

Severian's skin color

The Urth list — 47 messages, 15 voices, 16 Jun 2005

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4449>

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Kieran Mullen — 16 Jun 2005, 12:38

Begin forwarded message:

Message: 8
Date: Thu, 16 Jun 2005 20:08:15 +0200
From: Hmpf MacSlow <hmpf1998 at gmx.net>
Subject: (urth) Is this a BotNS illustration?
To: The Urth Mailing List <urth-urth.net at lists.urth.net>
Message-ID: <6.2.0.14.0.20050616200223.03762390 at pop.gmx.net>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="us-ascii"; format=flowed

[http://www.elevenland.com/amano/view.php3?
picName=The+Claw+of+the+Conciliator&picImage=pic16.JPG](http://www.elevenland.com/amano/view.php3?picName=The+Claw+of+the+Conciliator&picImage=pic16.JPG)

What do you think? It doesn't really *look* like anything I remember from

the book... but why else call the picture 'The Claw of the Conciliator'?

The artist is Yoshitaka Amano, a renowned fantasy illustrator who collaborated with Neil Gaiman on 'Sandman: The Dream Hunters'. He seems to

like doing random illustrations for fantasy stuff - there's some Elric illustrations on that website, too. Basically, high-calibre fan art.

g

Anyway... if that is supposed to be a Wolfe illustration, then what do you suppose it's meant to be? Is this Severian? (Surely not!)

Hm.

Hmpf

What color is Severian's skin? I always thought it was quite dark, but maybe I've been mistaken all along...

Kieran Mullen

"I don't get out much, so I read."
Pilot, Farscape

Hmpf MacSlow — 16 Jun 2005, 12:51 · in reply to Kieran Mullen

What color is Severian's skin? I always thought it was quite dark, but maybe I've been mistaken all along...

Kieran Mullen

IIRC, it's fairly light, for Commonwealth standards - I think that's one of the things that gets him being 'mistaken' for an exultant occasionally. Of course, to judge what 'light' in that context means we'd need to know what 'normal'/'dark' would mean in the Commonwealth. *g*

And it's been a while since I read the book, so I may be wrong, anyway.

Hmpf

"Senseless property destruction has failed me, and so I must resort to wackiness."

- Patrick Shaughnessy, Triangle and Robert

David Lebling — 16 Jun 2005, 13:04 · in reply to Kieran Mullen

From: "Kieran Mullen" <kieran at ou.edu>

What color is Severian's skin? I always thought it was quite dark, but maybe I've been mistaken all along...

I thought he was described as very pale-skinned with black hair.

-- Dave Lebling aka vizcacha

Seth Lombardi — 16 Jun 2005, 17:52 · in reply to David Lebling

What color is Severian's skin? I always thought it was quite dark, but maybe I've been mistaken all along...

I thought he was described as very pale-skinned with black hair.

-- Dave Lebling aka vizcacha

Same here. I have the first issue of the comic adaption and he looks a lot like Neil Gaiman's Morpheus. The guy's pretty much a goth.

seth

Seth Lombardi

sethlombardi at hotmail.com

<http://sethlombardi.blogspot.com/>

AIM: melombardi

"Two faces are alike; neither is funny by itself, but side by side their likeness makes us laugh"

-Pascal

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 16 Jun 2005, 20:13 · in reply to Seth Lombardi

This is a clear case of artists assuming that the generic SFF hero is white no matter what the writer says.

Somewhere in there Wolfe (or Severian) makes a comment to the effect that each of the continents has a characteristic physical "type," and that peoples who live on a continent long enough will tend towards that "type." (Something like a hundred

generations?) Since the Commonwealth (a) is on - roughly - the South American continent, and (b) has been there a long time, we can reasonably conclude that its citizens resemble contemporary native South Americans.

--Dan'l

I do not fear Satan half so much as I fear those who fear him.

-- St Teresa of Avila

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>

Sarah Dorrance-Minch — 16 Jun 2005, 20:44 · in reply to David Lebling

--- David Lebling <dlebling at hyraxes.com> wrote:

I thought he was described as very pale-skinned with black hair.

Just like his mother. The "blonde" fan art picture must be borrowing his father's hair colour...

Midori/Sarah

Ah, love couldst thou and I conspire/ To grasp this sorry scheme of things entire/ Would we not break it all to bits, and then/ Remold it nearer to the heart's desire - Omar Khayyam

Reach me a gentian, give me a torch
let me guide myself with the blue, forked torch of this flower
down the darker and darker stairs, where blue is darkened on blueness.
- D.H. Lawrence, "Bavarian Gentians"

Sarah Dorrance-Minch — 16 Jun 2005, 20:47 · in reply to Seth Lombardi

--- Seth Lombardi <sethlombardi at hotmail.com> wrote:

Same here. I have the first issue of the comic adaption and he looks a lot like Neil Gaiman's Morpheus. The guy's pretty much a goth.

Ooh! Ooh! There's a graphic novel version of the Timescape series? I can see where my next tax refund is going.

Midori/Sarah

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Sarah Dorrance-Minch — 16 Jun 2005, 20:51 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

--- Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:

Somewhere in there Wolfe (or Severian) makes a comment to the effect that each of the continents has a

characteristic
physical "type," and that peoples who live on a
continent long
enough will tend towards that "type." (Something
like a hundred
generations?) Since the Commonwealth (a) is on -
roughly -
the South American continent, and (b) has been there
a long
time, we can reasonably conclude that its citizens
resemble
contemporary native South Americans.

Indigenous, or descendants of European colonists? I
used to be an ESL tutor; most of the businessmen I
tutored were pretty pale, especially the Brazilians,
some of whom (from southern Brazil) had German
surnames and seemed to be an average of six feet four.

It's a big continent. There are currently as many
"types" as in North America. As a side note, I wonder
what the typical North American will look like
millions of years from now...

Midori/Sarah

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break it all to bits, and then/ Remold it nearer to the heart's desire - Omar Khayyam

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- D.H. Lawrence, "Bavarian Gentians"

don doggett — 16 Jun 2005, 21:44 · in reply to Sarah Dorrance-Minch

--- Sarah Dorrance-Minch <isobelwren at yahoo.com> wrote:
Just like his mother. The "blonde" fan art picture
must be borrowing his father's hair colour...

Ah, yes. This brings me to something I had nearly
forgotten. I'm assuming you're implying that Typhon
is Sev's father (which is not a terribly popular
opinion here since it's generally accepted that Ouen
is sev's pop). This may be true but it's just as
likely that Piaton is his father since Typhon's head
is grafted onto him at some point. Ymar is certainly
the son of Typhon or Piaton, and if Sev is not
actually Ymar (meaning he's a clone), he's certainly a
vessel for the first Autarch. In my mind this
explains the parallels between Sev's and Ymar's lives
and Sev's confused memories. All my humble opinion,
of course.

Don

Seth Lombardi — 17 Jun 2005, 16:09 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

This is a clear case of artists assuming that the generic SFF hero is white no matter what the writer says.

Somewhere in there Wolfe (or Severian) makes a comment to the effect that each of the continents has a characteristic physical "type," and that peoples who live on a continent long enough will tend towards that "type." (Something like a hundred generations?) Since the Commonwealth (a) is on - roughly - the South American continent, and (b) has been there a long time, we can reasonably conclude that its citizens resemble contemporary native South Americans.

--Dan'l

But much of South America is peopled by people who do not necessarily resemble "native" South Americans.

Assuming Severian's theory be true, then we also have to assume that the people who happen to live there have lived there in isolation without invasion or other ethnic turmoil for a hundred generations, and also that there have been no significant changes in diet or environment on that continent between now and TBOTNS. We already know that the sun has dimmed significantly. It is also harped on that Severian is tall and may or may not have some exultant blood in him, and it's not even clear if exultants are natives of Urth, much less what was once called South America. So, while I think it may be reasonable to assume that Severian may be tale, pale and sunken-cheeked only by the standards of his community and not that of contemporary Europeans, I think it's a bigger stretch to assert one way or another that he or the people of Nessus look like contemporary native South Americans, or any other ethnic group we can imagine.

seth

Seth Lombardi

sethlombardi at hotmail.com

<http://sethlombardi.blogspot.com/>

AIM: melombardi

"Two faces are alike; neither is funny by itself, but side by side their likeness makes us laugh"
-Pascal

Andrew Kertesz — 17 Jun 2005, 16:43 · in reply to Seth Lombardi

Actually, I was under the impression that the people of Severian's day (at least those of the "lower" social orders) are somewhat Neanderthalic. Wolfe makes a few references to high foreheads and thick brow-bones (IIRC - I may be completely off-base here...)

