

more grist for the "enhanced Horn hypothesis"

The Whorl list — 4 messages, 4 voices, 15 Oct 1999

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Dan Parmenter — 15 Oct 1999, 07:42

Last night I was re-reading the passage in OBW where Horn visits Marble and Mucor. Maytera Marble alludes to Hammerstone's deep fondness for Patera Incus, which as I recall, was a small "improvement" that Incus made, he being of the "hacker priest" class. A paragraph or two later, Horn laments the fact that the BOOK OF SILK doesn't convey just how great Silk really was. Hmmm! This may be a red herring, but given its textual proximity to Marble's observation and the fact that we have ample evidence of how human "software" can be re-jiggered by the will of the gods, it wouldn't surprise me to discover that Horn's perception of Silk has been enhanced.

Given the Wolfean "unreliable narrator," it makes you start to wonder if the Silk of the BOOK OF SILK is something of an exaggeration, which would certainly fit in with the Christ parallels. Silk is portrayed as a kind of Father Brown, but perhaps in "real life" he was more of a Father Ted.

Another random observation: "Passilk" immediately made me think of "Tashlan" from C.S. Lewis' THE LAST BATTLE.

Lex

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

Alex David Groce — 15 Oct 1999, 12:10 · follows Dan Parmenter

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I'm a bit confused here--fits in with the Christ parallels in that Silk couldn't possibly be that Christ-like, or fits in that the _gospels_ are exaggerations? I would think the first would be a more likely approach for Wolfe than the second, but even then, there's Silk's Enlightenment (which works two ways--(A) it might make Silk better than he would be and (B) maybe he got Enlightened because he had a tendency to be a Very Good person anyway). Also going against the exaggeration theory is that other people who knew Silk very well (Marble, Mucor, etc.) seem to have seen him as an extraordinarily good man.

I think a telling note in LONG SUN is that Horn is generally noticed much more than Nettle--is Nettle even listed as "Author of the BOOK OF SILK" in the Persons, Places & Things section in Exodus? It seems her role is secondary in the actual composition--scribe and organizer (given OBW, there is no telling what order Horn might have put things in...)

Horn does mimic Silk beautifully long before any possibility of possession or anything, so as usual in LONG SUN, any possession is well in keeping with his original tendencies.

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

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Jim Jordan — 15 Oct 1999, 17:33 · follows Alex David Groce

At 12:10 PM 10/15/99 -0400, you wrote:

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Well, he's Brown in the first book, not much in the latter three.

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Some kind of "divine election" is involved in his whole life, as well as the "scientific predestination" that resulted in his "virgin birth." I'm not sure how Horn as narrator could construe the whole flow of events to make them more gospellike than they in fact are. We certainly cannot assume that Horn had access to Luke, Acts, and the book of Revelation to use as templates. That would seem to be the doing of the Outsider and, behind him, Wolfe.

Also going against the exaggeration theory is that other people who knew Silk very well (Marble, Mucor, etc.) seem to have seen him as an extraordinarily good man.

One would like to know more about his mother, who, given Wolfe's beliefs, would have to be a kind of virtuous Mary-figure.

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Certainly the "imitator all along" business runs against any "special enhancement" view, and perhaps accounts for everything. Horn's ignorance might account for the seemingly truncated character of some sequences in the narrative. On the other hand, he seems to know a lot of things that it's hard to see how he could have learned -- not just details, but whole event-sequences.

Nutria

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Michael Straight — 18 Oct 1999, 08:06 · follows Jim Jordan

On Fri, 15 Oct 1999, Jim Jordan wrote:

We certainly cannot assume

that Horn had access to Luke, Acts, and the book of Revelation to use as templates. That would seem to be the doing of the Outsider and, behind him, Wolfe.

Or vice versa.

-Rostrum

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