

A question, an observation

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 10 Aug 2000

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/924>

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stilskin — 10 Aug 2000, 07:26

Forgive the question, but I can't for the life of me remember where we're shown that Hyacinth is dead or that Silk has committed suicide as I see stated in many posts. Could someone cite evidence for this for me?

As to the awful cover of IGJ, I raised this point with an EWSRN (editor who shall remain nameless), and he replied that Wolfe already had the thoughtful, literate readers, so the only way to expand his readership is to attract the lovers of pure shlock, hence this ridiculous cover, which is even worse than that of OBW (the worst Wolfe cover up to that point). I shudder to think of what lies ahead

Falcon

On Wed, 09 August 2000, whorl-errors at lists.best.com wrote:

----- BEGIN whorl.v011.n013 -----

001 - "Chris Hall" <chall at aoe.v - RE: "Wijzer warned me" (more Blue mysteries)
002 - "Chris Hall" <chall at aoe.v - RE: Digest whorl.v011.n012
003 - "Chris Hall" <chall at aoe.v - IGJ Thoughts [editing of Horn's book]
004 - Jim Jordan <jbjordan@gnt. - Re: (whorl) IGJ Thoughts
005 - Michael Andre-Driussi <ma - (whorl) IGJ, Major Spoiler re Silk (2)
006 - akt at attglobal.net - In Green's Cover
007 - Jim Jordan <jbjordan@gnt. - Inhumani Secret
008 - Adam Stephanides <adamste - Re: (whorl) IGJ Thoughts
009 - Adam Stephanides <adamste - Re: (whorl) Inhumani Secret
010 - Adam Stephanides <adamste - IGJ: altar scene

WHORL Digest -- for discussion of Gene Wolfe's Book of the Long Sun

----- MESSAGE whorl.v011.n013.1 -----

From: "Chris Hall" <chall at aoe.vt.edu>
Subject: RE: "Wijzer warned me" (more Blue mysteries)
Date: Wed, 9 Aug 2000 13:57:39 -0400
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain;
charset="iso-8859-1"
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit
In-Reply-To: <200008091634.JAA16319 at lists1.best.com>

In MESSAGE whorl.v011.n012.5

"Fernando Q. Gouvea" <fqgouvea at colby.edu> wrote
Subject: more Blue mysteries

Date: Tue, 8 Aug 2000 13:18:13 -0400

4) What does "Wijzer warned me" on page 366 refer to?

I don't have the book with me at work, but when I read this line I went back and reread Horn's conversation with Wijzer and figured this out (I think). Wijzer said something to the effect that eventually Horn would change so that even his own sons wouldn't recognize him.

Chris

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----- MESSAGE whorl.v011.n013.2 -----

From: "Chris Hall" <chall at aoe.vt.edu>
Subject: RE: Digest whorl.v011.n012
Date: Wed, 9 Aug 2000 14:01:52 -0400
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain;
charset="iso-8859-1"
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit
In-Reply-To: <200008091634.JAA16319 at lists1.best.com>

In MESSAGE whorl.v011.n012.8

From: Jim Jordan <jbjordan at gnt.net>
Subject: IGJ Thoughts
Date: Wed, 09 Aug 2000 11:14:14 -0500
A few thoughts.

[snip]

7. Horn's narrative is so disjointed, compared to the Book of Silk that Nettle edited, that I think Horn never makes it home. His book remains unedited. Sad to think. Hope I'm wrong....

I think it was edited, at least read by his family, since in OBW there are annotations by Hide or Hoof saying that

----- MESSAGE whorl.v011.n013.3 -----

From: "Chris Hall" <chall at aoe.vt.edu>
Subject: IGJ Thoughts [editing of Horn's book]
Date: Wed, 9 Aug 2000 14:03:05 -0400

MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain;
charset="iso-8859-1"
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit
In-Reply-To: <200008091634.JAA16319 at lists1.best.com>

In MESSAGE whorl.v011.n012.8

From: Jim Jordan <jbjordan at gnt.net>
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I think it was edited, at least read by his family, since in OBW there are annotations by Hide or Hoof saying that Nettle has read it. Don't remember the page number though.

Chris

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----- MESSAGE whorl.v011.n013.4 -----

From: Jim Jordan <jbjordan at gnt.net>
Subject: Re: (whorl) IGJ Thoughts
Date: Wed, 09 Aug 2000 13:25:23 -0500
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="us-ascii"
References: <200008091600.JAA00219 at lists1.best.com>
<200007240346.UAA17302 at lists1.best.com>
<200007210238.TAA24235 at lists1.best.com>
<200007210238.TAA24235 at lists1.best.com>
In-Reply-To: <200008091634.JAA16316 at lists1.best.com>

At 12:32 PM 8/9/2000 -0400, you wrote:

At 11:14 AM 8/9/00 -0500, Patera Nutria wrote:

4. Part of the secret of the inhumis is that they not only take on human characteristics when they drink us, but that they acquire "image of God" souls as well. Thus, when astrally projecting, their human souls become clear; it is what is projected. If they were still animals, they could not join the projection.

