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The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 18 Feb 2001

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akt — 18 Feb 2001, 12:17

From: dd at Adobe.COM (David DiGiacomo)

Quadrifons is a cherub...

Thank you! I had no idea why Quadrifons appeared in the text, so this was very helpful

Why do you think that Quadrifons's name is not to be mentioned?

Well, hmm, there is no actual cherub with that name (I rely on Gustav Davidson's excellent -Dictionary of Angels-); it's a generic term which comes from the description in Ezekiel 10.14 which gives them 4 wings and 4 faces--the only one of a number of biblical references to do so; for example, Revelation 4.8 gives them 6 wings and many eyes (but that's a mad text anyway). Blake took the Ezekiel description for his -Four Zoas-. Other items of note: they're way older than Judaism--they go back to Assyrian-Chaldean-Babylonian times and may at first have been rather malevolent. Satan was the Numero Uno cherub before the fall. I don't suppose any of that helps, but you've got to admit it's interesting.

-alga

From: dd at Adobe.COM (David DiGiacomo)

Subject: Re: (whorl) Catching up continued

Date: Sat, 17 Feb 2001 17:02:48 -0800 (PST)

Finally finished all the posts I had avoided while reading RTW. The only

further question I have to add is

what happened to Mucor? Maytera Marble decided to return to the Whorl to

help finish Olivine, but she just casually abandons her granddaughter Mucor?

Marble says that Mucor is taking care of her, not vice versa, so she is not hurting Mucor by leaving.

During some of Horn/Silk's discussion and interactions with Mucor in the

Whorl I got the eerie feeling that Mucor had passed away on Blue.

Anyone

see any evidence to support this? or not?

No.

----- MESSAGE whorl.v012.n054.6 -----

From: BraveSaintCroix at aol.com
Subject: more RTTW questions
Date: Sat, 17 Feb 2001 20:03:37 EST
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="US-ASCII"
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit

Finished RTTW today and after that spent the evening catching up on posts on this list. Most of the questions I had were answered, or at least touched on, but I have a few that I thought didn't get enough attention.

1. Who was the man in a colorless robe on the top of the statue on Green with Jahlee? It was when Horn went back to search for her in the tower and ended up climbing the cliff and getting attacked by inhumans. And what happened up there? When I first read "colorless robe" I thought of the fuligin cloak of the torturers.

2. What do you think of Horn being an inhuman? I think the evidence Wolfe gives is too much to ignore. The fact that he hardly ever eats bothered me all through the book, especially when Hoof said he often pretended to eat and that the inhuman in the boat with them ate some potato soup. Also, Horn says something about a possible way he got to Green without an inhuman present that he didn't want to think about. There is definitely something there we're not seeing.

That's all for now. More to say, but I've been online too long.

-Steve

PS: Say what you may, my vote is that RTTW was AWESOME.

----- MESSAGE whorl.v012.n054.7 -----

From: Alex David Groce <Alex_Groce at gs246.sp.cs.cmu.edu>
Subject: Re: (whorl) RTTW spoilers, Delusional and/or Quixotic
Date: Sat, 17 Feb 2001 21:17:43 -0500
In-Reply-To: Your message of "Sat, 17 Feb 2001 15:54:11 PST."
<200102180013.f1l0Dra70679 at lists1.ba.best.com>

<snipped>

Nice post, mantis.

Note that there is also Nutria's reading: Horn isn't delusional, but his family & Remora (our editors) are.

I find the most convincing reading to be a mixture of the Quixotic and the delusional: Horn and Silk are both present in the body from the moment of the transfer from Green. Silk, however, is in a funk--while he contributes to the actions of Silkhorn, at first he does not wish to acknowledge himself as still alive. Equally, Horn doesn't want to admit to himself that he's "dead," but certainly can't say "I'm Silk now"--both because he's sane enough to know that he isn't the Silk that New Viron needs, even if he is the real Silk in some sense. He's also having a hard time admitting that Silk is in him wishing he were dead. The Long Sun narration makes it clear that the little suicide scene on top of the airship was traumatic for Horn. This is much worse.

