

Third Rock from the New Sun

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 12 Oct 1998

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Robert Borski — 12 Oct 1998, 18:36

Time for another of my far-fetched genealogical forays. Lupines still reeling over my claim that Catherine, Sev's Mom, is Valeria's daughter, might be advised to skip this one.

This one's about aliens, the cacogens of Urth.

As most of us are well aware, all the aliens in the New Sun series have mythic, as opposed to saintly, names. (Father Inire's is a little hard to discern, but it's Abraxas.) Three characters, however, have names that are
both mythic and saintly:

Paeon/Palaemon (who are the same entity), and Merryn.

Merryn's name is a variant on Myrine, meaning 'sea goddess' (note: Palaemon too is a marine god). Robert Graves lists the following variants of Myrine--Marian, Ay-Mari, Mariamne, Marienna, and Mariandyne--I suspect if we looked hard enough we could find a Merryn, or weld one from a combination of the above. Also note how Wolfe at one point describes Merryn as an oread, a sea nymph.

All three of the above, I'm arguing, are cacogens attempting to pass as humans, and all wear very lifelike human masks. Only their eyes reveal their nonterrestrial origin; this is why Palaemon wears an optical device for a disguise, just as Merryn wears a mask (this also accounts for why Merryn looks the same as the time she did when Sev the toddler ran an errand to the Witches Keep. And it's all right if witches have spooky eyes<g>).

I'm speculating that Palaemon/Paeon is much older than his sister. Merryn appears to be a young adult who's being taught in matters sorcerous (actually high tech extraterrestrial) by her Mother, Camoena (the Cumaeon).

Father Inire--who built the Botanic Gardens especially for the Cumaeon--is the father.

Familimus and Barbatus are shorter-lived larval children. Note how both Familimus and the Cumaeon both speak in blank verse. Note too how Hildigrin has seen "metal and jeweled" figures visiting the Cumaeon--this is Ossipago, with his two larval wards.

The living statues around the House Absolute are some form of intermediate form--pupae or eggs--and are always described as looking like the unmasked Hierodules, who are made in the image of the Hierogrammates (cf. hellgrammite, aquatic larvae of the Dobson fly). Note as well the butterfly form of Tzadkiel.

Many of the cacogens have second names that are either variants of the first or shortenings. E.g., Camoena/Cumaeon; Tzadkiel/Zak; and Palaemon/Paeon.

Merryn (a famula) has spent time in Famulorum, where she's met the 13 year old Thecla, who is Appian's daughter, conceived of course before his unmannings, with a concubine mother who later marries Engino, Thea's father-to-be.

I don't have to tell you what their favorite tv show is.

Robert Borski

Stephen Witowski — 13 Oct 1998, 08:56 · follows Robert Borski

Robert Borski Wrote :

Time for another of my far-fetched genealogical forays.

You can say that again. Do you think Wolfe meant ALL of this when he wrote TBoNS, I think not. Your evidence is very thin and seems to consist of wild speculations and intuitive leaps. I don't think Wolfe wrote TBoNS so that we would spend all our time looking for family relationships (most of which are not there) but to grasp the meaning behind the story. I think we are in danger of missing the wood for the trees by following some lines of argument posted here.

I'm sorry if this sounds negative but I just had to say it.

Stephen Witkowski

Librarian/Information Officer

City Architect's Library , Manchester. UK.