

Che's "Gender in TBOTLS" and "Questions"

The Urth list — 4 messages, 2 voices, 03 Mar 2003

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3874>

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James Wynn — 03 Mar 2003, 16:45

From: Che Monro

Chem Onrust ;-) shares his anxieties about gender-bending on the Whorl:
I've been reading in the archives some speculation about gender changing in the Book of the Long Sun, in particular that Chenile and Hyacinth may have been male.

Crush responds soothingly:

Since I'm primarily responsible for all this, I'll take some of this on...

First, my opinions have developed about regarding Hyacinth and Chenille since I made those arguments. I believe I now understand EXACTLY what's going on with Chenille and why her name is sexually ambiguous. I think I have a ****general**** understanding of Hyacinth and I no longer see any reason that she is male. But I'm still developing the evidence both these characters so that's all I'll say.

You didn't mention the one character with whose cross-dressing I am satisfied with both the evidence and the thematic value. That is, Incus!

Then he asks:

2a. The Fifth Head of Cerebus. I never understood this story at all. Who's a clone of who?
What service does the house provide,
just what's going on here? Lovely story, but I can't make head or tale of it.

Crush helps as much as he can:

The original of the clones (whom we'll call "Original") cloned himself and then committed suicide to create Mr. Million. The clone (whom we'll call Number Two) cloned himself to create Maitre. Maitre (who is fourth in order after Original, Number Two, and Mr. Million) murdered Number Two and cloned himself to create Number Five. Number Five murdered Maitre, went to prison, and was released (perhaps there was a coup or St. Croix lost its war with St. Anne). He then returned to "the Cave" and cloned himself again.

"The Cave" is a brothel.

For information on this, I strongly recommend you start with Robert Borski's interesting website, "Cave Canem". <http://webpages.charter.net/rborski/>

--- Crush

Che Monro — 03 Mar 2003, 22:50 · follows James Wynn

Crush responds soothingly:

Since I'm primarily responsible for all this, I'll take some of this on...

Gosh, thanks Crush. :)

First, my opinions have developed about regarding Hyacinth and Chenille since I made those arguments. I believe I now understand EXACTLY what's going on with Chenille and why her name is sexually ambiguous. I'm think I have a ****general**** understanding of Hyacinth and I no longer see any reason that she is male. But I'm still developing the evidence both these characters so that's all I'll say.

laughs But Hyacinths are a male symbol, as used in um, The Wasteland by T. S. Elliot. Yup yup. As you pointed out.

You didn't mention the one character with whose cross-dressing I am satisfied with both the evidence and the thematic value. That is, Incus!

Um, now you make me sad that I've lent my book of the Long Sun to someone and haven't got it here to refer to. What about the Chem guard I mentioned who used to dress up and who got killed in an attempted rape? ***sighs*** Poor character. I'm satisfied with that evidence, although, I am fairly literal minded and I read things at face value mostly. You can see why I'm not the ideal Wolfe fan, I just love his style and emotion and storytelling power, but most of his tricksyness goes straight over my poor simple pretty little head.

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"The Cave" is a brothel.

Ug. So Biology really is destiny then? I love that story and the whole shape changer setup, but there's so much about it that I don't understand.

I'd love to hear your ideas about Chenille too. I liked her, although it's Silk and Oreb who I read the book for, mostly. But there's so much in there, isn't there? Definitely a desert island book. I reckon that you could spend 20 years reading the 3 Wolf series on a desert island and still not get to the bottom of it. I could, anyhow.

Cheers,

Che

Ché Franz Joseph Monro -- <http://www.chemonro.com>
che at chemonro.com -- flirt at technologist.com

James Wynn — 03 Mar 2003, 23:44 · follows Che Monro

Che challenges Crush's premature abandonment of his male Hyacinth theories:

laughs But Hyacinths are a male symbol, as used in um, The Wasteland by T. S. Elliot. Yup

yup. As you pointed out.

Crush concedes but backs away from the brink:

Yes, that's true. And the story of Apollo and Hyacinthus is a rather famous homosexual story - there were plenty of heterosexual Apollean lovers whose names Wolfe might have used and didn't. However, I think I know the chem with whom Hyacinth is associated and that chem is not male. I think know the bio with whom Hyacinth is associated and it is a woman. I'm still willing to be convinced of Hyacinth's masculinity, but at this time I can't get there.

Che pushes harder:

What about the Chem guard I mentioned who used to dress up and who got killed in an attempted rape? *sighs* Poor character.

Crush concedes:

I believe you are referring to the counterspy, Titi, whose name is ambiguously that of a monkey and a flower. Yep. That's true. But that's hardly a secret. Still, it does show that ambivalent names should be taken seriously. Consequently, I don't know what to do with the ambivalent name "Villus." It's so obscure, the ambiguity must be intentional, but what does it mean?

Regarding Crush's explanation of the "Fifth Head" clones: Ug. So Biology really is destiny then?

Crush consoles:

Not exactly. The destiny of the clones is determined also by their **nurture** because it is the same for Number Five and Maitre, just as their DNA is the same. Maitre and Number Five were raised each in the same house by the same person who was raised by the same person in the same house. So VRT/Marsch tells them that they are different only in their ages and views them as the SAME personality. This is more of Wolfe's investigation on the meaning of Identity.

Che attempts to lure Crush out of his protective hollow:

I'd love to hear your ideas about Chenille too. I liked her, although it's Silk and Oreb who I read the book for, mostly.

Crush mostly doesn't bite:

Learning from my previous unfruitful foray into suggesting Hyacinth's nature (which turned out to be mostly wrong anyway), I'm hesitant to make assertions about Chenille's nature without a lot more supporting facts. If I did, what would we talk about? I'd say what I think. Other's would say they don't agree or worse that my logic is fundamentally faulty. I will eventually accumulate the necessary facts, don't doubt it.

Wolfe was playing with a **lot** of subtext in the relationship between Silk and Oreb. However, since, as you say, you are quite literally minded, I doubt there is much of interest about them that I can to offer you. Still, the story of the Eye of Horus at least is an interesting read even if you don't care that in Wolfe's retelling, Oreb is "the Eye."

--- Crush

Che Monro — 04 Mar 2003, 08:19 · follows James Wynn

At 05:44 PM 3/03/03 -0600, you wrote:

Che challenges Crush's premature abandonment of his male Hyacinth theories:

Che pushes harder:

Che attempts to lure Crush out of his protective hollow:

*giggles and hides a smile behind her, um *ahem* his hand, Yes* You know they don't call me The Flirt for nothing. ;)

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Oh I must go and look this up. Was Horus the one who got torn up into little bits or was that Pas? Or Osiris? The all seeing eye of Horus also comes into Lois MacMaster Bujold's work as the symbol of ImpSec, the security wing of the Barrayar Imperium. Coincidence? I think not!

It's quite plausible to assume that the Whorl is traversing near Barrayaran space and they plant Oreb on board as a secret agent. Nobody will suspect an innocent bird of being a spy who watches everything. This would make The Outsider... Simon Illyan, the head of ImpSec. Does Bujold ever mention spybirds? No, but someone else does. Was it Harry Harrison in The Stainless Steel Rat?

But where is Miles in all of this, I hear you ask? I don't know, probably lost down in all those tunnels that look alike along with everyone else.

Can anyone disprove this theory for me, please?

Anyhow, thanks for the information on Oreb, it's provided a whole new light on the book for me. Um, that's a positive thing, I think. ;)

Che