

Typhon, Quetzal, Scylla Hypothesis

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 27 Nov 2002

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James Jordan — 27 Nov 2002, 21:36

At 02:10 PM 11/27/2002, you wrote:

Crush responds:

It's all quite moot with Charles' recent post, but still nicely done. Still, your suggestion has two problems:

(1) Remora is one of the "slaves of Scylla" in this chapter and he's very un-inhumi-like.

Well, he serves Quetzal, even if he's a better man. So on my mooted paradigm, he's also be a slave of Scylla if Quetzal is one. On my paradigm, neither Remora nor Quetzal would WANT to be a slave of Scylla. Remora would want to make an exodus from Whorl and Scylla to a "Christian" Blue, while Quetzal would want to escape Whorl and Scylla to a hellish Green.

(2) Scylla is not a serpent in mythology, etymology, association, nor on the Whorl. Echidna is the serpentine goddess.

Okay. It's been a while since I read the books, and I've become confused about these big-babe goddesses. But IIRC Scylla is Mother, and was close enough to Typhon for Typhon's daughter to get linked up with her Urth-manifestation. (Am I right here?)

If that much is right, then at least my hypothesis that Scylla was involved in building Starcrosser might be of some value, and that the allegory might mean Starcrosser is her tree.

If not, I'm satisfied that Quetzal is just referring back to the original Biblical story. I notice the reference to permanent exile from the garden in Quetzal's version, and I don't know how to link that with the events of the novel itself. I.e., if Urth is the garden, then the exile would not be permanent, since Narrator & Co. do go back and visit there.

Perhaps the safest, if more humdrum, way to read it is that

Quetzal refers back to the original Garden story, and then sees the tree

that he himself has planted as Green, a tree he as snake hopes to lure humanity up into. In that case, the Garden story has no allegorical reference to the whorl. Rather, Quetzal is simply identifying with the Ur-serpent, in the way perhaps that Silk is an extension of Christ the Redeemer. Humanity is spiritually "up a tree," and Quetzal thinks of Green as an extension of that ur-tree, and himself as an extension of the original serpent.

Still, I kind of like your suggestion in the main. Wolfe is many-layered, and some allusion to the building of the Whorl seems likely to me. And since Quetzal is not the original serpent, then how about Scylla? Well, that suggestion may founder on your point that Scylla is not associated with serpents elsewhere. Typhon might be the serpent who lured (forced in his case) the people up into the Whorl-tree. Scylla might be his assistant.

How about Scylla as Lilith? Wolfe recently put out a story about Lilith, so she's been in his mind. (I don't recall the title.) Scylla as "Mother" might be a Lilith figure, with Lilith as the original and evil "mother" replaced by Eve.

Does this work? You tell me. Try it on:

1. Original serpent + spiritual-daughter Lilith lure humanity up the original (spiritual-symbolic) tree.

2. Typhon + daughter-associated Scylla replay that event, putting people on Whorl.

3. Quetzal (+ ?) intends to replay it again, putting people on Green.

Just grist for the mill. Any thoughts?

Nutria