

women, memory, and stuff

The Whorl list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 27 Feb 2001

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/1236>

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shannon wilde — 27 Feb 2001, 05:16

Hello all! I'm glad I'm not the only one who felt somewhat irked by RttW. The lists have been helping me get some things (like narrators) somewhat straightened out. Thanks, as ever.

Mr. Groce wondered why Nettle returned to Whorl, what with her wife-and-mother duties being over. Well, unWolfeish as it sounds, maybe it was to pursue her career! As a writer and editor, she sure beats either Horn or, apparently, Silk. The Book of Nettle, set during and after the upcoming voyage-that could be pretty neat. And an awfully big change for Wolfe, not known for overwhelming compassion towards female characters. Maybe he finds it more acceptable for women to "find themselves" after they have worked off their Original Sin Duties. (Sorry, that wasn't nice, but I don't think it was unwarranted.) I found the contrasts in his treatment of women throughout LS and SS very odd, (especially Chenille and Mucor) so maybe he was experimenting to a purpose. OK, maybe not...;)

Also, quick aside on the topic of memory and identity. I don't know if Wolfe necessarily provides answers re their function as part of the soul (whatever that is:)). But when I reread the Soldier books I'm always astounded by the portrayal of the hellish torment and confusion of losing one's short-term memory. It does feel as if one is losing one's soul, or has lost it. And maybe one does, or at least misplaces it. I especially appreciated the depiction of the emotionality resulting from Latro's slow recovery. Wolfe was dead on target there, and I'm inclined to trust his judgment in the identity shell game in LS/SS.* Now, if I could just comprehend it! Looking forward to your posts,

-Shannon

*I except the Oreb/Scylla merger. That just felt cheap.

James Jordan — 27 Feb 2001, 08:58 · follows shannon wilde

At 05:16 AM 2/27/2001 -0800, you wrote:
Mr. Groce wondered why Nettle returned to Whorl, what with her wife-and-mother duties being over. Well, unWolfeish as it sounds, maybe it was to pursue her career! As a writer and editor, she sure beats either Horn or, apparently, Silk. The Book of Nettle, set during and after the upcoming voyage-that could be pretty neat. And an awfully big change for Wolfe, not known for overwhelming compassion towards female characters. Maybe he finds it more acceptable for women to "find themselves" after they have worked off their Original Sin Duties. (Sorry, that wasn't nice, but I don't think it was unwarranted.) I found the contrasts in his treatment of women throughout LS and SS very odd, (especially Chenille and Mucor) so maybe he was experimenting to a purpose. OK, maybe not...;)

We've discussed this on Urth a while back, as I recall. I think the consensus was that Wolfe is about as mean to his male characters as to his female ones, on balance. As for Original Sin, remember that "In Adam's fall we sinn-ed all." Yes, Eve bit the "appil" first, but it was Adam's fault mainly. The notion that the woman led the man into sin part of low-level superstition, found here and there to be sure, but Wolfe is way too knowledgeable for that kind of stuff. The New Testament is clear that it was Adam's doing, and that the woman was tricked, while the man acted with full knowledge of what he was doing. The reason for this goes back to Genesis 2, where Adam was told not to eat the fruit before Eve was made. Thus, Adam had first-hand knowledge of the prohibition, while Eve's was second-hand. There's more, but that's enough.

Pat. Nut.

*This is WHORL, for discussion of Gene Wolfe's Book of the Long Sun.