

Silk the Precursor?

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 07 Sep 2000

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/1018>

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Nicholas Gevers — 07 Sep 2000, 07:08

Something that hasn't attracted much comment as yet is the simple question: why, thematically speaking, does Wolfe include a crossover to Urth in IN GREEN'S JUNGLES, and, apparently, another in RETURN TO THE WHORL? Knowing of Urth may enrich our readings of THE BOOK OF THE SHORT SUN, but does knowledge of SHORT SUN enrich our understanding of Urth, of THE BOOK OF THE NEW SUN? I'd like to postulate that the answer is yes, in a quite specific way.

I commented a while back on the likelihood that Horn et al visit Urth in IGJ on the day of Severian's swimming expedition at the start of THE SHADOW OF THE TORTURER. Quite a few people have concurred. Some mention has also been made of parallels between Silk/Horn and Severian: the wielding of a numinous black sword, the Claw-style light given to Horn by the Neighbour on Green, the lochage concluding that Horn is a Master of the Torturers' Guild. What I infer from all this is that the career of Silk/Horn is the template for Severian's career: the Hierodules and others shape Severian's life to resemble Silk/Horn's, because the latter's progressively benevolent pattern will make Severian a likely bringer of the New Sun. Silk/Horn is Severian's precursor: his arrival on Urth, just as the action of THE BOOK OF THE NEW SUN commences, is the inspiration the higher powers need for their successful manipulation of Severian's timeline.