

FTP Pig; Clute's Review; Not Boredom

The Whorl list — 4 messages, 4 voices, 22 Feb 2001

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David Lebling — 22 Feb 2001, 09:36

1) Pig(Passilk) -> monitor -> Silk(Horn)? No.

From: "Patrick O'Leary" <poleary at sloth.cecom.com>

<<1. Passilk does not infiltrate Silk in Pig's Post-Op scene. Yes, there is a monitor.>>

From: "Dan'I Danehy-Oakes" <ddanehy at siebel.com>

<<4. At the West Pole, the scanned Silk reenters the body

-- *not* from Pig, but from the glass.>>

I agree with Patrick here. I've read that scene three or four times now, and I don't see anything that indicates Passilk enters Silk/Horn's mind at this point. There is no change in Silk/Horn's (or Pig's!) demeanor or style of speech, no subtle hint, no nothing.

Some have argued that Passilk leaves Pig and then enters Silk/Horn. Bah. Again, no evidence in favor.

Against, there is the fact that Horn talks about how if he had brought Pig to Blue, he wouldn't have failed in his mission. When gods de-possess humans, they leave. If Passilk went to Silk/Horn, he'd be gone from Pig, and I think Silk/Horn would know, if only subconsciously, that such a transfer had happened.

2) Horn Lives!

<<From: Jim Jordan <jbjordan at gnt.net>

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...>>

I just reread Clute's review and I don't see where it says Horn is dead. "Enfolded," yes, they "write each other," yes. The closest he comes to saying Horn is dead is this: "By spending something like his life (but of course he has been something like dead for most of the trilogy) Horn succeeds in his quest and bids us farewell."

I don't think this plus "deeply appreciates" is enough to declare Horn dead. Horn is dead in exactly the sense that Thecla, the old Autarch, and Pas himself are dead: they exist as remnant identities in another medium. Horn indeed bids us farewell at the end of RttW, but so does Silk.

3) Boredom?

From: <akt at attglobal.net>

<<It seems to me that, if GW should want to write another book about these people (my guess is not, because he seems so tired of them at this point--but you never know). it will be important to the plot to have the dual Silk/Horn interface. Like having Windows and Linux on the same machine.>>

(I deeply appreciate this comment, because I do have Windows and Linux on the same box.)

But seriously, I take the disquisition by Hoof on how scary Silk was, and Severian's comment that no one would believe him if he wrote about Silk, as a way of expressing how hard it is for Wolfe to write about this character. He may not be so much bored with him as exhausted by him. When you come right down to it, would you rather spend an evening with Silk or with Horn? Wolfe has spent a long time with this scary guy in his head.

Which brings up another thought. All of the "Sun" books are concerned to a greater or lesser extent with authorship, writing, publishing, imagining, and most importantly, the effect of having someone else's personality stuck in your head for long periods. These are all the chief day-to-day concerns of the writer, aside from where the next cup of coffee and next paragraph are coming from. I'd love to see someone scan the books to pull these out as a coherent essay. It would be fascinating. As Horn becomes more Silk-like over time, has Wolfe? Wasn't there a reported comment by Wolfe's wife Rosemary that Silk was the character most like Wolfe himself?

Dave Lebling
aka vizcacha

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

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 22 Feb 2001, 08:41 · follows David Lebling

Vizcacha wrote:

I agree with Patrick here.

On further thought, so do I. There is no real indicator that (Pas)Silk downloads into Silkhorn at any time. My reasoning was that (1) Silk's spirit was dying, (2) Horn takes over, (3) Afterwards, Silk's spirit seems to be active. But, thinking about it, I believe Silkhorn makes a few of the same kind of confusions before the West Pole as he does after (though I could be wrong; I don't have my copy here at work). What's certain, though, is that there is no clear moment when it happens or could happen.

Though... Given the provenance of that scene, would the twins and their wives have known? I dunno. At any rate, there is no direct evidence for a download, of which I am aware.

What is clear, though, is that the reason it was so critical to get Pig his e'en, or at least one, was so Silk-in-possession could reintegrate with his Mainframe self -- the reason the narrator says (in OBW? IGJ?) that he couldn't have left Pig blind.

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James Jordan — 22 Feb 2001, 15:37 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

At 09:36 AM 2/22/2001 -0500, vizcacha wrote:

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Well, I'm happier with such a view. The thought that Horn's last words are "I should not have come back", followed by his departure from this world, makes the trilogy into a real tragedy. Also, I don't understand why Silk, who has never met Seawrack, would want her along on the way to the Whorl (unless all these extended speculations about Hyacinth, Kypris, etc. are valid -- but I'm a bit dubious about them).

Nutricious

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Alex David Groce — 22 Feb 2001, 17:59 · follows James Jordan

Nutria said:

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in response to vizchaza:

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I agree, but not completely. Severian contains multitudes, but I at least don't think that we can say "Severian is Thecla" in quite the same sense we can say "Severian is Severian." And certainly the more ancient personalities within him are less essential to the Severian who writes BOTNS than Severian or Thecla.

I think that until Remora's "exorcism," we have a situation analogous to Severian going through the rest of CLAW, SWORD, and CITADEL after the feast with Vodalus saying "I am Thecla. I am not Severian." The first sentence is true, but far from completely true, and the second sentence is false. Mind you, I think that though Severian is Thecla, it is also legitimate to say that Thecla is dead. The Thecla in Severian is (like the Horn in Silk) both something more and something less than a ghost. Horn is dead, though something of him lives on in the man he died seeking. Horn can properly fall into the role of a Theclaish presence once Silk is willing to acknowledge his own identity.

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

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