On 6/18/05, Seth Lombardi <sethlombardi at hotmail.com> wrote:
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Somewhere in there Wolfe (or Severian) makes a comment to the effect that each of the continents has a characteristic physical "type," and that peoples who live on a continent long enough will tend towards that "type." (Something like a hundred generations?) Since the Commonwealth (a) is on - roughly -

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"Two faces are alike; neither is funny by itself, but side by side their likeness makes us laugh" -Pascal

Sarah Dorrance-Minch — 17 Jun 2005, 20:33 · in reply to don doggett

--- don doggett <kingwukong at yahoo.com> wrote:

Ah, yes. This brings me to something I had nearly forgotten. I'm assuming you're implying that Typhon is Sev's father

No, I was under the impression that the waiter Ouen is in fact his biological father. I recently took the pairing _Sword and Citadel_ from the library, and I remember reading near the end of _Citadel of the Autarch_ that Ouen had fair hair. At least I hope I read that right. I will confess that my short term memory can sometimes be almost as bad as Dori's memory (the Imperial Blue Tang fish in Finding Nemo, who "suffers from short term memory loss")

I find this alternative interpretation of Severian's parentage intriguing, although it's warping my mind. All right, I admit it, my brain cells aren't turning the hamster wheel of my mind fast enough today. What's

the rationale behind it?

Oddly, I don't find it all that odd that one of Severian's closest love interests was his dead grandmother. I'm afraid to ask myself what that says about me.

Sarah Dorrance-Minch
(in SCA, THL Isobel Wren, called "Midori")

Mother to Sophie and Liesl and militant lactivist cult member

Sarah Dorrance-Minch — 17 Jun 2005, 20:49 · in reply to Seth Lombardi

--- Seth Lombardi <sethlombardi at hotmail.com> wrote:

So, while I think it may be reasonable to assume that Sevarian may be tale, pale and sunken-cheeked only by the standards of his community and not that of contemporary Europeans, I think it's a bigger stretch to assert one way or another that he or the people of Nessus look like contemporary native South Americans, or any other ethnic group we can imagine.

Your explanation was a lot clearer than mine. And yes, that's what I had been trying to say.

Sarah Dorrance-Minch
(in SCA, THL Isobel Wren, called "Midori")

Mother to Sophie and Liesl and militant lactivist cult member

Andy Robertson — 18 Jun 2005, 00:50 · in reply to Seth Lombardi

So, while I think it may be reasonable to assume that Sevarian may be tale, pale and sunken-cheeked only by the standards of his community and not that of contemporary Europeans, I think it's a bigger stretch to assert one way or another that he or the people of Nessus look like contemporary native South Americans, or any other ethnic group we can imagine.

seth

The people of the Commonwealth do look like contemporary south Americans. There's a largely European upper class (some of whom have pale/blond hair and blue eyes), a lower class of Amerindian "autocthons" with dark skin and straight thick dark hair, and a mixed group between.

In the far South there are people who look like contemporary Scandinavians with "pale hair and speckled skin" (ref innkeeper describing the levies as he chats to Severian in Nessus).

I agree this makes zero sense at umpty zillion AD, but Wolfe describes these groups quite clearly.

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don doggett — 19 Jun 2005, 16:59 · in reply to Sarah Dorrance-Minch

--- Sarah Dorrance-Minch <isobelwren at yahoo.com> wrote:

I find this alternative interpretation of Severian's parentage intriguing, although it's warping my mind. All right, I admit it, my brain cells aren't turning the hamster wheel of my mind fast enough today. What's the rationale behind it?

It's been discounted by most people on the list, but the rationale in a nutshell is the parallels between Sev's life and Ymar's, clues in the Tale of Frog (sorry, my books are on unintentionally permanent loan - I should know better by now.) And the fact that Sev's confrontation with Typhon reflects the hero's confrontation with his father in Joseph Campbell's whatever-you-call-it theory. Here's the links to my argument from long ago.
<http://www.urth.net/urth/archives/v0303/3022.txt.shtml>
and
<http://www.urth.net/urth/archives/v0303/3023.txt.shtml>

Don

James Wynn — 20 Jun 2005, 14:54 · follows don doggett

I find this [Typhon/Piaton/Severian] alternative interpretation of Severian's parentage intriguing, although it's warping my mind...What's the rationale behind it?

It's been discounted by most people on the list, but the rationale in a nutshell is the parallels between Sev's life and Ymar's, clues in the Tale of Frog (sorry, my books are on unintentionally permanent loan - I should know better by now.) And the fact that Sev's confrontation with Typhon reflects the hero's confrontation with his father in Joseph Campbell's whatever-you-call-it theory.

For the record, I concur with the gist of the interpretation although I couldn't say what the parallels between Sev & Ymar's life are, I didn't originally find Don's interpretation of the Tale of the Frog drastically compelling, and I'm contemptuous Campbell's interpretation of myth and don't see it as much of an influence on Wolfe.

I believed it, initially, because the Short Sun declared that Severian's crypt held Typhon's immediate family. After that, things began to fall into place and make more sense.

In an interview with Nick Gevers he was asked:
<http://www.sfsite.com/03b/gw124.htm>

NG: Why did you choose in Short Sun to have your characters cross over into the milieu of New Sun? In particular, do the meetings of Horn/Silk and Severian have a decisive impact on the destinies of both?

GW: Because the books would have been lame if they had not. Once you see that Pas is or was Typhon, and know the Rajan can travel by astral projection, he's got to do that.

What Wolfe doesn't explain to my satisfaction is why it was necessary. It doesn't seem that obvious to me. I mean, it would seem more obvious for the Rajan to go back and meet Typhon wouldn't it? Or at least stand over his lifeless body. Why Severian?

In some interview that I can't currently place, Wolfe said that early on in the writing of the Long Sun, he came to realize it had to be a story about the family of Typhon. Which made me say "Hmm...I thought it was about Silk and Tussah and Pike and Marble and Awk and Chenille and Horn."

Well? That's why I think Severian **had** to make an appearance.

~ Crush

Chris — 20 Jun 2005, 15:34 · in reply to James Wynn

I can think of another way to read this than an implication that the Rajan should go back and meet Typhon. Basically Pas was Typhon, but became something a little different (and perhaps a little more). Recall that Silk at this point is maybe not the original, but comes from "Silver Silk" which supplanted Pas, but probably incorporated at least some elements from Pas. Thus in a certain way the Rajan **is**, or is descended from, Typhon.

So the Rajan, as a stand-in for Typhon, fittingly gets to visit Severian in his formative years. Though of course whatever influence he exerts over Severian is not what the original Typhon would have chosen.

Crush said:

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don doggett — 20 Jun 2005, 20:44 · in reply to James Wynn

I have to admit that my essay was very by the seat of the pants, and that it was later disclosed that Wolfe had never read King Jesus. However most of the ideas

in that work can be found just as readily in The White Goddess, which I read after I wrote the essay and which GW has almost certainly read. Silk and Severian are genetically related, father to son, brother to brother, or brother to half brother I don't know, but it's there. IMVHO.

Don

--- James Wynn <thewynns at earthlink.net> wrote:

For the record, I concur with the gist of the interpretation although I couldn't say what the parallels between Sev & Ymar's life are, I didn't originally find Don's interpretation of the Tale of the Frog drastically compelling, and I'm contemptuous Campbell's interpretation of myth and don't see it as much of an influence on Wolfe.

I believed it, initially, because the Short Sun declared that Severian's crypt held Typhon's immediate family. After that, things began to fall into place and make more sense.

