

Silk and Malrubius

The Urth list — 3 messages, 2 voices, 11 Sep 2013

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6435>

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Peter Sun Rogers — 11 Sep 2013, 23:19

Hi all, I just finished reading Return to the Whorl again and it struck me that Severian refers to Silkhorn's bird as *Malrubius*'s bird. This made me realize that many of the characteristics that Severian attributes to the ghost of Malrubius in *Book of the New Sun, *echo the traits we know best of Silk quite strongly. When Malrubius peaked in to check on Severian, it reminded me of something that Silk might do if he heard a worrying noise in a student's room. Also, Malrubius's lecture on the Seven Principles of Governance:

"Attachment to the person of the monarch. Attachment to a bloodline or other sequence of succession.

*Attachment to the royal state. *

*Attachment to a code legitimizing the governing state. *

*Attachment to the law **only. *

*Attachment to a greater or lesser board of electors, as framers of the law. *

*Attachment to an **abstraction conceived as including the body of electors, other bodies giving rise to them, and numerous **other elements, largely ideal."*

This struck me as the type of revelation Silk might have had after his Enlightenment at the ball court. So perhaps in the same way that Severian is both Severian and Thecla, and Silk is both Silk and Horn, perhaps Silk is both Silk and Malrubius. That is to say, a conceptual soul that inhabits both Silk and Malrubius simultaneously. In this case, it appears as if Book of the New Sun *does *set some precedent for the events of Book of the Short Sun, despite Severian's claim that he would never write about Silk.

Severian claimed that he would never write about his journeys with Silkhorn because he would be immediately discredited. However, who says that the only times that Silk visited Severian were the two times that he was accompanied by his sons? It is likely that he checked up on Severian his entire life, with Severian barely noticing him several times. In this way, Silk is both Severian's mentor and protector, watching over the man who would (one day) become the male and female voices that whispers enlightenment into his ears at the beginning of the Book of the Long Sun.

Peter Sun Rogers — 12 Sep 2013, 01:52 · in reply to Peter Sun Rogers

This also strengthens the motif of characters being the vehicles of archetypal roles, rather than individual and discrete personalities. As Gene Wolfe puts it in *Shadow and Claw,*: We say, "I will," and "I will not," and imagine ourselves (though we obey the orders of some prosaic person every day) our own masters, when the truth is that our masters are sleeping. One wakes within us and we are ridden like beasts, though the rider is but some hitherto unguessed part of

ourselves."

So Malrubius is Silk and Silk is Malrubius because they are both controlled by the same master: the archetypal mentor that raises up Severian to eventually become the New Sun. But as suggested by others in this newsletter, transcendent Severian then enlightens Silk in the ball court, thus closing the loop and connecting the cyclical chain of events that forms the complete Increate.

On Wed, Sep 11, 2013 at 7:19 PM, Peter Sun Rogers
<petersunrogers at gmail.com> wrote:

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Gerry Quinn — 12 Sep 2013, 09:41 · in reply to Peter Sun Rogers

From: Peter Sun Rogers

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That's interesting, but I think the actual incident where Severian said the bird belonged to Malrubius was just a lie Severian told to get rid of the heavyset man (Gurloes?). That said, when Horn put his hand on Gurloes shoulder, what did Gurloes see?

- Gerry Quinn