

different sev's and silk as seeker

The Urth list — 5 messages, 4 voices, 10 Jul 2003

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4079>

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maa32 — 10 Jul 2003, 05:57

Two brief points:

I believe Nutria asked me to clarify why I stated that the author of Urth of the New Sun was different than the Severian of Book of the New Sun. Note that the old Severian copies out the Book of the New Sun again and then dies falling down a shaft, after which point another physical body is created, then yet another one is made before that eidolon writes Urth of the New Sun: a copy of a copy. It isn't the same human hand - that's all I meant, and there may be other differences (since the hierodules aren't really God, after all - they just approximate him as best they can)

As far as I know, Wolfe was not specific about Silk being the only member of the Seekers for Truth and Penitence. Here is my take: the Matachine Tower is the last refuge of a distorted Catholic church: all male, in black, seeking to serve a greater justice beyond their ability to judge. They obey. They have ceremonies of religious import, but the church has ultimately fractured into the female Pelerines and the more sedentary torturers, who have adapted a bit of a secular role in punishment - bringing hell to Urth a bit before death, but still serving a higher power. Purgatory, if you will. Silk is a member of a distorted church that seeks truth and penitence as well, but since the traditions have been muddled with by Typhon, it is even more corrupted by polytheism. They still wear black and even have the sign of addition and confession and other DISTINCTLY Catholic sacraments (Silk even knows about the eucharist, but I think sacrifice has taken the place of that in their masses). So here is my take: the torturer's are very corrupt priests, and Silk is a priest of a polytheistic syncretic Catholicism (hell, there's even a pope).

I don't think we can use that interview statement to say that Silk is a clone of Ymar or Severian BUT on the other hand everyone and their brother thinks that Silk is a ghost of Malrubius, which STILL blows my mind. So ... Silk as clone of Malrubius, anyone? And where the hell would Typhon get a clone of a man born more than a thousand years after him to put on a ship, unless that "original" man (Malrubius) was a clone from an earlier source?

Any explanations for why Silk (possibly with some small fragments of Horn left inside him and blurring his astral appearance) looks like Malrubius? Could this be an explanation for why he needs to meet Severian?

Marc Aramini

Andrew Bollen — 10 Jul 2003, 06:43 · follows maa32

Marc writes:

As far as I know, Wolfe was not specific about Silk being the only member of
of
the Seekers for Truth and Penitence.

The actual comment from the Q&A:

14. Is there a member (current, former, future) of the Order of Seekers for Truth and Penitence on the Whorl? -- I'm going to interpret this question in the broadest possible sense, since that seems to be what Parsons wants. Yes, there is. It is Silk.

I suppose logically that doesn't preclude the possibility that other priests etc might also be members of the Order, in the broadest sense, but it does seem pretty Silk-specific to me.

I don't think Wolfe intends an identification between Silk's synthetic church and Sev's guild in this statement; if he did, I think he would have said, "Yes, there are - the priests of the Vironese Order", or something like that.

I think it makes more thematic sense for the Torturers to be distinctly secular from the start. The historical inquisition had to hand their victims over to the secular arm for punishment, for example. The Masters of the Guild have no priestly functions, as far as I can see, and their ceremonies don't appear to have much to do with Christian ceremonies.

Silk's Order is clearly a synthetic thing, with bits and pieces taken from everywhere, as reflected in the Chras Writings. There's a bit of Christianity, a bit of Greco-Roman paganism, a bit of Islam ... The Torturers on the other hand seem to me to be evolved prison guards - perhaps Ymar instituted the Order, with a higher sense of mission than the thugs he grew up with?

There's a clear thematic parallel, of course: both Sev and Silk are raised within Orders which both come to realize are flawed and which they both grow out of or betray in some way. Ymar too, I suppose.

Any explanations for why Silk (possibly with some small fragments of Horn left inside him and blurring his astral appearance) looks like Malrubius?

I've seen this said before, but I don't remember anything from the tet saying they look alike. Have I missed something?

matthew.malthouse — 10 Jul 2003, 09:54 · follows Andrew Bollen

On 10/07/2003 06:57:55 maa32 wrote:

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the Seekers for Truth and Penitence. Here is my take: the Matachine Tower is

the last refuge of a distorted Catholic church: all male, in black, seeking to

serve a greater justice beyond their ability to judge. They obey. They have

ceremonies of religious import, but the church has ultimately fractured into

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the female Pelerines and the more sedentary torturers, who have adapted a bit

of a secular role in punishment - bringing hell to Urth a bit before death,

but still serving a higher power. Purgatory, if you will.

They are not alone. The librarians have analagous ceremonies to those described for the torturers, it is mentioned in Sev's conversation with Ultan that they are held in the catedral rather than the chapel. Other guilds to process on ceremonial occasions. Would all be remnants

of corrupt priesthood or are they not more likely to be inheritors of lay organisations performing religious acts of devotion to their spiritual patrons as still happens in many part of the world?

Matthew

matthew.malthouse — 10 Jul 2003, 10:01 · follows matthew.malthouse

On 10/07/2003 07:43:14 Andrew Bollen wrote:

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There's a thousand year history of pageant, masque and re-enactment buy guilds, oratorical and chivalrous orders of scriptural events both in religious and secular circumstances. The mummers plays and mysteries of England the the decennial cycle of mysteries in (some place I forget) Germany remain to this day.

The description of the ceremonies given by Severian with St Catherine, her wheel and execution are very much in accord with extant traditions.

Matthew

Roy C. Lackey — 11 Jul 2003, 04:05 · follows matthew.malthouse

Andrew Bollen wrote:

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I agree that Wolfe didn't intend his answer to be taken in other than its most figurative sense. Neither do I think that his answer is sufficient grounds to try to establish some sort of physical familial relationship between Silk and Sev--or Horn or Typhon--much less Malrubius.

If one takes the meaning of "Seekers for Truth and Penitence" in a religious sense (its use by the Torturers is nothing if not ironic, as I see it), as those dedicated to the adoration and placation of the Increate, as the phrase implies, then Silk could be said to be a member of that Order.

The Order's creed, "Torturers obey", means just that: blind, unreasoning, unquestioning fealty

to a higher power. When Thecla pricked Sev's boyish male ego shortly before her excruciation, it made it easier for whatever passed for his conscience to follow the Order's creed, not only not to prevent her torture but to participate in it. Only when it was too late for Thecla did he think to violate the creed and help her to commit suicide. That was Sev's first step on the moral ladder, and he never got much higher.

Silk also violated the creed. Less than 24 hours after being enlightened by and pledging himself to the Outsider, the sight of a naked nubile woman and her flattery of his young male ego caused him to shift his new-found loyalty from the Outsider to a whore. Silk became obsessed with her, at least until he had her. Like Sev, he came to realize his mistake too late, but was too noble to turn his back on her. Unlike Sev, he contemplated _his own_ suicide. Silk strayed for twenty years and only when Hyacinth died did he return to the path the Outsider intended for him.

-Roy