

Occam's Razor and Pas's Heads

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 09 Nov 2002

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Jeff Veyera — 09 Nov 2002, 02:24

There is a simpler explanation for all of this---Wolfe simply needed a quick visual way to alert longtime readers as to who the builder of the Whorl really was.

-----Original Message-----

From: James Jordan [mailto:jbJordan4 at cox.net]

Sent: Friday, November 08, 2002 7:54 AM

To: urth at urth.net

Subject: (urth) Pas's Two Heads

At 11:24 PM 11/7/2002, Roy wrote:

So, when Typhon decided to build the _Whorl_ (for whatever reason), he *did not* plan to have himself scanned as a two-headed god. At some point before the launch, events overtook him. He was forced to change his original plans and have himself scanned *after* he had been grafted to Piaton. (Why he didn't have himself poured into a custom-made, look-alike chem body, like Loris, and Potto, and the others, I don't know.) But, so far as I know, Typhon never set foot in the _Whorl_. There was *no reason* for his scanned, digitized personality to have been depicted as two-headed. Given Typhon's vanity, it doesn't make sense for it to have been done that way.

The entire pantheon of Pas and his family and friends is all the more a travesty, some sort of sick joke, apparently. Yet the manteions in the pre-fabricated cities were built before the human cargo was put aboard. The Sacred Windows, the gods in Mainframe, all of that seems to have been planned from the beginning. Did Typhon's original plan call for him to be scanned as his one-headed self (with a new body)? Did he have time to have the Writings composed to reflect his two-headed godhead, create the whole mythology that permeates the _Whorl_? Why bother? If he wanted to play god, he didn't need to be two-headed to do it, and from his egocentric viewpoint, it wouldn't have been desirable.

Maybe. Maybe not. Janus of Rome was two-headed, and thereby ruled the past and the future. Typhon may well have wanted a two-headed image for Pas, so that he was visibly greater than other gods. Think also of the double-headed eagle of Russia, and similar images. We don't know that Pas's two heads looked like Typhon and Piaton. They may have both looked like Typhon. Of course, on the other hand, the reason Pas is not as bad as Typhon may be because the second head is Piaton's, and Piaton's nature has become highly influential in Pas. I don't think we have the information to decide about this.

Nutria

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Michael Straight — 15 Nov 2002, 20:03 · follows Jeff Veyera

On Fri, 8 Nov 2002, Jeff Veyera wrote:

There is a simpler explanation for all of this---Wolfe simply needed a quick visual way to alert longtime readers as to who the builder of the Whorl really was.

Exactly. If Pas had only one head, we'd have spent the last 7-8 years arguing about why Pas only had one head. And Robert Borski would have a 5000 word essay demonstrating that the "Typhon" of the Long Sun was not Severian's Typhon but an alternate version from a past/future where Severian wielded Occam's Razor instead of Terminus Est which he had used to forcibly remove Piaton's head yelling, "There can only be One!"

And then Wolfe, despairing over our density, would have written five seperate scenes in Return to the Whorl in which Horn/Silk muses about how of course it would have made no sense for Typhon to create Pas in his temporarily two-headed image.

-Rostrum