

The Book of Typhon part two: Silk as Typhon

The Urth list — 6 messages, 4 voices, 07 Mar 2003

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Lisa Schaffer-Doggett — 07 Mar 2003, 04:56

Hi everyone, Don again. This obviously needs a lot of work and support, but the ideas are sound, I think.

The Book of Typhon part two: Silk as Typhon

This segment is more speculative than the last since I haven't gotten to a second reading of the Long Sun books. Nevertheless, I am firmly convinced of its correctness overall. My argument is simply that Silk is a clone of the monarch Typhon and, by extension, the genetic father of Severian who is a clone of Ymar.

Let's establish some basic facts. First, Silk was an embryo frozen at the time of the Whorl's launch, and thus from the time of Typhon. Second, Silk is blond, as I'm reasonably sure Typhon is (though I've never found a conclusive statement of this). Third, Silk is very tall, like an exultant, and a natural leader, charismatic enough to be known all over the Whorl and on Blue. And finally, Wolfe describes Silk as having a "reddish-blond beard" (Litany of the Long Sun p. 187). So? Here is a passage from Graves' King Jesus describing JC:

"You have a Typhonic, or harvest-red, beard. . ." (KJ p. 221)

How coincidental that Wolfe gives Silk a feature that ties him not only to sacred kingship but also directly to Typhon.

Now, here are a few rhetorical questions. Why did the White Headed One, Hierax (who most likely really was Hierax, much as Oreb was Scylla in SS) attack Silk so violently? Could it be he recognized him? Why was Kypris so helpful to Silk, and so drawn to him? (A tangent question to this is why did Kypris spend so much time possessing Hyacinth, who I think was also an embryo. My guess is that Hy is Kypris, or rather her Urth counterpart and thus Severian's genetic mother.) Why was Silk allowed to merge with Pas? I'll answer this. It is because Pas couldn't collect all of his personality that he'd scattered. Pas is a scan of Typhon, so the easiest solution is to scan Typhon back in to complete Pas. But, as Quetzal says, the jokes of the gods are long. The Outsider has had twenty years and an enlightenment to work on Silk in Pas' absence. So here is my version of the Plan of Pas. The Whorl flies to wherever it is supposed to go. When the time is right, the embryos of Silk and Hyacinth (not their names in this version) are thawed and brought to fruition. They are then possessed by Pas and Kypris and effectively become Typhon and "Katharine". Most likely the other "gods" have embryonic counterparts as well, but perhaps Typhon pulled a doublecross. But this didn't happen. Pas is scattered, Silk is thawed early, and the Whorl ends up back where it left from (sorry, couldn't resist). Silk is the Outsider's long joke, the redemption of Typhon.

This father-son relationship between Silk and Severian is the operative principle in where the "astral" travel takes place in the Short Sun books. Silkhorn ends up on Green to seek out Sinew, Horn's son. If you believe Severian is on Green, then he ends up there because Severian is Silk's son. This also explains why he ends up on the Red Sun Whorl. It has nothing to do with Rigoglio. Silk's tie to Severian is what draws him.

I realize that this argument about Silk is not as well documented as I'd like, but I haven't given LS and SS a second read yet. (so many things on my list!) I plan to revise this as well, but in the interest of completeness, I'll send it in this form.

Thanks for reading.

Roy C. Lackey — 08 Mar 2003, 06:58 · follows Lisa Schaffer-Doggett

Don wrote, in part:

My argument is simply that Silk

is a clone of the monarch Typhon <<

Had Silk been a clone of Typhon, then Silk would have looked exactly like him (at least as Typhon looked before he acquired Piaton's body), which is

presumably why you wrote:

Now, here are a few rhetorical questions. Why did the White Headed

One, Hierax (who most likely really was Hierax, much as Oreb was Scylla in SS) attack Silk so violently? Could it be he recognized him?<<

The painted canvas Silk destroyed at Orchid's was a "mockery of Campion's celebrated painting of Pas enthroned". My point is that images of the gods were commonplace on the _Whorl_. Silk was familiar with the image of Pas. Typhon had a hang-up about his face, believing that it was necessary to insure continued obedience to the person of the monarch. He believed that so strongly that he accepted a second head rather than give up his own face. Up until his "death", about thirty years before the action in LS, Pas had appeared regularly in the sacred windows of Viron and other cities. Many individuals who knew Silk had seen Pas appear in the sacred windows during their lifetimes. It strains credulity to believe that no one in LS or SS ever even hinted anything along the lines of "Hey, Silk, you know who you look like?"

-Roy

Lisa Schaffer-Doggett — 08 Mar 2003, 17:08 · follows Roy C. Lackey

On Friday, March 7, 2003, at 10:58 PM, Roy C. Lackey wrote:

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To which Don replies:

This has occurred to me, and here is my solution. The Gods in mainframe are not actual visual representations of their scans but archetypal god figures, unless of course Typhon's wife has snakes for hair. The fact that Typhon had a hang-up about his appearance supports this. He was eager to get rid of his second head. Why scan that into Mainframe? It's a problem for consideration, but it's not fatal. The thematic signs IMO point to Silk being Typhon.

Lisa Schaffer-Doggett — 08 Mar 2003, 17:14 · follows Lisa Schaffer-Doggett

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I realized that I didn't quite reply to your question. When I said that Hierax perhaps recognized Silk, I meant that he recognized him as Typhon, not necessarily as Pas. The other Gods had the memories of their Urth counterparts (as per Kypris' recollections) and they most certainly knew the Plan, or part of it.

James Jordan — 08 Mar 2003, 17:22 · follows Lisa Schaffer-Doggett

At 11:08 AM 3/8/2003, you wrote:

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Without compleatly buying into your thesis (yet), there might be two differences between Pas and Silk:

1. Pas has two heads, and these are probably stylized to look similar, unlike the reality.
2. Typhon was older and Silk is still young. Especially if Typhon/Pas presents himself with

godlike white hair, they would not look alike unless someone spent a bit of time studying them. In all, I think that Pas with two heads would throw anybody off. Even if one head looked a lot like Silk's, who would make the connection? Pas is, after all, Pas! and Silk is just a man. FWIW.

Nutria

JoshuaFalchion — 10 Mar 2003, 02:26 · follows James Jordan

Hello fellow Wolfeans! I'm new to the Urth group, and trying to catch up with the various correspondence. Don, I liked the discovery in *Graves* of a reference to a red beard as "Typhonic." I had not considered that Silk might be a clone of Typhon; that makes a good deal of sense. I have read the *Book of the Long Sun* only twice, and while I don't ponder the relations in the books too much (preferring instead the experience of the whole world to wash over me), there surely is some direct relationship between Pas and Silk.

As I said, I'm new, and I'd like my group name to be something that, though a small reference from *Citadel of the Autarch*, means something rather more significant to me (and has nothing to do with Wolfe). Readers of Gene Wolfe, of course, won't need any explanation of what my name means.

Call me

the Falchion

ps: what is the advance word on "The Wizard" and "The Knight"?