

Hyacinth

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 06 Feb 2002

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Andy Robertson — 06 Feb 2002, 21:59

----- Original Message -----

From: "maa32" <maa32 at dana.ucc.nau.edu>

And while I don't take "Hyacinth as possibly a man" seriously,

<snip>

Hyacinth is not a traanssexual, but she is such an artificial woman that your idea is perhaps symbolically true. And actually, she is not a very realistic or convincing character at all. We never see things from her perspective; she is a vacuum of destructive femininity. Why was the little house she and Silk retired to so poor and broken? How was it that Silk's love for her somehow never failed, so that when she died, his spirit died? Did they find a way to get on with each other? Or was Silk's whole life with her a torture? There seemed to be some interaction between Silk and Hyacinth's ghost in the ruined palace: part mocking, part loving. What happened to them?

hartshorn

Alice K. Turner — 07 Feb 2002, 05:40 · follows Andy Robertson

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Nice post, hartshorn. Which is to say that I too have thought about these things. How in the world could two so fundamentally different characters have found a way to get along? With Silk it would be the healing power of sex, but Hy is totally cynical about sex--mocking With her, it would be sticking with power, but, as you point out, there's no power eventually.

Well, Wolfe was wise to avoid trying to demonstrate the relationship--I don't think he could have.

-alga

James Jordan — 12 Feb 2002, 17:25 · follows Alice K. Turner

At 11:40 PM 2/6/2002, you wrote:

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Yes. I think one has to be mostly satisfied with the symbolic dimension, that Silk is like Christ and Hyacinth is like the wayward Bride of Christ, who is quite often a Harlot (as the book of Revelation has it). Another "bride of Silk" is Maytera Mint, whose gentle persuasive "evangelism for Silk" in **Exodus** relates to how the Church should behave toward her Husband.

It would be interesting to re-read the four books and look carefully at all of "Silk's women" (Mucor, the mayteras, Hyacinth) and see how each in different ways might work with this theme, and perhaps how all taken together provide a rounded picture. But Hyacinth does seem to be the "bride" who needs to be rescued, but who really does not want to be rescued. Yet, there may be more to her than that. It may be a load of guilt that keeps causing her to leave Silk. Perhaps we should have some sympathy for her.

One theme in Wolfe, seen particularly in *Severian*, is that it takes a very long time to change one's upbringing and bad habits. Conversion reorients the heart, but changing the life is a long process. Perhaps Hyacinth is on such a journey. I thought she really loved Silk, but kept finding herself unworthy and thus would run away from him. I guess I kind of liked her -- saw a bit of myself in her.

But it's been a while since I read these books.

Nutria