

More on Silk-Horn's eating habits

The Urth list — 6 messages, 4 voices, 19 Feb 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/2966>

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Tom Foster — 19 Feb 2002, 12:18

Following on from my question about this the other day, I have now read the first 150 pages or so of RTTW. Two passages stood out with respect to the narrator's eating habits, both of which concern him eating/drinking enthusiastically. These are just about the only times I can remember that the narrator feels this way. The two instances occur at the beginning of the chapter 'Haunting Dorp', in which he enthusiastically describes all the food that he is brought as "a feast", and in the chapter 'Dark Empty Rooms', in which he drinks wine several times. One of these instances occurs in his present, and one in his past. I'm not sure what to make of it all, but it does seem strange.

I've been reading a lot of conversations in the archives and was interested to read about John Clute's review of IGJ, in which he apparently stated that it was fairly evident that the protagonist of the books is an inhum. There was some debate about it, but what do people make of it now? I'm not at all convinced, though I can see several arguments to support it, as well as several to dispute it (the obvious ones being the eating/drinking and the ability to write neatly, though perhaps this could be achieved through being an inhum trapped in a human's body?) One thing that struck me as slightly sinister is a sentence at the end of OBW. The narrator writes "Brother and Sister should have made me feel younger, as the girl did. I felt old instead". It isn't clear who the 'girl' he is referring to might be (Seawrack?), but I think that one could interpret this statement in several ways...

Tom

Andy Robertson — 19 Feb 2002, 12:28 · follows Tom Foster

I think it is possible that when Horn went to Green he was sucked dry by an inhumu and thereafter merely thought he was human.

I cannot pin down the spot but I think it might be after he leaves the City and is lost in the jungle. The rest of his striving on Green is the striving of an inhumu who thinks he is a man.

Silk-on-Blue is therefore a triple hybrid: Silk has the inhumu's soul: the inhumu has Horn's soul. Hence Silk carries many inhumu characteristics, including reluctance to eat.

Silk-on-blue is of course *physically* human, since he begets children at Gaon.

hartshorn

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

From: "Tom Foster" <t.foster2 at ntlworld.com>
To: <urth at urth.net>

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Michael Straight — 19 Feb 2002, 13:26 · follows Andy Robertson

On Tue, 19 Feb 2002, Andy Robertson wrote:
I think it is possible that when Horn went to Green he was sucked dry by an inhumu and thereafter merely thought he was human.

I don't think the inhumu soul-stealing works that way.

For one thing, there's no other evidence of an inhumu gaining memories (or even much personality) from the person he/she's drained. Fava feels the urge to appear like an old lady after she drinks from Mora's grandmother, but she doesn't show any signs of taking on the grandmother's memories or personality.

Secondly, if there's any sense in which an inhumu gains personality from someone who has been drained of blood, it is in the second generation. Krait is drawn to Horn, and is so much like a son to him--extending to the love/hate relationship, because his mother drained Sinew. I guess you could say that Horn was drained by an inhumu who subsequently had children and that one of those children then had adventures on Green thinking he was Horn (and somehow getting hold of Horn's neighbor ring) and then sent his hybrid soul into Silk, but that seems to be wandering pretty far into fan fiction territory.

The strongest objection to this idea is that, based on the actions of inhumu when they spirit travel and gain human bodies, an inhumu spirit in Silk's body would revel in eating and having sex and doing all the other human things it was unable to do in its reptilian body. If there were an inhumu in there, Silk would be eating more, not less, so you'd need some other explanation for why he's not eating.

To me, the "Silk is used to fasting, but Horn isn't" explanation is the simplest.

-Rostrum

Michael Straight — 19 Feb 2002, 13:50 · follows Michael Straight

On Tue, 19 Feb 2002, Michael Straight wrote:
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Yet another problem with this theory. When the narrator and Hoof and Jahlee travel to Green and visit Sinew's city, they go out to the lander where Horn died and retrieve the Neighbor ring and leave it with Sinew. Surely people would have noticed and made a fuss if Horn's body had actually been a dead inhumu.

-Rostrum

Michael Straight — 19 Feb 2002, 13:54 · follows Michael Straight

On Tue, 19 Feb 2002, Tom Foster wrote:

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I think "the girl" there is the concubine the Rajan escaped with. I agree, that sentence does lend itself to sinister interpretation.

I don't think the narrator is an inhumu, but I'm starting to think Wolfe meant to tease us with the suspicion that he might be.

-Rostrum

James Jordan — 19 Feb 2002, 17:19 · follows Michael Straight

At 07:54 AM 2/19/2002, you wrote:

On Tue, 19 Feb 2002, Tom Foster wrote:

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Maybe, but I think the simplest is the best here. An old man with a young concubine is surely going to feel younger. And being around little children also makes an old man feel younger. Or, such experiences can make one feel one's age. In fact, depending on one's mood and the time of the day, one can go back and forth. Wolfe's an Old Guy now, and I'm sure he feels younger around his grandchildren. (I assume no concubines are present in his life!).

Nutria