

RTTW spoilers, the Silken tongue

The Whorl list — 6 messages, 3 voices, 14 Feb 2001

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/1168>

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 14 Feb 2001, 21:50

Wombat and Adam go on thusly:

on 2/13/01 8:05 PM, Kevin J. Maroney at kmaroney at ungames.com wrote:

To me, the giveaway that there's a huge amount of Silk in "the protagonist" from the moment that Horn moves into his body is the amount of minutiae that he displays about the religion of Pas and the Children while on the _Whorl_.

Indeed; and not only his knowledge, but the sententiousness with which he dispenses it.

I know the conversation about "what do you call it when you read the future from the flight of birds?" is with Pig, and I believe he does a full exegesis of an excerpt from the Chrasomological Writings before the scene Michael discusses. The Chrasmomancy in particular strikes me as being unmistakably Silk; in fact, while reading the novel I felt it was somewhat out of character for Horn to be so Silkian. I should know better.....

Anyway, refresh my memory. Does the protagonist indulge in Chrasmomancy before he gives his eye to Pig? If so, I'd say that's strong evidence that he's largely Silk from the moment they merge.

He does, in Chapter 12, with Olivine, an exegesis that takes several pages. Very Silkian.

But you GUYS! HEY! Your sense of SILK is from the BOOK written by HORN and NETTLE! Crikies! There was even a little cliffhanger between volumes 1 and 2 of TBOTLS where it was established that lil' Horn could mimic Silk--and that was years before he invested the energy of writing the book.

You don't know Silk (none of us do!), you know litSilk.

Anybody, take some character you know something about, and now act like that character. Like any trekkie can do "Kirk," or "Spock." People can do "Kramer" or "Elaine" or "Numan." Or "Frank N. Furter" or "Magenta." Or "Elvis."

Got that part, okay: now on to the next part.

Imagine that the biggest Elvis fan in the world suddenly found himself transported into the nearly dead body ("whoa, that was a close one!") of Elvis himself. Do you think he couldn't fake being Elvis? Crank it up a notch: make that fan the guy who wrote all of Elvis's songs, and taught him how to move and sing--the guy who created the Elvis that everybody else saw and heard.

This has been an attempt to keep "what we know and how we know it" grounded in the text. Keep track of the frames.

=mantis=

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

Kevin J. Maroney — 15 Feb 2001, 11:12 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

At 09:50 PM 2/14/01 -0800, Mantis wrote:

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Of course he could. But if he doesn't know he's been transported into Elvis's body, why would he lapse into acting like Elvis for an extended time during a period when he's convinced that Elvis is alive *somewhere else*, and desperately wants people to help him find Elvis?

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Adam Stephanides — 15 Feb 2001, 10:44 · follows Kevin J. Maroney

on 2/15/01 5:50 AM, Michael Andre-Driussi at mantis at sirius.com wrote:

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No doubt Horn could impersonate Silk's manner of speaking. But why would he want to do so consistently? He doesn't know, or he denies, he's in Silk's body. He is aware that everybody thinks he's Silk, and wants to convince them he's not. It makes no sense that he would then go around acting like Silk. In any case, it's not just his manner of speaking, it's his character. The Horn of the journey to Pajarocu is not inclined to dispense wisdom at the drop of a hat, as the "Horn" on the Whorl is.

As for the distinction between Silk and litSilk, it's true we don't know the "real Silk," only litSilk. But we also know the litHorn of the trip to Pajarocu. And the "Horn" of the Whorl resembles litSilk much more closely than litHorn.

(I'll be writing a longer post replying to your earlier questions, but I wanted to answer this right away.)

--Adam

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 15 Feb 2001, 10:18 · follows Adam Stephanides

Kevin Maroney quoted and wrote:

At 09:50 PM 2/14/01 -0800, Mantis wrote:

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Of course he could. But if he doesn't know he's been transported into Elvis's body, why would he lapse into acting like Elvis for an extended time during a period when he's convinced that Elvis is alive *somewhere else*, and desperately wants people to help him find Elvis?

Okay, now we're getting somewhere!

The narrator must know that he isn't "Silk" (whether this is "oldSilk" or "mainframeSilk" or "litSilk," or some combination thereof, doesn't matter at the moment) but he must have some inkling that the Silk-he-is-not exists somewhere else (mainframe, for example, the place where the dead folk go).

I think that the narrator knows he is in Silk's body, but still this is something that is constantly being grappled with internally, as well as externally, since everybody he meets assumes that he is Silk. He acts like Silk for at least two broad reasons: first, because everybody he meets expects him to be Silk (and the first people have only known Silk, not litSilk); second, because he has always wanted to be more like Silk himself (fanboy, hellooo!).

Now, when the narrator strongly suspects that there is a Silk in Pig, obviously (according to the reasoning above) he would get very excited. Must get that Silk! But judging by the results, which happen before the first word of TBOTSS is written, the Silk he got wasn't the Silk he was looking for.

Still--the fact that a Silk was floating around incognito in the body of Pig means that it is quite possible that somewhere else the Silk he is looking for has downloaded into somebody else. The old wine in a new bottle.

Not to erase the delusional/Quixotic angle, since I enjoy a multiple layering, but just to outline the rational angle.

Note that one implication of what I'm saying is this: a series of interrupted histories. Horn knows nothing of what has happened on the Whorl since he left as a boy; Horn/Silk(body) knows

nothing of what has happened on the Whorl since Horn left as a boy (otherwise he would know about Silk's failure as ruler of Viron, etc.); post eye operation Silk/Horn/Silk knows nothing of what has happened on the Whorl since the scan was taken in TBOTLS (otherwise he would know all about Hyacinth's death).

Thus there is a big grey area centered on post-Exodus time in the Whorl. Good thing: then the character can venture forth into the Whorl and try to find out what happened, rather than just say "Oh drat!" and commit suicide (again?).

=mantis=

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Kevin J. Maroney — 15 Feb 2001, 17:02 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

At 10:18 AM 2/15/01 -0800, Mantis wrote:

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Yes. Mucor told him so.

I think that the narrator knows he is in Silk's body,

I think he doesn't, not for a very long time. The conversation between Pig and the shopkeeper underscores that. (Assuming it's a reliable reconstruction, and that Pig and the shopkeeper understand the protagonist, which of course they don't....)

Do you have any evidence to indicate that, at the time he lectures to Olivine, "the narrator" had decided/realized/admitted to himself that he was in Silk's body?

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 16 Feb 2001, 10:24 · follows Kevin J. Maroney

Kevin quoted and wrote:

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Do you have any evidence to indicate that, at the time he lectures to Olivine, "the narrator" had decided/realized/admitted to himself that he was in Silk's body?

None, alas! Mostly the result of impressions over the previous two books, impressions which seemed confirmed by a first reading of RTTW. I'll try to take notes on the next reading!

=mantis=

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