

Theophanies, Silk's end

The Whorl list — 4 messages, 4 voices, 02 Nov 1998

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Alice Turner — 04 Nov 1998, 09:22

Greg Neyman wrote:

A New Question: In Calde, Quetzal mentions that he's done his all he could to ensure that theophanies stop occurring in Viron ... I never really understood why ... does it get explained elsewhere in an oblique manner ... or not at all?

We do learn of one thing: Quetzal banned human sacrifice.

Greg, I don't think it's "explained," but does it need to be? Once you've had a look at Echidna and Scylla in action, wouldn't you do your best to keep them off-screen as well? Plus there is the destruction of the Pas program, which may have loosed the others to do their worst. Quetzal, despite his need for a meal beyond beef tea once in a while, generally seems to be a benign figure.

From Rostrum:

I predict that if we see Silk at all in the Short Sun books, it will be as part of a Silk/Pas amalgam residing in Mainframe.

If you want to make a bet of it, I'll take it. I haven't got much of an argument except that, speaking editorially, too much is unresolved at the end of Exodus. There is the new murkiness in Silk's disposition and demeanor that someone spoke of earlier. There is the question of Hy's allegiance. There are the taluses under construction. It is true that we might not meet Silk again directly (I will be sorry for that) but we will have to hear the end of his tale. I reject the Silk/Pas amalgam because it's so baldly a variant of the demonic offer of world control, and Silk really is a "beautiful man."

-alga

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

Kieran Cleary — 02 Nov 1998, 14:30 · follows Alice Turner

Alga said:

I reject the Silk/Pas amalgam because it's so baldly a variant of the demonic offer of world control, and Silk really is a "beautiful man." <

That's assuming Silk had any choice in the matter. There's reason to believe that Silk's downloaded personality may have been grafted onto the incomplete Pas persona without Silk's consent. (Or so I seem to remember).

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Matthew Malthouse — 04 Nov 1998, 16:15 · follows Kieran Cleary

Alice Turner wrote:

Greg, I don't think it's "explained," but does it need to be? Once you've had a look at Echidna and Scylla in action, wouldn't you do your best to keep them off-screen as well? Plus there is the destruction of the Pas program, which may have loosed the others to do their worst. Quetzal, despite his need for a meal beyond beef tea once in a while, generally seems to be a benign figure.

Quetzal appears benign from the point of view of the human protagonists. But his motives are not explained to them, or to us. Why does he want to see the completion of the Plan of Paz? It's outcome would be to send humans to either Blue or Green - the one to a fragile safety, the other to what is seemingly the home of the vampires. It looked to me as if he was seeking to send a new food supply to his relatives. Not so benign really.

Matthew

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Michael Straight — 04 Nov 1998, 14:19 · follows Matthew Malthouse

On Wed, 4 Nov 1998, Alice Turner wrote:

I predict that if we see Silk at all in the Short Sun books, it will be as part of a Silk/Pas amalgam residing in Mainframe.

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Editorially speaking, I think that what you're expressing is properly a criticism of Exodus, rather than a good reason to continue Silk's story in the Short Sun books. Unless Silk is the central character of the Short Sun books. It seems sloppy to write 4 books about a character and then have the resolution of his story take place in another set of books that center on other characters.

I think that criticism can be rebutted, that Silk's sudden disappearance can be seen as an artistically satisfying ending to the series, that the details of talus construction are not foreshadowing but the explanation of where these strange beasts come from, that we might still see more of Hy without necessarily giving Silk center stage again.

Silk's disappearance fits in well with the Christ imagery. It's straight out of Acts chapter 1. Silk is victorious and his followers think he's about to lead them to a new kingdom, and then he disappears leaving them to remember him as best they can and work things out on their own. Thus setting the stage for his Second Coming from the glory of Mainframe...

I reject the Silk/Pas amalgam because it's so baldly a variant of the demonic offer of world control, and Silk really is a "beautiful man."

Yes it is, but I'm also of the camp that, if this happened/happens, it wouldn't be something Silk had a choice about.

I am perhaps still too enamored of the theory that Silk was originally intended to be the host body for Pas when the Starcrosser reached landfall, the Piaton that Typhon's "head" would be grafted onto.

From which might lead the (for me irresistible) irony of a crippled Pas program which needs a new "head" personality from Silk to run it and make it strong enough to win back Mainframe from Echidna and the kids.

-Rostrum

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