James Wynn — 22 Jun 2005, 09:08 · follows don doggett

Crush said:

GW: Because the books would have been lame if they had not. Once you see that Pas is or was Typhon, and know the Rajan can travel by astral projection, he's got to do that.

What Wolfe doesn't explain to my satisfaction is why it was necessary. It doesn't seem that obvious to me. I mean, it would seem more obvious for the Rajan to go back and meet Typhon wouldn't it? Or at least stand over his lifeless body. Why Severian?

Chris replied:

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So the Rajan, as a stand-in for Typhon, fittingly gets to visit Severian in his formative years. Though of course whatever influence he exerts over Severian is not what the original Typhon would have chosen.

Hmm...Well, I doubt the Rajan contains 'Silver Silk' (have there been any proposed etymologies to this title?), and I don't know of any compelling reason to think SS has any of Pas in him/it.

However, interestingly, I think you are definitely on to something because I believe Horn is a clone of Typhon. There, I said it.

~ Crush

Chris — 22 Jun 2005, 13:51 · in reply to James Wynn

Crush replied:

Hmm...Well, I doubt the Rajan contains 'Silver Silk' (have there been any proposed etymologies to this title?), and I don't know of any compelling reason to think SS has any of Pas in him/it.

However, interestingly, I think you are definitely on to something because I believe Horn is a clone of Typhon. There, I said it.

~ Crush

I was thinking of Silver Silk as the combination of uploaded Silk with the remaining fragments of Pas, but browsing through the archives seems to indicate my memory is mistaken on that point - still, the situation seems very confused with Silver Silk, Silent Silk, and "Pas-silk" involved. General speculation seems to be that the version that was in Pig was Pas-silk, and that was the one I was thinking of.

The question of whether Silk gets into Silk/Horn via Pig, or from Pig to a monitor into Silk/Horn, or was there all along, is contentious and I'm not going to try to argue it here. The relevant question for me here is whether whatever version of Silk is in Silk/Horn had ever had access to fragments of Pas. And I think there's a good chance, or at least a live possibility, that he did - though I won't claim it's not arguable.

What becomes even more intriguing is the question of where, in the chronology of the New Sun, Typhon scanned himself as Pas. Was it before he ever encountered the Conciliator, or between the first and second times (of course the first visit chronologically was the second from Severian's subjective point of view). If it took place after, you get the possibility that Silk/Horn might actually *remember* Severian. But it has been argued (fairly well) by Roy Lackey that the Whorl had to have been launched before Typhon's first encounter with the Conciliator (ref: <http://www.urth.net/urth/archives/v0303/3073.txt.shtml>) so if that holds then this is a dead end. Regardless, it is still poignant to have fragments of a transformed, "kinder, gentler" Typhon encounter Severian near the beginning of his journey.

James Wynn — 22 Jun 2005, 15:06 · follows Chris

Chris speculates

The relevant question for me here is whether whatever version of Silk is in Silk/Horn had ever had access to fragments of Pas. And I think there's a good chance, or at least a live possibility, that he did - though I won't claim it's not arguable.

Well, after Pas re-emerged and began to purge the Mainframe of the rebel modules, I'm sure there were plenty of opportunities for Silk to encounter it. But if an aspect of Pas were hiding in Silk, I can't imagine him agreeing to Silk's resignation and hermitage. That doesn't sound like any simulation of Typhon.

If Roy Lackey and Blattid are correct in their posts that Silk is a clone of Typhon, then he would carry Typhon's very face back to the Whorl to meet Severian. As appealing as that would be to

me. I don't believe it.

Wolfe has said (when asked about Silk's "ancestry"), that Silk is the son of the Calde and his mistress. The question was regarding his *ancestry*, not his parentage. I resolved this quandary by asserting that Tussah was Typhon's clone, and that Silk is a clone of the son of Typhon and Kypris' original ("the son not of my body shall be Calde after me"). Thus, Tussah and Pas are murdered about the same time and Silk rises to take both their places. And that's why Silk meets 2 pairs of parents during his death: Pas, Kypris, Tussah, and his acknowledged mother.

For a lot of reasons, I would still like to say that Silk's "original" was a clone of Typhon implanted in proto-Kypris. But the text suggests that Chenille looked *very* much like Tussah and Horn told Silk that he and Chenille didn't "really look that much alike." There's no way around it for me. Silk is genetically the bio-child of Typhon and proto-Kypris.

Which brings me back to the question of why it was *Silk* who was chosen to be scanned to repair Pas. I understand why Wolfe did it thematically; I wish he had justified it narratively. Perhaps it could have been anyone, but they chose Silk as an honor because of his help against the Ayuntamiento.

What becomes even more intriguing is the question of where, in the chronology of the New Sun, Typhon scanned himself as Pas. Was it before he ever encountered the Conciliator, or between the first and second times (of course the first visit chronologically was the second from Severian's subjective point of view)...But it has been argued (fairly well) by Roy Lackey that the Whorl had to have been launched before Typhon's first encounter with the Conciliator (ref: <http://www.urth.net/urth/archives/v0303/3073.txt.shtml>) so if that holds then this is a dead end.

Well, I consider it self-evident that Typhon's scan occurred after he got his new body, since Pas has two heads. I don't have my books, but I seem to recall a suggestion that Typhon had *just* got Piaton's body when he met the Conciliator. That would place the Whorl's launch just before or very soon after his confrontation with the Conciliator. In that case, the scan must have occurred as the capstone to the Whorl project before launching. Since I say the taking of Piaton's body was punishment for his taking part in the rebellion with his siblings and mother, there is the very real possibility that Typhon had himself rescanned with this new body after executing his family. Would Typhon have permitted his rebellious family to be a worshiped pantheon on the Whorl after they had betrayed him? Well, look how they are depicted and you tell me. Pas and Kypris depicted naturalistically. The rest of his family are monsters. Typhon might have had himself scanned again simply because he wanted Pas to be knowledgeable of his family's potential treachery.

But this is irrelevant to our discussion since I find it hard to believe Pas was in Silk when the Rajan entered his body.

~ Crush

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 22 Jun 2005, 15:57 · in reply to James Wynn

Point of order:

On 6/22/05, James Wynn <thewynns at earthlink.net> wrote:
If Roy Lackey and Blattid are correct in their posts that Silk is a clone of Typhon, then he would carry Typhon's very face back to the Whorl to meet Severian. As appealing as that would be to me. I don't believe it.

I find this theory appealing, for very much the reason you show
-- Typhon is very concerned about "the face of command," which
is why he wants a full-head transplant rather than a brain transplant
-- but I'm not prepared to defend the theory, I can't say "this is how I think it is." It's just an
interesting possibility.

Which is how most interpretations of the solar books seem to me, come to think of it.

--Dan'l

I do not fear Satan half so much as I fear those who fear him.
-- St Teresa of Avila
<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>

Chris — 22 Jun 2005, 23:27 · in reply to James Wynn

Crush said:

Well, after Pas re-emerged and began to purge the Mainframe of the rebel
modules, I'm sure there were plenty of opportunities for Silk to encounter
it.
But if an aspect of Pas were hiding in Silk, I can't imagine him agreeing
to
Silk's resignation and hermitage. That doesn't sound like any simulation of
Typhon.

It depends on what state Pas was in, I suppose. I don't think there was enough left of him to
form a coherent person, and what is left is bound up into the persona uploaded by Silk, and the
combined Passilk is probably technically different from either of them, but much more like Silk
than Typhon.

Given this even in the best case it might be impossible to know just what Typhon lost, and
whether possible memories of Severian would be among what remained.

If Roy Lackey and Blattid are correct in their posts that Silk is a clone
of Typhon, then he would carry Typhon's very face back to the Whorl
to meet Severian. As appealing as that would be to me. I don't believe it.

Well, I don't have much to say for or against the clone theory, but to me it always seemed a
little beside the point. The DNA Silk had in his meatybits is only of peripheral interest (at least to
me), and the only problem I have with the clone theories is that they tend to make that aspect
central to their interpretation.

Well, I consider it self-evident that Typhon's scan occurred after he got
his
new body, since Pas has two heads.

True, and I find this to be dead-on convincing personally. But at the same time it seems almost
impossible to maintain continuity either way, because there's a pretty strong case going the
other way. I hate to suggest it but perhaps this is just the product of an error on Wolfe's part.

