

# Digest whorl.v010.n104

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 16 Apr 2000

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Timothy Reilly — 16 Apr 2000, 05:47

Adam Stephanides wrote:

There is very little humor in OBW (a trait it shares with most of Wolfe's books), but a while ago Kieran Cleary posted one humorous bit. Here are two more

<snip>

I always thought Horn's speculations on how the inhumi get from Green to Blue (and to the Whorl) at pp 180-183 was intended humorously (not by Horn, but by the reader seeing he's thinking himself into knots). Certainly it's hard to take some of the logic seriously, and it includes the elementary error "[l]ight objects fall much more slowly than heavy ones" at p 181. But now I'm less sure - since this is not talking about a vacuum (the context is dealing with re-entry heat) maybe it makes sense. And Horn's conjecture that the inhumi simply hold their breath in travelling the (still very lengthy) distance between Green and Blue at conjunction is supported by their survival when buried.

As for Wolfe's humor in other books, I actually thought there was too much humour in TUNS, one of the reasons I'm ambivalent about it. It seems to me to detract from the grandeur of the preceding volumes to have Valeria cracking puns about waves of gravity/dignity before she died and Tzadkiel (right name? off the top of my head) fluttering about like Tinkerbell at the Brooke Madregot. And the Patera Incus character for one just seems to have been put in TBLS largely for light relief; the same might be said to a lesser extent of Master Xiphias, Oreb and Tick. (Again I didn't like this, but then I didn't like lots of things about TBLS). I personally don't think Wolfe's attempts at humour in general are very successful - puns seem to be the order of the day!

On another subject, I notice on rereading OBW that Horn's first experience of enhanced perception seems to occur shortly after he gets out of the pit: from "that time forward" he sees things "as a good painter must" (p 228). Soon after - apologising to Seawrack after raping her - "[f]or an instant (only an instant) I had heard Silk's voice issuing from my own mouth. I tried to prolong it but could not" (p 247). So seems likely, as has already been suggested, that he has had some sort of download from Silk (or "Pasilk"?) while in the pit - probably thereby resurrected as he does appear to have died.

Tim