

Typhon uber alles and the fleshing of the hero

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 16 Aug 2003

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4163>

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Lisa Schaffer-Doggett — 16 Aug 2003, 03:12

Hi everyone,

Andrew's post whipped me back to something that has been on my mind for a while: Typhon's nature. It is pretty well established I think that he is not a product of natural childbirth. He is, to get straight to the point, the Nazi dreamboy, the ubermensch. Blond (blue eyed?) genetically perfect, brilliant, and desirous of bringing Urth back to the good old days of empire. Ruling from South America no less. Typhon is a fascist, the ultimate fascist. I think his story is told in The Tale of the Student and His Son. A hero, created from "dreams" to defeat Abaia (the Naviscaput). He defeats this monster by allying with its daughter (Scylla?) and returns home most likely to rule (like Theseus who by the way is one of Graves' seasonal sacred kings). This reading of the text satisfies me in two ways. It gives me ground for the nagging instinctive feeling I've always had that Abaia does not exist (either through extinction or through the fact that he is really Scylla) and it also fleshes out Typhon as a creation for a good purpose gone bad. It explains Cilinia's connection to Scylla, and (for me at least) it helps explain Severian's connection to the sea creatures (for those who don't know, I think Sev is Typhon's genetic son).

But even if no one buys my readings of the Wonders of Urth and Sky, it is still hard to avoid Typhon's parallels to the fascist ideal, and this goes a long way toward explaining why the Whorl is so out of sync with Urth culture. No mutant animals, no Aliens (he'd be furious about the inhumani I think), the Chems (don't they have a symbolic tie to Judaism?) are little more than slaves and aren't supposed to leave the Whorl when colonization begins. A throwback to a better time with him (as Silk, I think, but Pas would work, I suppose) ruling over it all.

Comments are welcome,

Don

Josh Geller — 16 Aug 2003, 04:53 · follows Lisa Schaffer-Doggett

Wonderful, thoughtful post.

J.

On Fri, 2003-08-15 at 20:12, Lisa Schaffer-Doggett wrote:
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