But this is irrelevant to our discussion since I find it hard to believe
Pas was in
Silk when the Rajan entered his body.

But it would make a difference, regardless of whether Pas was there, if we were to believe that
Silk had knowledge of Severian. At that point in the story, if I recall correctly, Silkhorn was no
longer narrating. Was there any point where he and Severian were "off camera" and could have
had a conversation the narrator wasn't privy to?

Roy C. Lackey — 23 Jun 2005, 00:57 · follows Chris

Crush wrote:

If Roy Lackey and Blattid are correct in their posts that Silk is a clone of Typhon, then he would carry Typhon's very face back to the Whorl to meet Severian. As appealing as that would be to me. I don't believe it.

I think you must have meant "carry Typhon's very face back to _Urth_". In any event, I never claimed that Silk was a clone of Typhon, as the previously referenced post and others from the same time period indicate. I argued against it.

Wolfe has said (when asked about Silk's "ancestry"), that Silk is the son of the Calde and his mistress. The question was regarding his *ancestry*, not his parentage. I resolved this quandray by asserting that Tussah was Typhon's clone, and that Silk is a clone of the son of Typhon and Kypris' original ("the son not of my body shall be Calde after me").

To assert that Tussah was a clone of Typhon is an unnecessary plot complication for which there is no textual support. It is enough that the old Calde was Silk's spiritual, adoptive father who designated his 'son' as the heir to his office.

Thus, Tussah and Pas are murdered about the same time and Silk rises to take both their places. And that's why Silk meets 2 pairs of parents during his death: Pas, Kypris, Tussah, and his acknowledged mother.

For a lot of reasons, I would still like to say that Silk's "original" was a clone of Typhon implanted in proto-Kypris. But the text suggests that Chenille looked *very* much like Tussah and Horn told Silk that he and Chenille didn't "really look that much alike." There's no way around it for me. Silk is genetically the bio-child of Typhon and proto-Kypris.

Let's see -- "Silk is a clone of the son of Typhon and Kypris' original". So, Typhon fathered a son on his mistress, and Silk is a clone of that son? Did Typhon father that child before or after he lost his body? Did the male half of the genetic material come from the original Typhon or from Piaton? And who was that son? Why isn't he in the pantheon? Why isn't he in the books?

And Kypris had the hots for a clone of her own son, and the clone reciprocated. Tisk, tisk.

Earlier, Crush wrote:

I believe Horn is a clone of Typhon. There, I said it.

I'd like to see the textual basis for that claim. You have, genetically speaking, Typhon = Tussah = balding Horn. And no one noticed. Not Quetzal, who knew the latter two. Not Hammerstone, who had seen both Typhon and Horn. Not Marble or Kypris, who had seen all three. And it seems to have escaped the notice of _everyone_ how much Horn looked like Chenille.

Typhon was proud of his face. He had 'command presence'. Horn had trouble ruling his own family.

-Roy

James Wynn — 23 Jun 2005, 08:44 · follows Roy C. Lackey

If Roy Lackey and Blattid are correct in their posts that Silk is a clone of Typhon, then he would carry Typhon's very face back to the Whorl to meet Severian. As appealing as that would be to me. I don't believe it.

I find this theory appealing, for very much the reason you show
-- Typhon is very concerned about "the face of command," which
is why he wants a full-head transplant rather than a brain transplant

Well, I didn't intend to pin this tail on you. I only referred to you and Roy because in the post Chris cited, y'all were, at the time, putting it forward. Actually, I also find the concept very appealing as I said. I probably have 2 dozen reasons for wanting it as an explanation for what is going on. But alas.

However, I think you are right about Typhon's interest in his own face in that Typhon or Pas *did* intend for Typhon's face to lead the colonists. But Echidna & Co and the Ayuntamiento spoiled it by knocking off Pas and Tussah.

~ Crush

James Wynn — 23 Jun 2005, 08:45 · follows James Wynn

Roy says:

To assert that Tussah was a clone of Typhon is an unnecessary plot complication for which there is no textual support. It is enough that the old Calde was Silk's spiritual, adoptive father who designated his 'son' as the heir to his office.

"It is enough" is a key word here. I once had about 5 potential explanations for Tussah's relationship with Silk. The one you give *could* have been the explanation among others.

I settled on this "unnecessary plot complication" only after Wolfe himself shut every other door. Wolfe was asked explicitly about Silk's "ancestry" and he said Silk was "the son of the Calde and his mistress". Unless one argues that Silk is the natural biological son of Tussah and his mistress (which is not explicitly denied in the text but is still untenable) then we are left to consider who that Calde in Silk's ancestry is.

Let's see -- "Silk is a clone of the son of Typhon and Kypris' original".
So, Typhon fathered a son on his mistress, and Silk is a clone of that son?
Did Typhon father that child before or after he lost his body? Did the male half of the genetic material come from the original Typhon or from Piaton?

That's an interesting question. But as you know, Typhon was blonde like Silk. Piaton dark-featured. But you make a significant point that Typhon has two heads *and* two bodies. This is important in some of the themes Wolfe riffs on. But not in this case.

And who was that son? Why isn't he in the pantheon? Why isn't he in the books?

I direct you to the Book of the New Sun...the story of Spring Wind (synonymous with "Typhon") and Bird of the Woods (the "People and Places" section of "Exodus otLS" or "Calde otLS" mentions Chico, Mamelta's pet parrot - this bird is not elsewhere mentioned in the whole saga - I take this an identity flag).

And Kypris had the hots for a clone of her own son, and the clone reciprocated. Tisk, tisk.

(sigh) Kypris was not Silk's genetic mother. She was a algorithmic simulation. I don't think even "Silver Silk" and Kypris could have had sex so what is your point? I could spend reems detailing the mythological types regarding mother and son that Wolfe is riffing off of, but I'm sure you know them already.

I'd like to see the textual basis for that claim [that Horn is a clone of Typhon].

It starts with the understanding that Tussah is a clone of Typhon. I realize that that is hardly self-evident from the text. As I said. I settled on it only after Wolfe shut every other door. But once you read it that way, much more starts to make sense. Give it a shot. And once you accept THAT, and once you accept that the story is littered with those frozen embryos like the ones in the looted freezer Silk and Mamelta found...then Horn's discussion about Pas at the beginning of "On Blue Waters" and other places start fall in to place.

You have, genetically speaking, Typhon = [bald] Tussah = balding Horn. And no one noticed. Not Quetzal, who knew the latter two. Not Hammerstone, who had seen both Typhon and Horn. Not Marble or Kypris, who had seen all three. And it seems to have escaped the notice of _everyone_ how much Horn looked like Chenille.

What makes you think Quetzal didn't notice? Horn was too young be of use overturning the Ayuntamiento, and the Trivigaunte spies were doing a lot of the work for him in putting Silk in that place. Quetzal knows a lot he doesn't talk about...certainly not to Horn and Nettle who are the narrators. Kypris? Same thing. What help could Horn provide for bringing back Pas? The Plan of Pas had been totally screwed 30 years before. The powers on the Whorl who wanted to see it happen had to work with what they had.

Pas was a god with two heads, both with hair. Tussah was a bald middle-aged man. Horn was a teenager. Do you really think whatever similarities they had in features were not ignorable?

Wolfe could have had chosen to have someone note these things. He could have explained a lot of things more clearly in this 7 volumn novel.

Typhon was proud of his face. He had 'command presence'. Horn had trouble ruling his own family.

I'm glad you brought up this similarity between Typhon, Pas, and Horn. Pas was master at keeping his family in line. He did a much worse job than Horn. You really think Typhon was so different? We know for a fact at least that his 12 year old daughter was conspiring against him with his enemies.

Also, Horn is the one person that the leaders of New Viron turn to when things are clearly going south. He leads a war against the Inhumis on Green. Thus his thoughts on the embryos that were given special genetic abilities in "leadership" becomes significant.

~ Cursh

James Wynn — 23 Jun 2005, 09:09 · follows James Wynn

Well, I don't have much to say for or against the clone theory, but to me it always seemed a little beside the point. The DNA Silk had in his meatybits is only of peripheral interest (at least to me), and the only problem I have with the clone theories is that they tend to make that aspect central to their interpretation.

