

Long Sun Allegory

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 04 Dec 1996

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/6>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

Jim Jordan — 04 Dec 1996, 18:28

Ossipagans,

Re-reading the last two chapters of volume three of the Book of the Long Sun, in preparation for volume four, I suddenly realized that Father Silk is not only a good pastor, but a Christ figure in the sense of acting out the events in Jesus' life. Wolfe would say a "Christian figure," since we are all to live in Christ and be Christlike; but here, as in the Book of Acts and in Cordwainer Smith's "Scanners Live in Vain," there is an allegorical presentation of this matter.

The reader should bear in mind that Wolfe is a devout, practising Roman Catholic strongly influenced by G.K. Chesterton, and that a number of his other works are Christian allegories.

Consider: (Spoiler Warning: Numbers 1-17 come from the first three volumes only; after that you are at risk.)

1. Silk's "enlightenment" and call by the Outsider // Jesus' baptism. Some have thought that this might merely be a downloading of information from Mainframe, but Mainframe is not the Outsider, and it becomes clearer and clearer that the Outsider is the God of the Bible.
2. The Crow (Night Chough) who accompanies Silk // the Holy Spirit Dove who accompanies Jesus.
3. Silk receives a foot wound right away // Jesus as the One whose foot was bruised (Genesis 3:15).
4. Silk is a priest who is reputed to be king also // Jesus, and the gradual reputation He acquired as King-Messiah.
5. The riot and war that take place about "Calde" Silk in Viron // the chaos in Jerusalem when "King" Jesus arrives at Palm Sunday.
6. Silk dies and is buried at the end of volume 3, and then is raised to life again by the Outsider // Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection.
7. Silk leads the Whorl's inhabitants to a new land // Jesus and the New Creation.
8. By the end of volume three, Silk is completely free from idolatry, and ready to begin to deliver the people from it // Jesus' work to deliver us from idolatry and to the worship of the Outsider (Creator).
9. The whorl is a self-contained, enclosed world, much like the First Creation. It is maintained by the angelic Fliers from Mainframe, who will not be needed once the people migrate to the outside (Outsider's) world.

10. The whorl's inhabitants can be possessed by evil gods from Mainframe, and can be guided by good gods (Tenebrous Tartarus), and can be possessed by telepathic humans like Mucor // the outbreak of demonic possession in the gospels, and the angelic guidance of the prophets. Compare Auk and, say, Ezekiel or Jeremiah or Daniel of John (Book of Revelation).

11. Big, lumbering, good-hearted Auk is Silk's Peter.

12. Hyacinth // the Mary Magdalene of mythology (prostitute), who is supposedly Jesus' earthly temptress to earthly love (as in _The Last Temptation of Christ_). Like Jesus, Silk loves her but does not bed her (in book three).

13. The choice of "Exodus" as title for the fourth volume is significant; it might have been "Departure" or something else.

14. The government of Viron is a clan of cousins (all named for various Lemurs), who have replaced the King (Calde) // compare the family of High Priests in the gospels, who supersede the Davidic line.

15. Silk is constantly tempted in all points like as we are, as the Outsider told him he would be, yet without sin (though he, unlike Jesus, is a sinner.)

16. We know from the Severian Quintet that two-headed Pas is the wicked and titanic Typhon // the devil. He rules the whorl, and makes himself god there (Pas means "all"). Clearly, leaving the whorl and moving to a planet will mean deliverance from this Luciferian Overlord.

17. When Typhon-Pas built the whorl from an asteroid, he suppressed the original religion of the people he put into it, and superimposed on them the worship of himself and his family; but the original (Christian) religion remains underneath (the Outsider as the forgotten God). The "sign of addition" is the sign of the cross; while Pas's "voided cross" or "gammadion" is a swastika.

18. And now to book four (spoiler warning). Silk was decanted from an embryo kept in storage. Parallel virgin birth of Jesus. (Info on Silk is given in the cast of characters section at the beginning of book four.)

19. Silk travels to the angelic realm of the fliers. Compare ascension of Jesus.

20. Silk's personality joins Pas and his lover, replacing Pas's dead head, and thus is "seated at the right hand of the Father." Compare Jesus's enthronement with Father and Spirit at His ascension. The "Pas" in Mainframe is not quite the same as Typhon, in this regard. He is a kind of "Good Lucifer."

21. Hyacinth's gross waywardness and infidelity are pictures of the sinfulness of Christ's Church-Bride. Wolfe makes sure we are both horrified and forgiving of her sins.

22. When Silk returns to Viron, it is armageddon, the end of the world battle. Compare the prophecies of Christ's return.

23. At this armageddon, Silk delivers his church, which was his task all along: Save the Manteion. Jesus returns to rescue His Bride from armageddon and to take her to heaven.

24. At the last moment, Silk's own wayward bride, Hyacinth, prefers this world to the world to come, and Silk rushes forth to save her at all costs. A moving finale, and a picture once again of

the abiding sinfulness of the Bride of Christ.

25. Auk-Peter becomes the captain of the new church that goes forth into the new land. Note: Wolfe combines the ideas of the second coming of Christ with the movement of the Church into the New Creation at His ascension.

26. In the old world, Silk fought mainly against political and human "enemies." In the new world, the enemies are ghostly vampires. Just so, in the Old Testament the enemies were human, while the Church now must fight against "principalities and powers" that come from the "other world" (green) and descend upon us to devour us.

Okay, this is just the beginning. Who wants to add to the list? I'll start us out:

27. (?) The Church is like a lion, image of Aslan. Compare Hyacinth's little lion, protected by the Night Chuff.

28. The long conversations in Exodus are Wolfe's idea of good evangelism, as various persons are gradually persuaded to switch sides and follow Silk. This is the Church's work, which comes into play after the resurrection of Christ (Silk).

29. It turns out that the usurpers of Viron are all already dead; they sustain their power artificially, by force and fear instead of by love and affection. This is another New Testament theme.

James B. Jordan

Questions or problems to whorl-owner at lists.best.com