Oreb projects right along with Incanto and Jahlee, but Oreb isn't "human".

Good point. Of course, as you note, Oreb talks. Also, there is a distance between reptiles and mammals that might figure in.

Nutria

----- MESSAGE whorl.v011.n013.5 -----

From: Michael Andre-Driussi <mantis at sirius.com>
Subject: (whorl) IGJ, Major Spoiler re Silk (2)
Date: Wed, 9 Aug 2000 12:55:30 -0700
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="us-ascii"
References: <200008081624.JAA25409 at lists1.best.com>
<200008081510.IAA22603 at lists1.best.com>
In-Reply-To: <200008081658.JAA11109 at lists1.best.com>

My sense of it is that Silk committed suicide (with knife) by himself next to Hyacinth in her coffin.

To expand this and add to it:

1) I think that Silk really crossed the Rubicon and slashed himself, offering his own body as a funeral sacrifice, just as I think Horn's body gave out on him against his will to live and struggle on Green. I don't think Silk just thinking, "Gosh, I could just die right now, I'm so sad" would be nearly enough.

2) Because I think Silk killed himself, I think Horn has a very different/revised impression of the real man behind the mask that was first created by the politics of Viron and later embellished/enshrined within his work TBOTLS. Silk's suicide is definitely non-heroic, even without a Catholic angle. This factor plays in the whole "Horn/Silk Tangle."

3) Metempsychosis, the transmigration of souls. My sense of what the Neighbors did and how they explained it is this: Silk wanted to die, and was dying (but this was fixable); Horn wanted to live, and was dying; so Horn's spirit (and probably his soul, if it is a separate thing within this context) was put into Silk's body, and Silk's spirit/soul went elsewhere. "Spirit Weak, Flesh Strong" and "Spirit Strong, Flesh Weak" into "Spirit Strong, Flesh Strong" (and some discards of weak flesh, weak spirit).

4) Seems to me that while Horn knows where Horn is (in Silk's body), and he knows that Silk is not there (except as a "ghostly" residue, like the seeds left after a god has possessed a Vironese person for a while), he does not know where Silk's non-corporal part is. Two immediate options are: Silk's spirit/soul has gone on to Mainframe/heaven (in which case nobody is ever going to see him on Blue); Silk's spirit/soul has been installed into another body, perhaps one that doesn't have a such a melancholic tinge (in which case he might appear on Blue at any moment). I don't think that Horn thinks that Silk is in Horn's old body on Green: if he did, his descriptions of "Silk" would sound more like the shorter bald guy we know Horn looked like when he set out from Lizard Island: still, it is possible that this is what the Neighbors did, but I tend to think it is not (I think the Horn body is dead and decomposed).

Now, whether "Passilk" is a creation from before or after the suicide

remains to be seen. If after, well then, that's where Silk went--into Mainframe (but even then he could download into a human host).

=The Horn/Silk Tangle=

As we keep pointing out, the majority of the people in TBOSS know Silk only through reading TBOLS, they do not have firsthand experience.

The "Silk" they know, then, is a step or two removed from real-life. And Horn is in a unique position to know, first-hand, how far off his own boyhood hero-worshipping version was.

But the world of Blue seems to really need a hero exactly like the Silk of TBOLS (crop failures, slavery, wars of expansion are just a few of the problems marring the "paradise" of a new world). And as an architect of that hero, Horn seems to have volunteered/been drafted to become the hero.

Paradoxically, this means that Horn must become more like "Silk" and less like Silk; he must become the fiction, not the warts-and-all fact. So things are being burned away: bits of Silk, bits of Horn.

On to the editing of Horn's first book (OBW), but not his second book (IGJ): yes, this =is= something very interesting. OBW has five frames (Blue, Green, Whorl, present, and future), but IGJ has only two (Green and present); we have no indication that Horn returned home, nor even his book IGJ being read by his family. Things are very uncertain, suddenly.

With regard to the next volume, I have a suspicion that there will be even =less= about the whorl, directly and indirectly, then there is about Green in IGJ: rather like how Sainte Anne is in 5HC (you =think= you've been there, but you've really just read a forgery and a traveller's diary about the place).

=mantis=

----- MESSAGE whorl.v011.n013.6 -----

From: akt at attglobal.net
Subject: In Green's Cover
Date: Wed, 9 Aug 2000 17:35:15 -0400
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain;
charset="Windows-1252"
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit
References: <200008091634.JAA16319 at lists1.best.com>

Got the book today and brought it home. And hid it from my houseguest! Whoa--that cover! An amalgam of Ben Franklin and Joe Lieberman takes a stroll with an octopoidal Highwayman! No, I couldn't face the (at best) politely raised eyebrows or (worse) outright snickering that would have been my lot had this been openly displayed!

