

Pig as godling

The Whorl list — 3 messages, 2 voices, 21 Feb 2001

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/1214>

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Robert Borski — 21 Feb 2001, 17:01

Patrick O'Leary having written:

<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.>

If I read you correctly, Patrick, you seem to be denying the possibility of even small godlings in general, whereas Wolfe at least mentions them twice.

The first comes in OBW: "It may be that our gods did not come among us except by enlightenment and possession because they were too large to do so; even the godlings that they send among the people now are, **for the most part,* immense.*" [Italics mine.]

The second mention is more implied than cited, but comes courtesy of the corn farmer and his wife. When the former suggests that the source of Horn's wounds may be a godling, the latter avers that "a godling would have killed him," only to have her husband further amend this to, "**Big one** would've." [Ditto.]

Think Chekhov's gun here. Why have two differently-sized godlings if you're not going to use them? It belies the very elegance and engineering soundness you cite. Or do you have another candidate in mind for a smaller godling? Only Pig of all the characters we meet is intermediate in size, if scaled to more human dimensions. And I can't see Wolfe being this coincidentally sloppy.

As for Pig's dialect being too difficult to parse for a godling, you're being too parochial. There are many dialects and tongues on the Whorl. Surely, the godling who's sent among, say, the Whorl equivalent of Dorp would communicate in the fractured yoda-speak they use. Pig--who claims he's been on the road for over a year and is thus far from home--might therefore be quite easily understood in cities and towns that speak his same dialect.

Robert Borski

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

William Ansley — 22 Feb 2001, 00:09 · follows Robert Borski

At 5:01 PM -0600 2/21/01, Robert Borski wrote:

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Wow, Robert! This is most impressive. Wolfe mentioned godlings in OBW and I had totally forgotten it until you mentioned it. Could you give the page number for this passage, please?

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I agree with your reasoning here completely, Robert.

Wolfe has done this kind of thing before, too. Remember the the "baby undine" in TUotNS? Her name was Idas. She was masquerading as a tall man, but she was really just a young girl.

And you have left out what, for me, is the clincher. The ears! Godlings have "bestial, pointed ears" (RttW, p. 53). When Horn refuses to allow Pig to return to Blue with him, Pig first assumes that it is because Horn had seen his ears ("Seen me h'ears" is what Pig says on p. 372.) What in the whorl can this mean except that Pig **is** a small godling. (Now exactly why Pig assumes that this would make Horn refuse to take him along, I can't say.) If Wolfe doesn't intend this reading, why does he give the godlings pointed ears? It seems, to me, like an atypical touch for him. What else could have been special about Pig's ears?

Plus we are told that godlings have claws on p. 139, and Pig's nails are described as claw-like several times. You take take this as evidence for some sort of Pig-Babbie identity; I just think it is another "Pig is a little godling" clue.

Now I don't buy the Pig-Tartaros or Pig-Babbie connection and I don't think Pig killed Silk, but I am right with you on "Pig is a godling."

Hey guys! If Robert and I can agree on something, how can anyone else doubt it?

William Ansley

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

Robert Borski — 22 Feb 2001, 00:52 · follows William Ansley

The unusually-gracious-of-late William Ansley having written:

<Wow, Robert! This is most impressive. Wolfe mentioned godlings in OBW and I had totally forgotten it until you mentioned it. Could you give the page number for this passage, please?>

p. 157, paragraph 6.

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<Hey guys! If Robert and I can agree on something, how can anyone else doubt it?>

So maybe pigs do sometimes fly, eh, William? Now if I can just get you to consider the notion that all godlings are under the control of Mainstream, and ask you why you think Wolfe might have chosen to make Pig a godling as opposed to someone, say, like Auk (although the two do bear a fair amount of similarity), then perhaps we can get away from the usual applied sarcasm and have a genuine discussion.

Robert Borski

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