can consciously relate is far smaller and less profound than the totality of the experience as it was originally granted to him. Whether he relates it sequentially, or whether it occurs sequentially, it is impossible to explain it in a fashion conformant to its nature, which is, if you like, superhuman. It certainly doesn't resemble the experience of an embolism!

Never having experienced an embolism myself, I can't say.

But what we also have to remember is that the account we possess is at least a third-order abstraction from the event: the minimum set of abstractings involved include (1) Silk's remembering the event, (2) Silk's attempt(s) to relate the event to others, including Horn and/or Nettle, and (3) Horn's and Nettle's attempt to work backwards from (2) to the event and narrate it in their Book of Silk.

Given all this, I think that the most we can say of the "real" event (somehow I feel no shame in describing a fictional event this way ...) is that Silk had a mystical and life-changing experience of some sort, which he referred to as "enlightenment," in which he learned a certain amount of information to which he had not previously had access. (I am inclined to analogize it to the experience of "gnosis," because of my perception that the Whorl is a physical instantiation or representation of (one) classical gnostic view of the universe, embedded in the larger Lupiverse in which orthodox Catholic Christianity is, more or less, defined as "true"; but I won't insist on that.)

4WIW, I read a long I/V with Mr. Wolfe shortly before I joined this forum, in which he said something to the effect that all the 'clues' were present in the books, but that they were only placed there once, as he didn't intend to insult the intelligence of his readers.

Yeah. Sometimes I think Mr Wolfe genuinely fails to understand that most of us simply aren't as intelligent as he is ...

I would tend to the view that [...] he is a skilled professional author, who inserted everything necessary to have his works understood TO THE EXTENT TO WHICH HE INTENDED in the works themselves. Therefore, I support the call to closer textual study of works which are

being theorised about...

Amen unto this, for those who have time.

PS: While I'm here, my copy of RTW (Return to the Whorl), the TOR paperback, is absolutely crammed with the most annoying typos throughout.

This is true of the H/C also. It's incredibly badly proofread.

Josh Geller — 18 Dec 2002, 16:55 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On Wed, 18 Dec 2002, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:
Regarding the question of whether Silk's enlightenment has any subjective sequence or duration to him as it occurs ...

... it occurs in an instant in the middle of the prosaic activity of a ball game, which is not interrupted by it.

Right. We agree, I presume, that it takes no "objective" time.

It happens at right angles to Silk's normal timeline.

We are three dimensional creatures moving involuntarily in a fourth dimension. This motion, and this dimension are seen as time. The plenum we inhabit is thus four dimensional (three spacelike and two timelike dimensions). This is embedded within a plenum that consists of these four, one other spacelike and one other timelike dimension, and a seventh dimension within which creatures of this order are in involuntary motion. This is 'time for them' ('them' are the creatures that I generally refer to as "angels or small-g gods"). Mr Big Nose, of course, is beyond this level as much as he is beyond our level.

Silk's timeline has been turned 90 degrees.

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Timothy Reilly — 19 Dec 2002, 01:34 · follows Josh Geller

PS: While I'm here, my copy of RTW (Return to the Whorl), the TOR paperback, is absolutely crammed with the most annoying typos throughout.

This is the most irritating thing about RTTW, although Pig's silly voices and the astral travel back to interfere in the plot of the TBNS are up there too. Several people, including me, commented upon it when the book first came out in hardcover. I am surprised Tor don't have the wherewithal to get it right the first time, and doubly surprised that they don't fix it up in the paperback.

Does anyone know if the Mint/Marble (IIRC) mix up at the end of TBLS ever got fixed in subsequent editions?

Tim

Don Doggett — 19 Dec 2002, 06:12 · follows Timothy Reilly

----- Original Message -----

From: "ArchD'Ikon Zibethicus" <zibethicus at hotmail.com>
To: <urth at urth.net>
Sent: Wednesday, December 18, 2002 2:06 AM

Subject: (urth) Silk out of time / Blushas? Grushas?

Don:

why couldn't Marble's clock be correct?

<snip>

3. Marble is absolutely decrepit. I find it hard to believe that an advanced chem capable of self-repair and engaged in only mildly strenuous activity would decay so soon.

Pardon my obtuseness, but is it anywhere specified that Marble's memories of her life as a secular chem are located on the Whorl? She might have had an earlier life on Urth, as did many people who were forced aboard.

No pardon necessary since these I believe are Jeff's comments rather than mine. I mean, I know they're not mine and I think they're Jeff's. We are in accord.

Don the clarifier, unifier, tribune of the plebs, layabout, roustabout, wave slider, nonsense writer Doggett, Junior