

Corn Silk?

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 16 Nov 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/732>

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William H. Ansley — 16 Nov 1999, 22:58

"Roberson, John" <RobersonJ at bek.com> (Ram) wrote (back on 5 Nov 1999):

Once again, Gene is playing identity games with us regarding Horn. Yes, he's definitely been back to the Long Sun Whorl after being hijacked to Green and my impression is, as a reminiscing narrator from the future, looking back, he'll lead us through his adventures on Green in IGJ and then write about his one-and-only trip back to the Whorl in RTTW. He's dropped the hint in OBW to the effect that a surgeon talked about "Pas-silk", intimating that Silk's physical body had Pas' (Typhon program's) head grafted on it in the "real world" during his stay on the LS Whorl. He also mentioned that he was pretty sure Silk was scanned into mainframe and potentially merged with the Pas program as Kypris suggested, in the "virtual world". Horn also affects Silk's attitudes frequently, dresses in augur's robes, and is apparently mistaken for Silk by Oreb and occasionally refers to himself as though he's Silk. So...I get the distinct impression that, unable to leave the LS Whorl, the Silk program had Horn look into the monitor at it and transferred some of Silk's essence into him, "possessing" him to the extent of giving him some of Silk's identity. This would be the only way Silk could provide New Viron and Blue with his leadership (or the leadership of someone possessing---no pun intended---similar abilities) without actually leaving the LS Whorl. This would explain Horn's references.

and later (16 Nov 1999):

1. As mentioned before in this column, there are numerous cases of identity confusion with Silk, on Horn's part, after he returns from the Long Sun Whorl. There's also mention of what we'd suspected for a long time: the possibility of Silk being scanned into Mainframe and probably merged with the Pas program (as well as mention of a surgeon who has perhaps grafted a Pas-Silk in the physical world?). Could Horn's identity problems result from the Pas-Silk amalgam program having transferred some of Silk's identity into Horn via "possession", in a similar way to that which turned Maytera Mint into the "Sword of Echidna"? This might have been the program Silk's only way of sending "Silk" to New Viron as a leader. This would explain the identity confusion.

Ram,

Don't feel bad that there was little response to your earlier posting; this list has been quite dead, considering a new Wolfe book is out. I am not sure why; perhaps we are all waiting, breathless, to see if Wolfe is going to be able to keep all these balls in the air, while adding several new ones and then catch them all safely without letting us see where some of them go or quite how he does it.

I think your "Silk program downloaded into Horn" hypothesis is good as far as it goes, and something like this probably happened, but it doesn't explain the apparent physical

transformation of Horn into a simulicrum of Silk.

Fortunately "Kieran Cleary" <kierannwn at tinet.ie> has done all the work for me, so I'll just quote his post:

EVIDENCE OF A METAMORPHOSIS

1. "Marrow is...balder even than I was then." [p.21]
2. "At thirty-five, only a little taller, thick bodied and nearly bald.." [p.65]
3. "My own height...was three cubits and two hands at that time - a good deal less than it is now." [p.196]
4. "...explaining that I...was half blind." [p.225]
5. "Yet they cheered for the one-eyed man with white hair." [p.289]
6. "Saw my own reflection...wild white hair and empty socket, lined and worried old face." [p.281]

Points 1 and 3 seem most telling to me. Horn seems to have grown considerably taller and less bald since his trip to _The Whorl_. I believe there is a passaged where Horn talks about his bad ankle, as well. (As for the missing eye, I have my own thoughts on that, which you can read in my post, "An eye for an eye?" on 19 Oct 1999 in the archives.

This makes it seem as if Horn's mind/program has been transferred to Silk's (discarded?) body. Well, it will undoubtedly be much more complicated than this.

William Ansley

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