

Silk Wrong; Saving the _Whorl_

The Whorl list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 11 Feb 1997

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/86>

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David_Lebling — 11 Feb 1997, 09:23

mantis,

I'll have to do some more research if I'm to come up with a list. I think what I was referring to was more Silk's habit, whenever anything happens, of coming up with an immediate and facile explanation. Sometimes, as you say, he is corrected, or corrects himself, but sometimes it just goes on by without comment. One example with immediate correction is his experience that we've been calling "Pike's Ghost," where he immediately assumes the black shape is Oreb.

One case that hit me on rereading is Silk's interpretation of his enlightenment. It seemed clear to me from the wording and the content of his vision that his charge from the Outsider was to save the _Whorl_, but he almost obsessively whittles that down to a charge to save his manteion. Only much, much later does he, in an almost surprised way, decide that saving his manteion means saving the people of the quarter the manteion serves, which is of course equivalent to saving the _Whorl_. The explicit religious aspect of this is obvious; we are all charged by the Outsider with saving the world, and such saving is to be accomplished by saving ourselves and our fellow humans, and through them the world.

In fact, the more I think of it, the more I think that Silk's explanations are often self-serving in a sense; the same way peoples responses to religious challenges are often self-serving, and deflect them from what was really wanted.

Another question (so this won't all be philosophy and ethics): Who saves the rest of the _Whorl_? Horn's appendix makes it clear that people from cities other than Viron made it to Blue. Who got them there? Did the Outsider enlighten someone in each city? Auk's lander is the first to leave the _Whorl_. What's happening elsewhere? Why did Tartaros pick Auk of Viron, of all the Cargo? (That at least has a plausible explanation.)

Dave
(david_lebling at avid.com)

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

Jim Jordan — 11 Feb 1997, 11:00 · follows David_Lebling

At 09:23 AM 2/11/97 -0500, you wrote:

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In both the Severian Quintet and in the Long Sun Quartet Wolfe gives us a central character who is slowly working his way out of a bad beginning. In Silk's case, it is idolatry. Slowly he comes to understand that the Outsider is the only real God, and all the rest are false. After that, he comes to appreciate that even these false gods carry fragments of truth with them. Idolatry is a major interest in many of Wolfe's works, but never more than here. Silk's gradual understanding of the Outsider's command to him is part of that process of illumination and deliverance from bondage.

James B. Jordan

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