Thematically, I consider it very important. Tussah=Typhon means that Tussah's and Pas's murder that happened at about the same are connected so far as the story goes. Much has been made of Pas's possible intentions for Silk. It shows that Pas' original plan did not include Silk. Silk came later, after things went awry. If Silk is genetically Horn's son, then the fact that the Rajan is simultaneously Silk, Horn, and Horn the Neighbor builds on the theme of rationalizing the Holy Trinity which Wolfe takes at many levels in The Short Sun.

Basically, knowing Silk is Typhon's son, is as useful as knowing that Krait is Horn's son. Hmm..no one ever asks if any of the other Inhumis bear the souls of named characters in the story. Don't you think they would gravitate toward the same roles their originals had in one way or another if possible?

Well, I consider it self-evident that Typhon's scan occurred after he got his new body, since Pas has two heads.

True, and I find this to be dead-on convincing personally. But at the same time it seems almost impossible to maintain continuity either way, because there's a pretty strong case going the other way. I hate to suggest it but perhaps this is just the product of an error on Wolfe's part.

Gasp! heh heh

Actually, I agree that shoehorning the launching of the Whorl into the apparently brief period between Piaton getting his new head and the first death of Typhon is a tight squeeze. But I think it can be done. And so far, I'm still inclined to my stated opinion on this. But I would love to be convinced otherwise.

But it would make a difference, regardless of whether Pas was there, if we were to believe that Silk had knowledge of Severian. At that point in the story, if I recall correctly, Silkhorn was no longer narrating. Was there any point where he and Severian were "off camera" and could have had a conversation the narrator wasn't privy to?

Well, even if Typhon's scan occurred after his meeting with the Conciliator, *and* that the Rajan carried the memory of that meeting, there is no guarantee that the Rajan would associate a boy he encountered with the somewhat older haggard prophet he encountered on before the launch.

On the other hand, if that boy was the image of Typhon's own son...well, perhaps there would be something there.

~ Crush

don doggett — 23 Jun 2005, 10:19 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

--- "Roy C. Lackey" <rclackey at stic.net> wrote:
I'd like to see the textual basis for that claim.
You have, genetically speaking, Typhon = Tussah = balding Horn. And no one noticed. Not Quetzal, who knew the latter two. Not Hammerstone, who had seen both Typhon and Horn.

Is this an acknowledgement that Quetzal personally knew Typhon? You realise you're saying that Quetzal came from Urth then, and didn't slip onto the Whorl 30 years prior to the start of LS. I'm not trying to dredge up the old blushas greeshas blurth blah blee debate but I would like a clarification. Thanks

Don

Chris — 23 Jun 2005, 10:39 · in reply to don doggett

Don said:

--- "Roy C. Lackey" <rlackey at stic.net> wrote:

I'd like to see the textual basis for that claim.
You have, genetically
speaking, Typhon = Tussah = balding Horn. And no one
noticed. Not Quetzal,
who knew the latter two. Not Hammerstone, who had
seen both Typhon and Horn.

Is this an acknowledgement that Quetzal personally
knew Typhon? You realise you're saying that Quetzal
came from Urth then, and didn't slip onto the Whorl 30
years prior to the start of LS. I'm not trying to
dredge up the old blushas greeshas blurth blah blee
debate but I would like a clarification. Thanks

Don

Quetzal knew Pas, the same as any other augur in the Whorl. And given Typhon's preoccupation with his face, it is assumed that he would *not* have given Pas a different face than himself.

don doggett — 23 Jun 2005, 11:08 · in reply to Chris

--- Chris <rasputin_ at hotmail.com> wrote:
Quetzal knew Pas, the same as any other augur in the
Whorl. And given
Typhon's preoccupation with his face, it is assumed
that he would *not* have
given Pas a different face than himself.

Ok, but Roy didn't say Pas, he said Typhon. Not to be
nitpicky but I think that requires clarification,
especially with this series. It also keeps Roy from
being misquoted later.

Don

James Wynn — 23 Jun 2005, 11:26 · follows don doggett

--- "Roy said:
You have, genetically
speaking, Typhon = Tussah = balding Horn. And no one
noticed. Not Quetzal,
who knew the latter two.

Don said:

Is this an acknowledgement that Quetzal personally
knew Typhon? You realise you're saying that Quetzal
came from Urth then, and didn't slip onto the Whorl 30
years prior to the start of LS. I'm not trying to
dredge up the old blushas greeshas blurth blah blee
debate but I would like a clarification. Thanks

Chris said:

Quetzal knew Pas, the same as any other augur in the Whorl. And given
Typhon's preoccupation with his face, it is assumed that he would *not* have
given Pas a different face than himself.

I think Roy was saying that Quetzal only knew Tussah and Horn. Wolfe has clarified when Quetzal entered the Whorl on the urth list by saying that Quetzal was "a late arrival" but that he's not the only Inhumis on the Whorl. I'm inclined to believe that the Neighbors/Inhumis were involved in the Whorl's launching based the Inhumis' thematic connection with Dionysus and the LS/SS similarities to the "King Midas and His Golden Touch" story. <http://www.urth.org/whorlmap/midas.htm>

But it's not iron-clad. Wolfe's interweaving of myth and literature can provide clues but he *does* go off-script as I have learned with frustration. And of course, the text itself says nothing of this.

~ Crush

Mark Millman — 23 Jun 2005, 11:26 · in reply to don doggett

Dear Mr. Doggett,

Actually, what Mr. Lackey said, is that Quetzal knew -Tussah- and Horn. The statement was:

You have, genetically speaking,
Typhon = Tussah = balding Horn.
And no one noticed. Not Quetzal,
who knew the latter two.

The "latter two" are Tussah and Horn. The characters that Mr. Lackey mentions as having seen Typhon are Hammerstone, Marble, and Kypris. The full posting is in the archive at:

<http://listserver.dreamhost.com/pipermail/urth-urth.net/2005-June/001168.html>

It is, so far, the only post by Mr. Lackey this month, so you can just search on his name to find it.

I hope this provides the desired clarification.

Best,

Mark Millman

On Thu, 23 Jun 2005, don doggett wrote:
--- Chris <rasputin_ at hotmail.com> wrote:

Quetzal knew Pas, the same
as any other augur in the
Whorl. And given Typhon's
preoccupation with his
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Pas a different face than
himself.

Ok, but Roy didn't say Pas, he said
Typhon. Not to be nitpicky but I
think that requires clarification,
especially with this series. It also

keeps Roy from being misquoted later.

Don

Chris — 23 Jun 2005, 12:14 · in reply to James Wynn

Though I try to remain agnostic about the whole clone thing, I might as well throw in some things that I think are problematic.

Crush said:

I settled on this "unnecessary plot complication" only after Wolfe himself shut every other door. Wolfe was asked explicitly about Silk's "ancestry" and he said Silk was "the son of the Calde and his mistress". Unless one argues that Silk is the natural biological son of Tussah and his mistress (which is not explicitly denied in the text but is still untenable) then we are left to consider who that Calde in Silk's ancestry is.

I find the application of the term "Calde" to Typhon to be very out of place here; the natural implication one would normally draw is that Wolfe is referring to Tussah. If you assume that Wolfe is being conversationally perverse here, then the term "Calde" could be applied to almost anyone. Which is not to say it's impossible that things are as you say.

For the life of me, though, I can't think of what purpose it might serve for Typhon to do this. It has been suggested that it was a body that Typhon was meant to inhabit, but that doesn't really work - why not clone himself and possess that body, rather than his son? And if he were going for optimization, why go with a natural biological pairing instead of a genetically engineered alternative? On the other hand if the embryo is supposed to be raised as an actual son for Pas in the new world, he would make a dangerous potential rival.

And who was that son? Why isn't he in the pantheon? Why isn't he in the books?

I direct you to the Book of the New Sun...the story of Spring Wind (synonymous with "Typhon") and Bird of the Woods (the "People and Places" section of "Exodus otLS" or "Calde otLS" mentions Chico, Mamelta's pet parrot - this bird is not elsewhere mentioned in the whole saga - I take this an identity flag).

