

Horn's Authorship 1.1

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 07 Feb 1997

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Doug Eigsti — 07 Feb 1997, 09:32

This is a revision of my previous posting. I had to correct some glaring errors from the first release. Changes are in [brackets].

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Ever since I learned that Horn penned the "Book of Silk" I have been on the lookout to see if the story is consistent with his writing perspective. I think it is. I have, so far, collected information from the first two volumes. Wolfe has Horn drop some cues in the scenes with the two fishing boats on Lake Limna, the first with Silk at the end of LAKE and the second with Auk at the beginning of CALDE.

Silk's rescue by Captain [Scup] leaves him lying on a pile of nets. The narrator describes the scene using only Silk's vocabulary: "a rope connected the long stick (Silk could not recall its name, if he had ever known it) that spread the sail". Later, with Auk, he describes a similar scene freely using the nautical terms "halyard" (the rope), III p 25.-1, and "yard" (the stick), III p 27.2. What are we to make of these narrational irregularities? The parenthetical phrase could be evidence consistent with a writer reconstructing events based on personal interviews, in this case with Silk, for his story. Our narrator refrains from using terms his witness did not use in his account. Later he applies them correctly because his eye-witness, Auk, was more fluent in nautical terms. Wolfe has changed narrational perspective before, for instance with Musk or Marble, but this time he gives us a clue that he is not using conventional limited 3rd person narration.

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Horn has a way of working his name into the story in flattering ways even when the character Horn is not in a scene:

I p.15.-7 - I (Silk) know that whenever I need you I can call on you (Horn), and that you'll do all that you can do without counting the cost.

I p. 204.-1 - I should have Horn - he's quite artistic - and some of the older students paint the front of the manteion.

II p. 13.1 - Horn, the tallest boy in the palaestra...

II p. 19.3 - You imitated me so well that for a while I actually thought that your voice was my own; it was like hearing myself.

II p. 23.-4 - It (Horn's toy marionette) had strings, and if you did them right you could make him walk and bow. (Puppet symbolism is [prevalent in] many of Wolfe's stories)

II p. 111.-3 - Horn's toy (Chenille's movement under the influence of Mucor, reminded Silk of a marionette).

II p. 286.5 - Horn, the best player we have...

II p. 320.2 - Running at thrice the speed even a fleet boy like Horn could have managed.

II p. 347.1 - I can have Horn or one of the other boys bring them back.

[III p. 95.2 - ...planning to have Horn and some of the other boys...]

One might, at first, think that Silk is just fond of Horn. These references take on a different cast seen from the perspective of Horn's authorship. I see these as cameos by the author.

=Talon=

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Questions or problems to whorl-owner at lists.best.com