-alga

----- MESSAGE whorl.v011.n013.7 -----

From: Jim Jordan <jbjordan at gnt.net>
Subject: Inhumani Secret
Date: Wed, 09 Aug 2000 20:06:15 -0500
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="us-ascii"
References: <200008091634.JAA16316 at lists1.best.com>
<200008091600.JAA00219 at lists1.best.com>
<200007240346.UAA17302 at lists1.best.com>
<200007210238.TAA24235 at lists1.best.com>
<200007210238.TAA24235 at lists1.best.com>
In-Reply-To: <200008091812.LAA03996 at lists1.best.com>

I submit for your consideration that the secret is that men must die for the inhumani. They must learn to die for each other, but in this narrative, also to die for the inhumani. It's not just the golden rule, but being willing to lay down your life for your enemies, as Jesus did.

I submit that the eucharist the Outsider leads Horn to perform indicates that this will turn out to be the answer. That's the meaning of the eucharist, for by eating the death of Jesus into ourselves, we become able to die for our enemies as He died for His.

That's why the secret is so hard. Humans will find this the hardest thing of all to do. It's harder than loving each other, because it's easy to love the lovable. Or, it's the toughest kind of love.

When humans become willing to die for their enemies, and inhumani acquire this characteristic from them, the inhumani will be willing to die rather than destroy humans. This will "destroy" the inhumani, though I suspect it will not annihilate them but transform them somehow.

I bet that Horn gives his life for Jahlee before it's all over.

I also bet that when it's all over, the Memoirs of Severian, the Book of Silk, and the Book of Horn will be seen as a progression. Severian never really learns much about love, and certainly never dies for anyone. He does grow and mature, but not as much as Silk. Silk makes much more progress, but Horn will make the most. The triptich of their lives will make one thematic narrative of personal growth and maturation into Christlikeness. I cannot help but think of the Cashier O'Neill stories of Cordwainer Smith, though I don't know if these influenced Wolfe at all. They deal with politics, spirituality, and religion progressively, as "On the Gem Planet" is a "mirror for princes"; "On the Wind Planet" is about conversion; and "On the Sand Planet" is about the application of that conversion back into the world. In a very broad way, Wolfe's three narratives follow the same kinds of themes: in the real world, apart from the real world (on the whorl), and back into the real world. Just a thought.

But I'll bet I'm right about the secret.

Patera Nutria

----- MESSAGE whorl.v011.n013.8 -----

From: Adam Stephanides <adamsteph at earthlink.net>
Subject: Re: (whorl) IGJ Thoughts

Date: Wed, 09 Aug 2000 22:55:59 -0700

MIME-Version: 1.0

Content-Type: text/plain; charset=us-ascii

Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit

References: <200007210238.TAA24235 at lists1.best.com>

<200007210238.TAA24235 at lists1.best.com> <200008091600.JAA00219 at lists1.best.com>

Jim Jordan wrote:

1. The neighbor on Green switches the souls of Silk and Horn. That seemed clear to me.

Not to me. What the Neighbor says is "'I can send your spirit into someone else, into someone whose own spirit is dying....Then there will be one whole man there, instead of two dying men, one here and another there.'" (127, my deletion doesn't affect the meaning) Nothing about moving Silk's spirit at all. And the Neighbor doesn't say "there will be one whole man and one dying man," just "there will be one whole man."

--Adam

----- MESSAGE whorl.v011.n013.9 -----

From: Adam Stephanides <adamsteph at earthlink.net>

Subject: Re: (whorl) Inhumis Secret

Date: Wed, 09 Aug 2000 23:11:31 -0700

MIME-Version: 1.0

Content-Type: text/plain; charset=us-ascii

Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit

References: <200008091634.JAA16316 at lists1.best.com>

<200008091600.JAA00219 at lists1.best.com>

<200007240346.UAA17302 at lists1.best.com>

<200007210238.TAA24235 at lists1.best.com>

<200007210238.TAA24235 at lists1.best.com> <200008100052.RAA23539 at lists1.best.com>

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When humans become willing to die for their enemies, and inhumis acquire this characteristic from them, the inhumis will be willing to die rather than destroy humans. This will "destroy" the inhumis, though I suspect it will not annihilate them but transform them somehow.

I don't think that this is the secret, for a couple of reasons. For one thing, it doesn't fit several of the things we know about the secret: it doesn't explain why the inhumis drink human blood, it doesn't have anything to do with Krait's mother drinking from Sinew, and it doesn't explain the Neighbor's remark on p. 21.

For another thing, iirc (I don't have the book with me) in OBW Horn says explicitly that if humans could use the secret it would turn the inhumis

back into the unintelligent predators they originally were. So if humans did come to "love the inhumani," they would presumably refuse to apply the secret (since the inhumani have no wish to lose their intelligence).

--Adam

----- MESSAGE whorl.v011.n013.10 -----

From: Adam Stephanides <adamsteph at earthlink.net>
Subject: IGJ: altar scene
Date: Wed, 09 Aug 2000 23:17:40 -0700
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=us-ascii
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit

I was reviewing the altar scene, and I just noticed the following sentence, where Horn is narrating the manifestation of the Outsider: "I knew that he was there, that if I turned, I would see them." (285)

Is that "them" a typo? If not, what does it mean?

--Adam

----- END whorl.v011.n013 -----

*This is WHORL, for discussion of Gene Wolfe's Book of the Long Sun.
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www.sff.net/people/stilskin