

Posession

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 28 Mar 2001

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/1295>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

Michael Straight — 28 Mar 2001, 09:11

Yay! Finally finished RTTW and wading through the archives and can post some of my thoughts. Y'all can put me in the camp that thinks this series is fabulous--I don't know if I can say which of the three books I liked best, so I'll just say I really like them all, but I do have a few quibbles to go with the multitude of questions.

The oddest thing for me in this series is that Horn/Silk has a readilly available model for understanding and explaining to others what has happened to him. Even if the end of RTTW convinces us it is the wrong model, I still don't see why Horn/Silk wouldn't use it. I mean posession, of course, which Horn, Silk, and many of the folks he wishes would stop calling him Silk have abundant experience with: Mucor, Mainframe Gods posessing people and animals, Mora et. al. posessing people via dreams, and what may offer an even closer parallel, bits of Maytera Rose in there with Ms. Marble.

Given all this, it is astounding to me that Horn's persona, finding himself in someone else's body, would not immediately see this as some form of posession, or that when trying to convince people who he is, he wouldn't explain what has happened to him in those terms. Why wouldn't he say to Calde Mint or Horn's family, "I am Horn, this is not my body, but my spirit has been transferred into this body, let me prove it's me by telling you a bunch of stuff only Horn would know." Mint and Hoof and Hide and Nettle all ought to have a much easier time believing this than John Travolta's wife in Face/Off.

Furthermore, in all the cases of posession we know of, the personality of the host body is still in there somewhere. Horn shows particular concern for Hide's fiancée when Mora et.al. are posessing her, and seems only partly relieved when she claims to have befriended this legion. Yet he shows no concern for the persona in whose body he's trespassing. Perhaps this is more of the Silky "do as I say not as I do" that others have noticed, but it still seems out of character.

I was going to concede that the end shows that Horn was not really posessing Silk's body, that it was really Silk all along with maybe some memories and influence by Horn (at a minimum, Horn is the influence behind Silk writing the Book of the Short Sun). But isn't this exactly like Silk posessing Pig? Pig is still himself, but he's been changed by Silk, shares some of Silk's emotions, and Silk sometimes influences his actions.

So why doesn't Horn/Silk understand and explain himself this way?

-Rostrum

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