I am not sure what you are getting at with this. But all in all if Typhon and the-mistress-who-became-Kypris did have a child I don't see why this would necessarily need any mention in the books or pantheon. The son could have been born during the rebellion, and very possibly killed by Typhon's wife and her children before developing a personality extensive enough to be worth scanning. One would certainly expect his bastard children to enjoy a very short lifespan in those circumstances.

Roy says:

I'd like to see the textual basis for that claim [that Horn is a clone of Typhon].

And I would add, I would like to see the textual *purpose* for Horn being a clone of any kind.

It starts with the understanding that Tussah is a clone of Typhon. I realize that that is hardly self-evident from the text. As I said. I settled on it only after Wolfe shut every other door. But once you read it that

way, much more starts to make sense. Give it a shot. And once you accept THAT, and once you accept that the story is littered with those frozen embryos like the ones in the looted freezer Silk and Mamelta found...then Horn's discussion about Pas at the beginning of "On Blue Waters" and other places start fall in to place.

Those little frozen embryos were enormously expensive and not easy to come by, and Horn's family was not of any great wealth. Nor is there any indication of who, if anyone, would give such an embryo to them to raise, or why. If you are suggesting that he was planted there in order to later be exposed to Silk, this would have had to have been planned long before Silk even came to that manteion.

Pas was a god with two heads, both with hair. Tussah was a bald middle-aged man. Horn was a teenager. Do you really think whatever similarities they had in features were not ignorable?

Later on, there should have then been a marked similarity between Horn (genetically Typhon) and Silk (genetically Typhon's son). This is something that lots of people should have noticed.

Also, Horn is the one person that the leaders of New Viron turn to when things are clearly going south. He leads a war against the Inhumis on Green. Thus his thoughts on the embryos that were given special genetic abilities in "leadership" becomes significant.

The subtext I always took from this was that the primary reason they sent Horn was to get him out of the way, not because they had high hopes of him returning successfully. And Horn knows he is being maneuvered, but has little choice in the matter. You could argue Horn as a religious leader, and certainly he was influential. Although his influence extended mostly to people who had never seen him, through his book - and it's implied that Nettle was at least as responsible for the persuasive force of that book as he was - but in any event the influence he wields is not the product of his face or "command presence".

Chris — 23 Jun 2005, 13:44 · in reply to James Wynn

Crush said:

Thematically, I consider it very important. Tussah=Typhon means that Tussah;s and Pas's murder that happened at about the same are connected so far as the story goes. Much has been made of Pas's possible intentions for Silk. It shows that Pas' original plan did not include Silk. Silk came later, after things went awry. If Silk is genetically Horn's son, then the fact that the Rajan is simultaneously Silk, Horn, and Horn the Neighbor builds on the theme of rationalizing the Holy Trinity which Wolfe takes at many levels in The Short Sun.

This is the kind of thing I was talking about, and I do think there's a very big thematic problem here. You are suggesting that Wolfe is "rationalizing" the Holy Trinity by deriving it from Typhon, who is on several levels *the Demiurge*. Perhaps you can justify this, I don't know, but any attempt to work this into the theme changes the implications of the entire series from top to bottom - and, as far as I can tell, not for the better. It seems like you'd be left with nothing but a sort of Gnostic pamphlet piece.

This isn't the only way the clone angle can be explored, of course, but it seems like many of the Clone Interpretations that have been proposed tend to center the theme on this one aspect at the direct cost of turning other aspects into mere farce, or simply discounting them.

don doggett — 23 Jun 2005, 13:59 · in reply to Mark Millman

Don blushes and shrugs. You know, I have trouble with left and right too. :)

--- Mark Millman <millman at heimdallr.dyndns.org> wrote:
Dear Mr. Doggett,

Actually, what Mr. Lackey said, is that Quetzal knew -Tussah- and Horn. The statement was:

You have, genetically speaking,
Typhon = Tussah = balding Horn.
And no one noticed. Not Quetzal,
who knew the latter two.

The "latter two" are Tussah and Horn. The characters that Mr. Lackey mentions as having seen Typhon are Hammerstone, Marble, and Kypris. The full posting is in the archive at:

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It is, so far, the only post by Mr. Lackey this month, so you can just search on his name to find it.

I hope this provides the desired clarification.

Best,

Mark Millman

On Thu, 23 Jun 2005, don doggett wrote:

--- Chris <rasputin_ at hotmail.com> wrote:

Quetzal knew Pas, the same as any other augur in the Whorl. And given Typhon's preoccupation with his face, it is assumed that he would *not* have given Pas a different face than himself.

Ok, but Roy didn't say Pas, he said Typhon. Not to be nitpicky but I think that requires clarification, especially with this series. It also keeps Roy from being misquoted later.

Don

James Wynn — 23 Jun 2005, 14:34 · follows don doggett

Though I try to remain agnostic about the whole clone thing, I might as well throw in some things that I think are problematic.

Cool.

Crush said:

I settled on this "unnecessary plot complication" only after Wolfe himself shut every other door. Wolfe was asked explicitly about Silk's "ancestry" and he said Silk was "the son of the Calde and his mistress".

Unless one argues that Silk is the natural biological son of Tussah and his mistress (which is not explicitly denied in the text but is still untenable) then we are left to consider who that Calde in Silk's ancestry is.

I find the application of the term "Calde" to Typhon to be very out of place here...the natural implication one would normally draw is that Wolfe is referring to Tussah...If you assume that Wolfe is being conversationally perverse here...

I do think Wolfe was being "conversationally perverse" as you put it. The questioner asked about Silk's ancestry. He is taking it as a given that Silk is not the natural son of Tussah. Wolfe acts dumb...he answers the question but with a major misdirection. I *was* stunned by this answer since at first glance it seemed be saying Silk was Tussah's natural born son. I recall that Don Doggett, on reading this response was initially prepared to scrap every all his clone theories and start from scratch...after all, if the text could be misread to this extent....

But Calde' is not an unworkable appellation for Typhon. A calde' is a combination executive officer and sole judge. That is an accurate designation for any dictator. Originally the word was applied to an official over a town, but by the same token an onager is a half-wild ass used for carrying small loads, not a what-ever-it-is that was in The Book of the New Sun. Wolfe takes words and uses them by their function, not their strict definition (at least in the Sun Cycle).

If you assume that Wolfe is being conversationally perverse here, then the term "Calde" could be applied to almost anyone.

No. There's no evidence that Whorl technology was capable of producing NEW special embryos available for implantation. But they did have the technology to implant the embryos after the fact. If Silk was one of those and it is clear he was, then he came from Urth. Now, 1) we know Silk is not naturally conceived, that he was not the natural son of Calde' Tussah, 2) there is another "calde'" in the story who has a mistress who takes special note of Silk (and there are no others), and 3) by virtue of becoming Calde', Silk has identified himself as Tussah's "son not of my body".

There are LOTS of ways to *possibly* resolve this, but I can think of only one way to take Wolfe's answer as anything approaching the truth *and* put all the other pieces together:

Silk was Tussah's son because Tussah was Typhon's clone. But he was a son "not of Tussah's body".

I can't make it work any other way. Prior to this, to have Silk meet Tussah in the Mainframe struck me as seriously unbelievable. He had never even met Silk. It was as unlikely (or more so) as if Blood were to seek Mucor's company after death.

For the life of me, though, I can't think of what purpose it might serve for Typhon to do this. It has been suggested that it was a body that Typhon was meant to inhabit, but that doesn't really work - why not clone himself and possess that body, rather than his son?

I don't know whether Typhon intended Pas to inhabit a body when the colonists disembarked. I kind of doubt it since why would he tinker with the embryos to give them added leadership abilities if he was only going to possess a host with a simulation of himself? He *did* clone

himself. When the Whorl came in to orbit around their destination, TUSSAH was in charge. But the Echidna & Co rubbed out Pas and the Ayuntamiento rubbed out Tussah. Tussah planned for Silk to rule after him, because Silk was genetically designed to lead...as Tussah was.

Why use himself and his family and court to make cloned embryos? Why not?

