

pigs, Sheep & Wolves

The Whorl list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 21 Feb 2001

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/1210>

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Patrick O'Leary — 21 Feb 2001, 15:14

Fascinating stuff, buds.

As always I swing between being intimidated by the depth of your analysi

and annoyed by the cockamamie conclusions you sometimes leap to. But I'm always grateful to share this obsession.

Adam: Thank you for your lucid and sane comments. Your take on the ending is dead on, I believe. Silk lives. Horn has laid down his life. I can't think of any other way to read it.

Things I'd argue against:

1. Passilk does not infiltrate Silk in Pig's Post-Op scene. Yes, there is a monitor. But where do we see the evidence of this occurring? Does Silk behave differently after this scene?
2. Pig is not Tartaros. True, Both are blind. Pig was wounded so. Wasn't Tartaros born blind?
3. Pig is not a godling. Think of difference between the two: One an artificial being (a combo of chem and Super Talus, I'd say) and a three dimensional human character. If the godlings' mission is to proclaim the will of Passilk to the whorl does it make any sense for them to speak in an strange difficult to parse dialect like Pig, or the slow, easily understood child speak of the godling. Structurally, think of how awkward it is to have TWO godlings in the same place (Blood's palace). It lacks all the elegance and engineering soundness we find continually in Wolfe's fiction. It makes no sense to me.

On the issue of Wolfe's obscurity I see three alternatives:

1. Lazy and pretentious
2. Unconscious and sloppy
3. Deep and deliberate

I go for three (I doubt this surprises anyone).

Though I should add an amusing personal note. Wolfe has read and deeply appreciates John Clute's SF Weekly Review of RTTW. He wrote me that "I only wish I understood why Clute thinks those books so difficult." (Meaning the Short Sun Books) "It's a simple quest story with a fold."

I think he is being coy here and I told him so.

For me the most obscure parts of RTTW are the Scylla parts. After two reads I'm still not sure I really really get it.

Oh. And one last thing. I pay particular attention to the openings of Wolfe's books.

He usually plants important clues there.

Here's one I rediscovered on the first page of ON BLUE'S WATERS p. 13 (in the opening letter).

"There are many beds of hide."

Which I take to mean several things.

1. This is a work of multiple layers.
2. Many characters will be sleeping in each other.
3. People will cover and obscure themselves in other creatures' skins.

Fun, eh?

Patrick O'Leary

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

Kevin J. Maroney — 21 Feb 2001, 16:37 · follows Patrick O'Leary

At 03:14 PM 2/21/01 -0500, Patrick O'Leary wrote:

2. Pig is not Tartaros. True, Both are blind. Pig was wounded so. Wasn't Tartaros born blind?

Yes, and (reading between the lines) with a damaged visual cortex, so that he **can't** see.

3. Pig is not a godling. Think of difference between the two: One an artificial being (a combo of chem and Super Talus, I'd say)

Yes. I'm not sure *why* anyone assumed that the godlings are fleshy--did I miss something? (Well, obviously I missed something. Did I miss something germane to this question?)

Kevin Maroney | Unplugged Games
kmaroney at ungames.com | (212) 777-1190

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Jim Jordan — 21 Feb 2001, 16:01 · follows Kevin J. Maroney

Though I should add an amusing personal note. Wolfe has read and deeply appreciates John Clute's SF Weekly Review of RTTW.

Well, that being the case, I must bow and admit that Horn is dead and Silk lives. I was never certain, but I thought a case should be made for the Horn Lives standpoint. I'll have to rethink a few categories...

Patera Nutria

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