The behavior ends up being very Silkish because both Horn (& the slowly emerging real Silk) view "book Silk" as a very good man. After all, though Horn invented, to some extent, "book Silk," where do we think he got his idea of what a good man is?

Remora doesn't drive Horn out as in an exorcism so much as force Silkhorn to acknowledge that by this point Horn has faded away--he can die now, because he hasn't failed, really. Silk has become willing to live by this point, but isn't willing to admit he's alive. Horn has become less and less essential, but cannot admit to himself that he is dead until Silk no longer needs him.

So, why, having become himself again, does Silk take off to return to the whorl?

As I see it, Silk sees that the two problems facing the colonists are not ones he can solve. p. 314 is the crucial point. First, Silk considers the government of New Viron. The _real Silk_, we know, gave up rulership in Viron once it became clear that he could not rule without forcing his will upon an unwilling populace. New Viron is in much worse state. "Silk would pray, of course." If prayer and the influence of "book Silk" are all (hardly nothing, I would say) he can do, he can do that as well from the Whorl, where he may really be needed. Also, remember that at this point it is mostly Silk running the show. Silk's home is the Whorl. He was willing to leave when it was the order of Pas and the Outsider, but even then he turned back for Hyacinth, and never left, though surely he had opportunities over the years. He is a stranger on Blue.

The second problem is that of the inhum, and again, it is the problem of evil. Indeed, despite his having discovered the humanity of the inhum, Silkhorn is still himself capable of murdering his daughter when she attacks Nettle. He knows enough to doubt that there is a "solution" to this problem other than the one above--for men to be better than they are.

--

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32

--

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----- MESSAGE whorl.v012.n054.8 -----

From: Jeffrey Meyers <jeffmeyers at earthlink.net>
Subject: Re: (whorl) Death of Jahlee
Date: Sat, 17 Feb 2001 22:02:17 -0600
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="US-ASCII"
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit
In-Reply-To: <200102171912.f1HJCu668310 at lists1.ba.best.com>

James Jordan <jbjordan at gnt.net> wrote:

I believe that among the broad subtexts of the series is that Silk
is like Jesus and Horn is a bit like Paul. Humans are the Jews, and
the
inhumi are the barbarians to whom Paul was sent.

.. . .

So, let's not be surprised if Jahlee's "sanctification" is
imperfect. Wolfe's characters are on the road to being better
people, but
they are never perfect!

I guess I don't see how the inhumi as a whole are "on the road to
being
better people." If the inhumi are Gentiles, why are so few of them
(possibly Krait and Jahle alone; would you also say Fava?)

"converted." If

the NT typology is to make some sense, I guess I would expect more
"conversions" among the "Gentiles." Maybe I'm pressing it too much.

But it

is a major feature of NT history that many Gentiles come into the
kingdom.

The inhumi, however, seem intractable. But maybe you're seeing these
"conversions" as typical. But I just can't help thinking that most,
if not

all of the inhumi on Blue turn on Horn/silk in the attack at the
wedding.

Of course, the last words of the book ("Good fishing!") seem to
indicate a

further missionary effort to other "Gentiles" undertaken by the Bride
(Nettle), the Holy Spirit (Oreb), and a representative of the old
world (the
old sybl).

Patera Bunny

----- MESSAGE whorl.v012.n054.9 -----

From: Michael Andre-Driussi <mantis at sirius.com>
Subject: (whorl) RTTW spoilers, crutch of Horn
Date: Sat, 17 Feb 2001 20:36:44 -0800
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="us-ascii"
References: Your message of "Sat, 17 Feb 2001 15:54:11 PST."
<200102180013.f1I0Dra70679 at lists1.ba.best.com>
In-Reply-To: <200102180242.f1I2gne71875 at lists1.ba.best.com>

Alex David Groce wrote:

Note that there is also Nutria's reading: Horn isn't delusional, but his family & Remora (our editors) are.

Right, that would be 0% Delusional for the narrator; the outsiders cannot grok it, but the Outsider can.