You have to get the clones from somewhere, I'm sure he thought he had the best of the best starting material all around him. It seems obvious to me that he would take the genetic material from close by.

I'm speculating here. I didn't decide that Tussah should be a clone so I could justify having clones wander around the Whorl. I attempted to work out the mysteries in the text and found that was the only solution left to me.

And if he were going for optimization, why go with a natural biological pairing instead of a genetically engineered alternative? On the other hand if the embryo is supposed to be raised as an actual son for Pas in the new world, he would make a dangerous potential rival.

I don't think Typhon was concerned about that. The question was whether the colonies would survive at all. They wouldn't have the technology to return to Urth or to set up rival empires. He DID genetically engineer leaders for the colonies. That's clear from the text in The Short Sun. He was trying to give them the best chance for survival. Any clones leading the colony in the first years would be dead before they could cause Urth any trouble. And they weren't supposed to be milling around normal people on the Whorl. Their purpose was to descend with the colonists. Things went wrong. The embryos leaked out on to the black market. The colonists did not disembark when they were supposed to. So you ended up with the embryos being implanted at various time under varying circumstances.

And who was that son? Why isn't he in the pantheon?
Why isn't he in the books?

I direct you to the Book of the New Sun...the story of Spring Wind and Bird of the Woods

I am not sure what you are getting at with this...The son could have been born during the rebellion, and very possibly killed by Typhon's wife and her children before developing a personality extensive enough to be worth scanning.

I'm just saying that the children of Typhon and proto-Kypris *are* mentioned in the books. And yes, you are right, it is not necessary for them to be in the pantheon but is it not unreasonable that they would be there. The text makes it clear that there are many lesser gods not mentioned in the LS/SS (Kypris is a lesser god herself). There are some that *are* mentioned such as Hephaestus and Thyone's Son. If Kypris was scanned it is reasonable any children she had were alive at that time. If the child was anything but a baby, or perhaps even then, it might well have been scanned. It would look no more like Silk than Scylla looked like her original. Maybe he *is* Thyone's Son.

I would like to see the textual *purpose* for Horn being a clone of any kind.

The same purpose for Rose having red hair or Kypris having blond hair while her original looked more like Hyacinth. It provides narrative depth. I've given thematic purposes for having Horn be a clone of Typhon. What sort of textual purpose would suffice? The SF New Age writers provide the multiple viewpoints with limited knowledge to tell a story and leave reader to divine the gaps. They tell a story with a certain amount of "negative space". This is just one more thing Wolfe has left for the reader to find in that negative space.

Those little frozen embryos were enormously expensive and not easy to come by, and Horn's family was not of any great wealth.

Neither was Silk's mother.

Nor is there any indication of who, if anyone, would give such an embryo to them to raise, or why.

This is a very good point. In my opinion, the person was Quetzal and his purpose was as a backup plan in case neither Silk nor Awk succeeded in bringing about the Plan of Pas. That's my guess.

Pas was a god with two heads, both with hair. Tussah was a bald middle-aged man. Horn was a teenager. Do you really think whatever similarities they had in features were not ignorable?

Later on, there should have then been a marked similarity between Horn (genetically Typhon) and Silk (genetically Typhon's son). This is something that lots of people should have noticed.

As the text states, there were very few people who knew Silk first hand... certainly not for very long. Most of those who did, were still on the Whorl. Without the two side-by-side, whose to compare them?

Also, Horn is the one person that the leaders of New Viron turn to when things are clearly going south. He leads a war against the Inhum on Green. Thus his thoughts on the embryos that were given special genetic abilities in "leadership" becomes significant.

The subtext I always took from this was that the primary reason they sent Horn was to get him out of the way, not because they had high hopes of him returning successfully. And Horn knows he is being maneuvered, but has little choice in the matter. You could argue Horn as a religious leader, and certainly he was influential. Although his influence extended mostly to people who had never seen him, through his book - and it's implied that Nettle was at least as responsible for the persuasive force of that book as he was - but in any event the influence he wields is not the product of his face or "command presence".

Well, you might have said the same thing about Silk prior to the revolution. Horn was "the leader of the boys at the palaestra". He led a revolt against the Inhum on Green. Even if you are right that the leaders of Viron were trying to get rid of him, what does that say? A hermitic paper manufacturer is a threat to them?

If it is The Book of Silk that is the danger, then they should have sent Nettle too.

~ Crush

James Wynn — 23 Jun 2005, 15:02 · follows James Wynn

Crush said:

Thematically, I consider it very important. Tussah=Typhon means that Tussah;s and Pas's murder that happened at about the same are connected so far as the story goes. Much has been made of Pas's possible intentions for Silk. It shows that Pas' original plan did not include Silk. Silk came later, after things went awry. If Silk is genetically

Horn's son, then the fact that the Rajan is simultaneously Silk, Horn, and Horn the Neighbor builds on the theme of rationalizing the Holy Trinity which Wolfe takes at many levels in The Short Sun.

This is the kind of thing I was talking about, and I do think there's a very big thematic problem here. You are suggesting that Wolfe is "rationalizing"

the Holy Trinity by deriving it from Typhon, who is on several levels *the Demiurge*. Perhaps you can justify this, I don't know, but any attempt to work this into the theme changes the implications of the entire series from top to bottom - and, as far as I can tell, not for the better. It seems like you'd be left with nothing but a sort of Gnostic pamphlet piece.

This isn't the only way the clone angle can be explored, of course, but it seems like many of the Clone Interpretations that have been proposed tend to center the theme on this one aspect at the direct cost of turning other aspects into mere farce, or simply discounting them.

I don't care if you completely deny there are *any* clones in the entire Sun Cycle, it is still extremely arguable (but I'm not arguing it) that the books are to Gnosticism what The Chronicles of Narnia are to Orthodox Christianity. That's just a fact, and discounting clones doesn't solve it. You still have a Gnostic pamphlet.

Severian is named after a 2nd century Gnostic sect. Silk is an "enlightened" man who becomes divine. Pas is an evil maker of an evil world who is undermined by the original "good god" from outside it. I would really like get Wolfe to provide a definitive answer on this.

But that is totally aside from Wolfe's rationalization of the Trinity....which he does for example in his discussion regarding Thyone's Son in RTTW... he is showing through the Rajan that it is possible...theoretically...for a person to be three persons yet one person. He's not saying that's how God

is. He's only showing that it is not unreasonable.

Wolfe has said that originally The Long Sun was about a "good man in a bad religion". Perhaps Wolfe is showing that you can't savage the knowledge of the true God so much that he can't reach people's hearts. That, as they say, when you get far enough away you are on your way back home. A demon who imitates a god will be transformed into that god. So the more evil Pas is, the better he exemplifies Wolfe point.

He's also clearly interested in mythical divine triads. Robert Graves made much of the female ones in "The White Goddess" (which Wolfe illustrates in the term "trivigaunte" and in the three sibyls) but there are plenty of important male triads as well in the mythologies of Greece, Scandinavia, Syria, etc.

~ Crush

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 23 Jun 2005, 15:31 · in reply to Chris

On 6/23/05, Chris <rasputin_ at hotmail.com> wrote:

If Silk is genetically

Horn's son, then the fact that the Rajan is simultaneously Silk, Horn, and Horn the Neighbor builds on the theme of rationalizing the Holy Trinity which Wolfe takes at many levels in The Short Sun.

This is the kind of thing I was talking about, and I do think there's a very big thematic problem here. You are suggesting that Wolfe is "rationalizing" the Holy Trinity by deriving it from Typhon, who is on several levels *the Demiurge*. Perhaps you can justify this, I don't know, but any attempt to work this into the theme changes the implications of the entire series from top to bottom - and, as far as I can tell, not for the better. It seems like you'd be left with nothing but a sort of Gnostic pamphlet piece.

Ummm.

I think that the Trinity theme is there, with or without the cloning aspect: but I think it isn't about "rationalizing" at all. I think that the Whorl, as a Gnostic parody of the true Creation, has its own parody of the Trinity....

--Dan'l

I do not fear Satan half so much as I fear those who fear him.

