

# Digest whorl.v011.n002

The Whorl list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 30 Jul 2000

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Ian Smith — 30 Jul 2000, 17:24

Hi, I'm new to the list contribution-wise, although I've been listening (& learning) for a while now. Finally my copy of IGJ has arrived, and I've been able to read all the recent posts, so I thought it might be worth asking a question which I don't think anyone has got around to discussing yet.

No-one seems to have queried yet the reason for the sudden change in Horn between the first two volumes. At the end of OBW we leave Horn still wallowing to some extent in self-loathing, still questioning whether he should be writing his book. At the start of IGJ this has disappeared, and throughout he confines himself to minor self-deprecatory remarks (very much in the manner of Silk...). As the time lapse between the end of writing the end of OBW and the start of OGJ is purportedly very short (I think there are hints that it is only around 2 days?) what has caused this transformation? Could it have something to do with the mysterious encounter in the woods before Horn meets brother and sister?

"I found him in the forest, sitting in the dark under the trees. I could not see him, it was too dark to see anything. But I knelt beside him, and lay my head upon his knee, and he comforted me."(OBW p.378)

At first I thought this was another neighbor encounter, but in IGJ Horn says he hasn't encountered them since they moved him to a new body. It could also be a particularly obtuse dream sequence, I suppose. Any ideas?

Ian

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

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William Ansley — 01 Aug 2000, 00:09 · follows Ian Smith

At 6:24 PM +0100 7/30/00, Ian Smith wrote:

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Actually, Adam Stephanides noted the change:

At 10:29 AM -0700 7/23/00, Adam Stephanides wrote:

The Horn of OBW resembles the non-apotheosized Severian: someone who feels strongly, suffers greatly, and is very human, to the point of being unsympathetic. The Horn of IGJ is much more like Silk in more than a physical sense; he's clearly a good man, and a dispenser of wisdom and good counsel, while humbly insisting all the time that he is no such thing. I have to admit that as a protagonist I prefer the first model to the second.

And, in response, I made a speculation much like yours:

At 11:40 PM -0400 7/23/00, William Ansley wrote:

I agree that the Horn that narrates OBW seems to be significantly different from the Horn that narrates IGJ. This makes me wonder what happened to cause the change. It seems to me that it may have something to do with the very odd section towards the very end of OBW where Horn's identity seems to become confused with Babbie's and Horn meets the little boy and girl who are named Brother and Sister. I readily admit that I didn't understand the section of OBW at all and that I am disappointed that it wasn't explicated at all in IGJ.

I think the section of the book that you quote from is probably important, perhaps only because it is so incomprehensible. I hope that we will receive a little more help in teasing out what is really going on here in RttW, but I don't expect much help if any will actually be forthcoming.

Then before I got around to posting this message, alga replied to the the same message:

At 10:46 PM -0400 7/31/00, Alice Turner wrote:

No, I think it is, as has been discussed quite recently, Horn's transfer to Silk's body, with Silk's powerful gene-spliced leadership DNA having an effect on those he encounters. I'm not quite sure from your post that you have finished IGJ--this will become clearer.

alga,

I think you are missing the point here. The writer of both OBW and IGJ is the same version of Horn, the one that has come back from \_The Whorl\_ looking a lot like Silk, however he got that way. But his narrative voice differs considerably, at least to me and Adam and Ian, from the first book to the second. So whatever happened to cause that change (if the change is real) had to happen between (or close to) the end of OBW and the beginning of IGJ.

William Ansley

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Alex David Groce — 01 Aug 2000, 08:46 · follows William Ansley

William said:

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I agree with this strongly. In my opinion the change stems at least partly from something (fairly) simple: Horn is no longer ruling a city "as Silk." Horn is freed to become something more like a holy man precisely because he is no longer in the false position of officially being Silk. Horn's reluctance to identify himself with a man he sees as, unlike himself, good is key to his actually becoming a very good man himself. Another couple of things: (1) he's come very close to death by the inhumani--Wolfe's characters always grow quite a bit when they willingly face death and (2) I think he's much more at peace now that he's without his concubines and is being faithful to Nettle (and Seawrack!)

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

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