

Amazon has RTW cover up

The Whorl list — 6 messages, 5 voices, 22 Nov 2000

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/1041>

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Michael Purdy — 22 Nov 2000, 14:33

FYI all, the cover for Return to the Whorl is now up on Amazon.

This one's got me stumped. Who's the giant? And is that a humanoid figure in his hand? It's easy to lose the little finger on the giant's hand, but if you can separate that finger out (it points in a different direction than the other fingers), there appears to be an arm from the smaller humanoid figure propped up on it. You can see a waist and legs, but the head of the figure and one of its hands are radiating so much light it's very tough to be certain. About the only thing that can be said with any certitude is that Oreb's on the cover. Very tiny, but it's gotta be Oreb.

*This is WHORL, for discussion of Gene Wolfe's Book of the Long Sun.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 22 Nov 2000, 11:45 · follows Michael Purdy

I hate to say it, but my first reaction is that the giant's face looks more than a bit like Wolfe's. I hope this doesn't turn into some metafictional crud.

(Dammit, Dan'l, have faith in Wolfe's taste. Even if it turns metafictional surely it won't be crud. "The Last Thrilling Wonder Story" certainly wasn't...)

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Michael Purdy — 22 Nov 2000, 15:24 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Dan'l,
I just popped over to the one photo of Wolfe online that sprung to mind (it's on Paul Duggan's Wolfe page), and darned if you ain't right. That giant DOES look a lot like Wolfe. Although I love just about everything Wolfe writes, the prospect of a metafictional intrusion into/resolution of the Whorl storyline provokes pangs of dread. I'm hoping this was more of a tip of the hat to Wolfe on the artist's part.
Can anyone make anything out of that funky headgear on the giant?
Michael

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William Ansley — 24 Nov 2000, 00:33 · follows Michael Purdy

At 2:33 PM -0500 11/22/00, Michael Purdy wrote:
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giant's hand, but if you can separate that finger out (it points in a different direction than the other fingers), there appears to be an arm from the smaller humanoid figure propped up on it. You can see a waist and legs, but the head of the figure and one of its hands are radiating so much light it's very tough to be certain. About the only thing that can be said with any certitude is that Oreb's on the cover. Very tiny, but it's gotta be Oreb.

I don't know why everyone thinks that the larger guy on the cover is a giant. The glowing guy could be teensy. And the bird could be much farther away than everyone is assuming.

Maybe one of the major influences on _RttW_ is _Darby O'Gill and the Little People_.

Or maybe not.

William Ansley

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James Jordan — 24 Nov 2000, 11:01 · follows William Ansley

Since we're all just guessing in the dark, here's mine:

1. Neither Silk nor Horn is Christ, but both are trying to be Christlike, so to speak. They occupy that position in the narrative, to some degree.
2. Oreb is not a dove or the Holy Spirit, but again, to some degree he occupies that position in the narrative.
3. Now we have a giant, holding what looks like a man, with Oreb flying over the man. I'd say this person is linked to the Father.

After all, among the dozens of things Wolfe is doing in these novels, one is to show the mysterious work of the Christian God (the Trinity) in the providential direction of history, through His agents.

One thing I think we can assume, and that is that, like the other two covers, this is an illustration of an event in the course of the novel.

A truly wild guess would be that the giant is Severian, grown large somehow (like Baldanders).

Pat. Nut.

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Kevin J. Maroney — 27 Nov 2000, 14:06 · follows James Jordan

At 03:24 PM 11/22/00 -0500, Michael wrote:

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There's a lot of metafictional content in _Return to the Whorl_, but it's very much in keeping with the metafictional content of the first two volumes--that is, an awareness by the author of the work that he is writing a work about his life, and also commentary by other hands upon that work. Gene Wolfe doesn't appear in it (at least, not that I noticed; Robert Borski is much better than I at spotting hidden Wolves in these works).

The character depicted on the cover of _Return_ is new to that volume, and has not been seen (or mentioned, I believe) previously.

I don't think the illustration looks particularly like Wolfe, but in my mental image of Wolfe, his glasses are an inseparable part of his head. And these days, he's got a walrus mustache, so he looks even less like that picture.

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