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The Whorl list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 22 Dec 1999

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Paul C Duggan — 22 Dec 1999, 08:48

Horn isn't even fully grown then (or is he?). Yet OBW states that Horn has grown quite noticeably (I can't find the figure he gives -- it is in cubits, which confuses the issue further, but I think to recall a good 6

What if Blue has lighter gravity than the whorl?

Paul

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

Alice Turner — 22 Dec 1999, 19:21 · follows Paul C Duggan

The hypothesis that Horn is actually in Silk's body is appealing; yet it seems contradicted by the very beginning of NtLS:

"With a slight shock of insight, Silk realized [...] that Horn's [...]

eyes

were very nearly level with his." (p.15)

Horn isn't even fully grown then (or is he?). Yet OBW states that Horn has grown quite noticeably (I can't find the figure he gives -- it is in cubits, which confuses the issue further, but I think to recall a good 6 inches were implied). Perhaps (gasp!) Wolfe is being inconsistent, perhaps this isn't Silk's body, or perhaps I'm just hopelessly confused. Any thoughts?

Yves, it's awfully confusing, and deliberately so, but consistent with Wolfe's deliberate confusions in much of his writing. Nevertheless, that's a good catch of yours, and it's a slip on Wolfe's part, for he does imply in OBW that the "Silk" body is considerably, maybe even a head, taller than the "Horn" body. In OBW the evidence eventually becomes pretty strong that Horn's spirit does indeed inhabit Silk's body, though.

As for etymologies: the "hus" seems unique to Blue; nothing in English (the "hus" of husband and other words refers to "house") remarks it. "Felwolf" seems pretty clear, a colonist's word, with the old "fell" meaning "dreadful" or "terrible." Breakbull and leatherskin, as you say, seem descriptive. But mightn't colonists use old, familiar words for new animals? American "Indians?" It's unlikely (to me) that elephants were stocked on the Whorl, but books were, and the words are useful. In TBOTNS "olifants" and "mamoths" might have been chosen to describe these new beasts, but here (and earlier in TBOTSS) I think we have a new translator <g>.

-alga

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