

Silk vis a vis God

The Whorl list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 06 Apr 1997

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Alice Turner — 06 Apr 1997, 12:05

With regard to the identity of the Outsider, let me remind you of Lake, 285, where Silk is telling Crane about his enlightenment:

"Voices...One spoke into each ear most of the time. One was very masculine--not falsely deep, but solid, as if a mountain of stone were speaking. The other was feminine, a sort of gentle cooing; yet both voices were his...I believe, too, that the Outsider has a great many more voices as well. I could hear them in back of me at times, although indistinctly. It was as if a crowd were waiting behind me while its leaders whispered in my ears; but as if the crowd was actually all one person, somehow: the Outsider...."

If that isn't Severian, I'll eat my mouse.

Dr. Gouvea, assuming you've already rejected Porcupine and Hedgehog, the obvious choices for your Vironese alias, what about Tanrec or Tenrec (alternate spellings)? It's a spiny native of Madagascar. Or you could try Porpentine--I think that's from Othello, and most melodious.

Hush yo' mouf, mantis.

-alga-

Jim Jordan — 07 Apr 1997, 00:03 · follows Alice Turner

At 12:05 PM 4/6/97 -0400, you wrote:

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Hope you like plastic! :-) Or is this a pet mouse....

I'd say it is God and the Church, the Mother of believers and Bride of Christ. Not only does this work with theology, specifically Roman Catholic theology, but it is also in Wolfe, as in the Italian Restaurant run by "Mamma and her sons" in *There Are Doors,* and as in the woman who runs the church-hostel in "Westwind."

If the same thing is going on with Severian -- and I'm not sure it is (though it is an interesting symbolic suggestion) -- then it is because they have a common source, not because the Outsider is Severian.

For my money, anyway. (In real life, a protestant theologian by trade.)

Signed: Big Rat (Nutria) -- and by the way, a Nutria might look like a mouse, but I'm not YOUR mouse, so don't try slaughtering and roasting me!

Doug Eigsti — 07 Apr 1997, 12:35 · follows Jim Jordan

Alga,

I'll have to chime in on the side of Nutria. The Outsider is better supported in the text as being the supreme being, The Creator:

(IV, p284.9) "...who shaped our forebears from the mud of the Short Sun Whorl."

(IV,p341.-5) "created Pas"

No one would like to see Severian make a cameo in LONG SUN more than I. I cannot, however, place Severian in the role of the Increate. Conciliator, yes. It is easier to accommodate the one difficult text you quoted, with the male and female voices, by incorporating God's triune nature, as Nutria has, than to assume that Severian is the One True God. For this is the conclusion Silk comes to. His struggle with his beliefs is one of the key themes in the book. Severian just does not fit. I would love to see further evidence to the contrary. If it's there I missed it completely.

=Talon=

One tart without so much rat in it later... (Monty Python)