

Digest whorl.v010.n138

The Whorl list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 24 Jul 2000

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/873>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

akt — 24 Jul 2000, 20:16

Said Wombat, entirely correctly:

Remember that Silk was genetically programmed to be an exceptional leader.
Once Horn took over Silk's body, he apparently gained that ability, too,
which is why the Gaonese made him Rajan, swore eternal loyalty to him, and
so forth.

Before his "death", Horn can't buy a break. After his rebirth, he's a demigod. Whatever genes Silk had, they're the pure product.

Indeed. And there's the extraordinary physical prowess, the ability with a sword. The DNA in the physical body took care of that.

But, too, Horn has been touched by the angels (and I do realize how revoltingly prime-time TV this sounds). They have given him the ability to bond with an inhuma to complete "astral travel" and to do what seems like "magic tricks" with his sword etc. when he is there. I think that Horn/Silk/ [maybe Sev too?] can do some magic tricks even when *not* in projection, though one of you completists will have to prove it since I'm comatose.

-alga

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

Josh Levitan — 25 Jul 2000, 06:47 · follows akt

SPOILER SPACE
SPOILER SPACE
SPOILER SPACE
SPOILER SPACE
SPOILER SPACE
SPOILER SPACE
SPOILER SPACE
SPOILER SPACE
SPOILER SPACE
SPOILER SPACE
SPOILER SPACE
SPOILER SPACE
SPOILER SPACE
SPOILER SPACE
SPOILER SPACE

Alex David Groce wrote:

1. The inhumi's secret (maybe) becomes a little clearer, in some

aspects: Krait's _mother_ drank from Sinew, and I believe it may be that when the inhumis spawn their children take their spirit (in some sense) from (a particular, I assume) victim of the parent.

I don't think that's the case. I do think it has become a bit clearer, although not crystal clear yet. And unfortunately, all evidence seems to point to the "Do Unto Others Theory" as being extremely likely to being "the secret."

5. The parallels with Severian are growing stronger and more interesting: (1) Horn(/Silk) is now "accidentally" enacting sacraments (the Eucharist at the Neighbors' table is my favorite scene from IGJ); (2) he has his own sword; (3) he's actually been mistaken for a torturer (we're reminded that a Patera's costume is not unlike that of a torturer).

And that he seemingly subconsciously reshapes his black sword into a Torturer's sword, presumably because of the aspects of Severian/the Conciliator/The Outsider that were part of Silk and are now merged with Horn.

Fernando Q. Gouvea <fqgouvea at colby.edu>

I haven't made up my mind about this one... Is Wolfe saying that *all* inhumis have essentially human spirits, or that some get to that point after extensive (and friendly) contact with humans? Or is contact with *Silk* necessary? (After all, we have only two points of evidence...)

The inhumis seem to be spiritual (as well as physical) chameleons. One might conjecture that they are all semi-human in spirit, but the slave masters in Green wouldn't be very clearly human while the ones who live in Blue are closer.

I think it's a combination of things. One, their spirits are at least partially comprised of whatever they're feeding on. When Jahlee(? I've had about five hours of sleep in the past few days, so my memory's a little hazy at this point, and a marathon reading session didn't help, but I'm pretty sure it was Jahlee and not Fava) is asked by Horn what the inhumis who fed on the Neighbors would have been like, she says "Wonderful," or something to that effect. Also, I believe that both Fava and Jahlee are striving to be good "people," to overcome their inherently bad nature, like Severian (and Silk and Horn, for that matter), so that their true spirits are human or very close to it, rather than reptilian in nature.

Another question: if the inhumis eventually become close copies of those they prey on, shouldn't the inhumis be fighting among themselves now? After all, this characteristic of humanity is strongly emphasized in the book.

Great question...

Alga wrote:

Subject: Does Horn Know He is Silk?

I think he does and he doesn't. Horn practically worshipped Silk as a boy, wrote a book about him, has invested much of his life in perpetuating his myth and doesn't feel up to "walking in his shoes." He knows that it is his--Horn's--personality in this body, however much Oreb may squawk. Nevertheless, parts of Silk are left, just as you can never erase a program completely from your computer.

It's also pretty apparent that he knows he's in Silk's body. The people in Gaon thought he was Silk and that's why they made him their ruler; people on cities all over Blue and Green think he's Silk; Oreb calls him Silk, etc. He makes disingenuous comments that he's not Silk, that Oreb's confused, etc. However, this is clearly meant in the spiritual sense, and I don't think he's

entirely right there. Horn spends a great deal of time in OBW talking about how he's the only one who doesn't know where Silk is. And we know why now -- as the female neighbor said, his spirit was dying and she puts him in Silk's body. But, even though Horn seems to have picked up some incredible powers that Silk/Severian/The Conciliator had, he doesn't think he is Silk. And, in a sense he's not, exactly, so he's truthful when he says he isn't. He's also a humble person, and doesn't think he can measure up to Silk, even though his personality has become merged with Silk/Pas/The Outsider/The Conciliator/The Autarch/Severian and he is measuring up.

Nicholas Gevers wrote:

I've mentioned this before, but now that many people have read IGJ, perhaps I can get more comment: I strongly believe that Horn's visit to Nessus takes place at the same time as the opening chapter of THE SHADOW OF THE TORTURER. Clue: Horn and company need to be guided into the Citadel, so the guard at the Citadel's gate, Badour, abandons his post to accompany them; when Severian and his friends try to return to the Matachin Tower in Chapter One of SHADOW, they find the guard gone, with no explanation for his absence. Very probably, Horn missed meeting the apprentice Severian by only a short time. I should add that in his NOVA EXPRESS interview (1998), Wolfe said that THE BOOK OF THE SHORT SUN would "take us into the world of Severian's childhood"; it seems certain that just this has happened.

Thanks so much, Nick. I felt this, but couldn't put my finger on it. They're in Nessus right before the Sun goes out. The Duko recognizes his house, but it's collapsed and has been for some time, so the Colony ship is long gone. The people that Horn and company encounter, the guard, the omophage, the lochage, are those from Severian's time. I wonder why Horn didn't encounter Severian, though. Severian certainly seemed to encounter himself often enough in one form or another throughout TBOTNS.

And now something of my own...

The only complaints that I have about IGJ are due to Wolfe's insanely good writing ability. For a book entitled "In Green's Jungles," we get very little of Green's jungles. He continues to hint around (maddeningly) the Inhumis secret. And, other than the very brief scene we get when the Neighbor female puts his spirit in Silk's body, we get nothing at all, really, about the Whorl. It's gonna be a long seven months until the final book...

I was also a bit curious why Horn screws around with Hide so much. You'd think a loving father would tell his son who he is rather than wait for him to figure it out... That puzzled me a bit.

Narwhal

Alex David Groce — 25 Jul 2000, 08:29 · follows Josh Levitan

Narwhal said:

I was also a bit curious why Horn screws around with Hide so much. You'd think a loving father would tell his son who he is rather than wait for him to figure it out... That puzzled me a bit.

I think it's the same reason why the Neighbors won't tell Horn about their gods: it's better if he comes to figure it out for himself (with some hints).

That the Neighbors aren't completely forthcoming seems not so much to suggest (as Adam speculated) that they believe each race should stick to its own gods as that they believe the Outsider (by whatever name they know Him) is in the process of revealing Himself to Horn as it is, and that it isn't their place to, say, disillusion him about Pas.

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

--

Alex David Groce (agroce+ at cs.cmu.edu)

Ph.D. Student, Carnegie Mellon University - Computer Science Department

8112 Wean Hall (412)-268-3066

<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~agroce>

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