

First Impressions of IGJ (SPOILERS)

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 15 Jul 2000

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Adam Stephanides — 15 Jul 2000, 11:17

These are just a few scattered impressions gleaned from a quick first reading. Although you don't want to read this message if you want to come to IGJ absolutely fresh, I've tried to avoid giving away any real secrets, in case someone reads it by accident. Besides, why would you want to learn IGJ's mysteries from me, rather than Wolfe? Bear in mind also that I've only read the book once; as usual with Wolfe, I'll probably have to read it a second time to figure out what's really going on (if then).

1. The book is quite different than I had expected from reading OBW and knowing the titles of the other two books. It's not the story of the Green leg of Horn's quest for Silk in the same way that OBW was the story of the Blue leg of Horn's quest, although we do learn about Horn's time on Green.
2. On the other hand, the book is probably what you'd expect from the middle book of a trilogy--i. e. leaving most of the questions left by the first book unresolved, although answering some, while adding a few new ones. It's also like the middle book of a trilogy in that it seems to meander somewhat, though of course what seems meandering now may prove supremely relevant once we've read Return to the Whorl.
3. While IGJ was absorbing as a story, I found it much less emotionally involving than OBW. Horn's strong passions in the first book--his love of Seawrack, hatred of Sinew, love-hate for Krait, and longing for Nettle--are all muted in IGJ, and nothing really takes their places.
4. I found it harder to follow the story here than in OBW. This is partly because the plot is more complicated, partly because there is no strong narrative thread like Horn's quest for Pajarocu in OBW, and partly for another reason which I'm afraid it might give too much away to reveal.
5. The question of the relationship between humans and inhumi dominates IGJ, even more so than OBW. It is the main theme of IGJ.
6. The most enigmatic hint which has been dropped about IGJ on this list is true, and the way it is true makes the similar hint about RETURN plausible. (I'm being cagy for the benefit of those who missed these hints and prefer it that way.)

--Adam

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