I find the most convincing reading to be a mixture of the Quixotic and the delusional: Horn and Silk are both present in the body from the moment of the transfer from Green. Silk, however, is in a funk--while he contributes to the actions of Silkhorn, at first he does not wish to acknowledge himself as still alive. Equally, Horn doesn't want to admit to himself that he's "dead," but certainly can't say "I'm Silk now"--both because he's sane enough to know that he isn't the Silk that New Viron needs, even if he is the real Silk in some sense.

He's

also having a hard time admitting that Silk is in him wishing he were dead. The Long Sun narration makes it clear that the little suicide scene on top of the airship was traumatic for Horn. This is much worse.

I agree with just about all of the material you posted (I would go on more about how, after all this build up of "natural king" stuff, the events of Gaon, and Viron before that, prove that there is no way Silk can do it right, etc.). I just had this sense that N was grasping at =all= straws (following rumors that Silk was in hotel; catch whatever comes out of Pig's eye; etc.) while he was on the Whorl in an attempt to better complete his mission. It didn't feel to me like he was entirely delusional in his Quixotic quest.

(The whole issue of psychic "fragments" separate from body and spirit might point to a tripart system, like body/soul/spirit. I don't know. But my intuitive model agrees with what Nutria said about how Silk's brainstuff is still there for N to use, just like his super-muscles are, even if

Silk's
spiritual essence is gone away.)

On to the new topic: if we can agree that "Horn is a crutch," and I
can
readily go along with that, then suddenly I find myself asking "why?"

It

is strange, because I went along with it in the book (it especially
seemed
"right" after the whole wooly "laying Cilinia to rest" thing), but at
the
moment it seems odd. As if Thecla suddenly imploded ala Master Ash.

Or

perhaps Jonas imploding within Miles as the news of Jolenta's death
gets to
him?

The "easy" answer is: well, Thecla was meant to be Severian's female
side,
his constant companion; she has no goal beyond that, she had no life
quest
that seeks completion, where completion leads to dissolution. But
Horn
completes his quest, and is now free to die? So his whole purpose was
to
be the crutch? (Granted, there's that powerful twin-theme again: one
dies,
the other is immortal.) Why not stay around? Unless such a state is,
er,
"a fate worse than death"?

(Note that you are in direct contradiction of Nutria here, since he
says
that Horn is becoming more like Silk rather than imploding. And I can
see
his reading, too, fwiw.)

(Eek, come to think of it . . . the equivalent of Thecla imploding
might
very well be that part in URTN where she appears in her own body, etc
. . .
hmmm.)

OTOH, if it is Horn back at New Viron, then what is the attempted
suicide-by-inhumi-attack, a sort of exorcism of dark Silk through
enactment
of the thing itself? (I mean, it hardly seems like the sort of thing
one
is going to do as one becomes "Silkified" . . . unless . . .) And
then,
having done that, N is a Horn/repared-Silk?

=mantis=

Sirius Fiction

Catalog and errata sheet at <http://www.sirius.com/~mantis/>

----- MESSAGE whorl.v012.n054.10 -----

From: "Endymion9" <endymion9 at mindspring.com>
Subject: More RTW thoughts
Date: Sat, 17 Feb 2001 23:42:54 -0600
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain;
charset="iso-8859-1"
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit

Just some general thoughts.

I thought RTW was the best conclusion to a Gene Wolfe series that I have read. Yes I had problems, the same problems I have at the end of any Wolfe story. I don't know everything I want to know. Like what happens to Sinew and his Trivaguante <sp?> wife. And other questions I've listed in other posts. But this is nothing new.

And I also wasn't thrilled that Krait died, Fava died, Jahlee died, Horn and Sinew never could patch things up, etc., but who is to say the story would have been better if they hadn't. Also, I kind of like when a story is unpredictable and doesn't just do what I expect. It's rare to be surprised when so many stories are just rehashes of previous work.

I just know I felt much more satisfied after reading RTW than I did after reading Citadel of the Autarch or Urth of the New Sun and Exiles of the Long Sun

Dennis/Endy
<http://home.mindspring.com/~endymion9/index.htm>

----- END whorl.v012.n054 -----

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