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The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 17 Jun 1997

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Kevin McGuire — 17 Jun 1997, 20:51

Hi folks,

Lots of interesting thoughts these past few days - it has been a real pleasure reading them.

On Journeys Begun on False Pretenses:

One theme that struck me is in both the New Sun and Long Sun books was how the initial journey is motivated by something that turns out to be false, and yet the journey proves worthwhile. In the New Sun books, the false coin of Vodalus serves to start Severian down his revolutionary (sorry) path.

In the Long Sun books, Silk follows "false" (in a theological sense) gods, and is often quite wrong in what he believes to be true, yet his actions ultimately are for the good of the people under his protection, though he doesn't actually restart the sun or anything
truly spectacular.

Silk's paganism (though certainly more technological than Latro's) strikes me as similar in some ways to the Soldier books, in that Gene seems to be making Silk at the start of the Long Sun a "virtuous pagan." Which is to say a good person who died before Christianity, and thus without the salvation of the Church - these were the folks that Dante consigned to the first (and not altogether unpleasant) circle of Hell. Wolfe believes that those who came before us were intelligent people whose ideas about their world were entirely reasonable given their circumstances, and in the Whorl, what could be more reasonable than believing in gods who actually appear. Silk is the transition state from Latro's vivid pagan world-view to Severian's christian one.

On a more frivolous note - is there any connection between Typhon/Piaton and that episode of the Simpsons where Mr. Burns head is grafted onto Homer's body?

"But Homer, tomorrow we are meeting with Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands"

Kevin McGuire | "Human beings are perhaps never more frightening than Philadelphia, PA | when they are convinced beyond doubt that they are right"

| --Laurents van der Post