

reckless speculation on Typhon and Quetzal

The Urth list — 7 messages, 4 voices, 04 Sep 2003

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4196>

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James Wynn — 04 Sep 2003, 22:12

Don posited:

Typhon ...is the father of the unsleeping serpent that guards the Golden Fleece. So I spent the next hour or so googling around randomly and came across these two sites. The first is interesting because it places the Golden Fleece as a solar representation. I don't expect anyone to buy this but the Kholkian Drakon (do inhumi sleep?), the offspring of Typhon is the guardian of the Golden Fleece (which I read somewhere could also be a golden apple)/Sun. What I mean is Quetzal, the offspring of Typhon (or a clone thereof), is the guardian (via the Chapter) of Silk (the Long Sun). I know, I know, you don't buy it. Still it's in the record now.

Crush responds:

The importance of archetypes in understanding what is going on in the Long and Short Suns can hardly be overemphasized. And I agree that the serpent Ladon the is to be found on the Whorl. The thing is that Quetzal is not the only serpent on Whorl (he's not even the only inhumi). There are lots and lots of them. The Trivigaunte are serpents and so is Newt and Kingcup. The Lemur family are all serpents because they have shed their skin in a bid for immortality as serpents were classically believed to do. Wolfe has used this shedding skin analogy before. And so consequently, I have asserted that

Pas is Ladon. Pas is Typhon's "son" in the same complex (and Biblical) sense that Number Five was Maitre's "son". He is a serpent in that he Typhon having shed his skin to acheive immortality.

The exasperating part of assigning archetypes in Wolfe's works is that he is so clever about it.

-- Crush

Chris — 04 Sep 2003, 22:32 · follows James Wynn

You said a mouthful. I just read "There Are Doors" and was playing around tracking references to Attis/Dionysus/etc. looking for more keys that I hadn't picked up. In the process I found lots of alternate stories of Attis I hadn't known about, many of which contradict each other, and Wolfe appears to have been using ALL OF THEM, sometimes at the same time. His grasp of myth continues to impress me.

- Civet

Crush said:

The exasperating part of assigning archetypes in Wolfe's works is that he is so clever about it.

-- Crush

Lisa Schaffer-Doggett — 05 Sep 2003, 00:28 · follows Chris

On Thursday, September 4, 2003, at 03:12 PM, James Wynn wrote:

The importance of archetypes in understanding what is going on in the Long and Short Suns can hardly be overemphasized. And I agree that the serpent Ladon the is to be found on the Whorl. The thing is that Quetzal is not the only serpent on Whorl (he's not even the only inhumu). There are lots and lots of them.

Yes, but Quetzal is the only inhumu who is a Sun archetype, Dionysus. This singles him out as being somehow related to Typhon and Silk (and Severian) imo. According to Graves there are only two, one for each half of the year. Mr. Wolfe is an amazing exploiter of the disconnects between various versions of a myth, using science fiction as the glue. For example, one of the fatal (and annoying) problems with Graves is that he supports an argument with the myth of Cronos and Zeus (father and son) one minute and buttresses the rest of the argument with the myth of Set/Typhon and Osiris (brothers) ignoring the obvious problems this poses. Cloning solves this problem in the Sun cycle. If Typhon is Severian's genetic father then Silk (as Typhon's clone) is also Severian's father (Cronos and Zeus). However Silk, as Typhon's clone, is also in a sense his son and thus he and Severian could also be considered brothers (Set/Typhon and Osiris). I'll belabor my point with something I thought of yesterday. I'm not sure if this has been discussed but one of Severian's obvious archetypes is Apollo, or Apollon as I keep seeing it lately. Well Apollo is connected to Apollyon the Destroyer who is not really a fallen angel but the righteous angel of Hell's pit. Severian the Destroying Sun. So to my way of thinking (which I know many discount) it makes perfect sense that Mr. Wolfe would identify Quetzal with Typhon by identifying him with Dionysus (though there are a myriad of other reasons for that in addition. What a genius!) and also identify him as the serpent of Colchis through the biology (two or three books later, good lord!) of the inhumu's reproductive cycle.

On Thursday, September 4, 2003, at 03:32 PM, Chris wrote:

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Indeed! It's maddening. Speaking of which, I'm being told I have to go to my room and take my medication now. Don

James Jordan — 05 Sep 2003, 00:33 · follows Lisa Schaffer-Doggett

At 05:12 PM 9/4/2003, you wrote:

Crush responds:

The importance of archetypes in understanding what is going on in the Long and Short Suns can hardly be overemphasized.

This is important to bear in mind, because we readers have a tendency to see identity where there is only archetype in operation. If someone looks and acts a bit like Apollo he must be version of Severian. Not necessarily.

Nutria

Lisa Schaffer-Doggett — 05 Sep 2003, 01:00 · follows James Jordan

On Thursday, September 4, 2003, at 05:33 PM, James Jordan wrote:

At 05:12 PM 9/4/2003, you wrote:

Crush responds:

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Nutria

Yes, but in a work that is set up as a puzzle archetypal cue and clues should not be (and I think are not) carelessly placed.

Don

James Jordan — 05 Sep 2003, 01:14 · follows Lisa Schaffer-Doggett

At 08:00 PM 9/4/2003, you wrote:

On Thursday, September 4, 2003, at 05:33 PM, James Jordan wrote:

At 05:12 PM 9/4/2003, you wrote:

Crush responds:

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Don

Granted. And there are all those clones....

Nutria

James Jordan — 05 Sep 2003, 01:20 · follows James Jordan

At 07:28 PM 9/4/2003, you wrote:

On Thursday, September 4, 2003, at 03:12 PM, James Wynn wrote:

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IIRC, Wolfe has said that Typhon had no knowledge of the inhumi, so any kind of literal or clone/paternity relationship between him and Quetzal seems to be out. Symbolically you may be on to something, but it has appeared to me that Quetzal is a serpent in Typhon's garden, and the allusions are Biblical in some kind of way. Like the ur-serpent, Quetzal has entered the garden and has his own plans for its people, plans quite different from Pas's.

Nutria