-- St Teresa of Avila

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>

Chris — 23 Jun 2005, 16:56 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

I agree with both you and Crush that there is a Gnostic element **there** regardless - that's the reason I find the possible relation to the Trinity to be problematic. A "parody" of the Trinity suggests a cosmological framework that's something like this (this is a rough, quick sketch so please don't kill me):

You have the Outsider standing "outside" from on high, and the Demiurge in control. The Trinity then springs from the Demiurge, but the Trinity is subverted from the Demiurge's purpose by the Outsider, thus becoming a genuine instrument for good. If you take this **seriously** you're drawn to the inference that the Gnostic elements in this book are an intended parallel to real cosmological principles, including a strongly heretical (to Catholic orthodoxy) suggestion of the Demiurge somehow standing necessarily in between the relation of man and God.

The difference thematically is in what role the Gnostic elements are supposed to play in the story. On a "standard" or "naive" reading you can place them as Typhon's attempt to have his way - but the Gnostic structure is overturned by the Creator and, in effect, cancelled out. Going the extra step and putting forward a Trinity which springs from the demiurge creates a stronger (and different) symbolic connection with theology and the story begins to **mean** something different, in a way that legitimizes at least some important aspects of that Gnostic structure.

re: the "rationalizing" Crush was talking about, as a simple device of showing how a 3-in-1 nature can work it may actually be somewhat inoffensive, but the minute you make that device central you call up these symbolic connections - which I can't help but think Wolfe would have wanted to avoid, even if he is not exactly the Voice of Orthodoxy.

Dan'l said:

Ummm.

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--Dan'l

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-- St Teresa of Avila

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 23 Jun 2005, 17:36 · in reply to Chris

Chris,

A "parody" of the Trinity suggests a cosmological framework that's something like this (this is a rough, quick sketch so please don't kill me):

You have the Outsider standing "outside" from on high, and the Demiurge in control. The Trinity then springs from the Demiurge, but the Trinity is subverted from the Demiurge's purpose by the Outsider, thus becoming a genuine instrument for good.

Ummmm ... not really what I had in mind.

What I'm saying (and have been saying for a couple of years now) is that the _Whorl_ itself is a miniature Gnostic Kosmos, with Pas/Typhon as the Demiurge who creates it and the Outsider as the True God. Silk's "enlightenment" - for which I have no proper name in terms of the "orthodox" true Creation; perhaps it might be likened to a moment of prophetic vision? - is, within the context of this miniature Kosmos, a moment of pure Gnosis. In pretending to be a whole and self-contained universe, the Whorl is thus a parody of the true Creation.

Because the Outsider is the True God of this Gnostic parody Kosmos, but also and more basically the God of Christianity, the Outsider is able to bend the false gods of the _Whorl_ to (ultimately) serve His ends. At one point Silk observes that demons and other entities who pretend to be gods "become" them - that is, they all tend toward Outsider-ish-ness - they are subsumed ultimately into His design (rather like Melkor and the Music of Eru Iluvatar).

I'm still not saying this very well. I have a clear vision of what I'm saying but it's hard to put into words. I need to draw pictures or something.

If you take this **seriously** you're drawn to the inference that the Gnostic elements in this book are an intended parallel to real cosmological principles, including a strongly heretical (to Catholic orthodoxy) suggestion of the Demiurge somehow standing necessarily in between the relation of man and God.

That is exactly what I am suggesting, with the caveat that "the Demiurge" is not the metaphysical being of old Gnosticism but Pas/Typhon. He does his best to make the inhabitants of the Whorl think he is the Father God, the Creator, and to make them forget the old religions - but he can do no better for a Scripture than create a patchwork of the Bible, Marcus Aurelius, and God knows what all else.

The difference thematically is in what role the Gnostic elements are supposed to play in the story. On a "standard" or "naive" reading you can place them as Typhon's attempt to have his way - but the Gnostic structure is overturned by the Creator and, in effect, cancelled out.

In what sense is this naive?

Going the extra step and putting forward a Trinity which springs from the demiurge creates stronger (and different) symbolic connection with theology and the story begins to **mean** something different, in a way that legitimizes at least some important aspects of that Gnostic structure.

What I was thinking was rather more orthodox: as Pas tries to replace (or displace) the Outsider as God, he will naturally (and perhaps not knowingly) tend to take on more and more seeming aspects of Outsider-ness, and ultimately a parody Trinity will be the result. I don't really see Tussah as part of it though...

--Dan'l

I do not fear Satan half so much as I fear those who fear him.

-- St Teresa of Avila

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>

Roy C. Lackey — 23 Jun 2005, 23:30 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Mark Millman wrote:

I hope this provides the desired clarification.

Dear Mr. Millman,

Thank you for saving me the trouble. I only wish more people read so carefully.

-Roy

nastler — 24 Jun 2005, 02:24 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Before the old Gnostic argument cycles through again,
I'd just like to flag the discovery of the secular
nature of Silks enlightenment made by Marc Aramini
almost two years ago (10Oct2003) but not really
discussed on the list.

This makes spurious the easy assumption (which I had
also made) that the Outsider is the True (Christian)
God breaking into the closed Whorl to directly
enlighten Silk on the court.

If God takes a hand in LS (or SS) then He is massively
indirect. As Dan (and Silk) says, it can only then be
an assumption that the intentions of Tyhpon and
Kypris, in giving such a cyberpunk message to Silk,
and the actions of the other "demons and false gods",
in some way accord with His wishes. Which is another
way to say "God is the Universe".

nastler

--- Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> skrev:

What I'm saying (and have been saying for a couple
of years
now) is that the _Whorl_ itself is a miniature
Gnostic Kosmos,
with Pas/Typhon as the Demiurge who creates it and
the
Outsider as the True God. Silk's "enlightenment" -
for which
I have no proper name in terms of the "orthodox"
true
Creation; perhaps it might be likened to a moment of

prophetic vision? - is, within the context of this

miniature
Kosmos, a moment of pure Gnosis. In pretending to be
a
whole and self-contained universe, the Whorl is thus
a
parody of the true Creation.

Because the Outsider is the True God of this Gnostic
parody Kosmos, but also and more basically the God
of Christianity, the Outsider is able to bend the
false
gods of the _Whorl_ to (ultimately) serve His ends.
At
one point Silk observes that demons and other
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who pretend to be gods "become" them - that is, they

all tend toward Outsider-ish-ness - they are
subsumed
ultimately into His design (rather like Melkor and
the
Music of Eru Iluvatar).

James Wynn — 24 Jun 2005, 06:11 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Chris says:

I agree with both you and Crush that there is a Gnostic element *there*
regardless - that's the reason I find the possible relation to the Trinity
to be problematic. A "parody" of the Trinity suggests a cosmological
framework that's something like this
[Chris gives a decent sketch of The Long Sun as an allegory for Gnosticism]

re: the "rationalizing" Crush was talking about, as a simple device of
showing how a 3-in-1 nature can work it may actually be somewhat
inoffensive, but the minute you make that device central you call up these
symbolic connections - which I can't help but think Wolfe would have wanted
to avoid, even if he is not exactly the Voice of Orthodoxy.

I don't think Wolfe is writing an allegory. He's playing with many different ideas in many ways
often at the same time. He's cooking a multiple course meal tossing in different flavors that kick
in at different times and ways. This story, like all his novels, overlays certain symbols and
concepts that were adopted as central to Gnosticism but were also seen as CONFIRMATIONS of
the deity of Jesus of Nazareth by Christian mythopoeists like C.S. Lewis. So there's bound to be
some potential confusion here.

Even if the Whorl is a miniature Gnostic universe, Silk, Horn, and Horn! become
the Rajan mostly OUTSIDE it. If Wolfe were *merely* trying to create a Gnostic set-piece then
the Rajan Trinity confuses or devastates it. Horn, a clone of Typhon, is *ironically* the FATHER
of the Trinity. But he is neither Typhon himself nor Pas. He was reared in a vastly different
environment than Typhon. Horn! the Neighbor is the Spirit. They become 3-1 on the Whorl when
they join with the Son (Silk). Fine for our Gnostic story, although Silk has already been enlightened
and so this event is out of order. But THEN the Rajan preaches the will of Pas to the Whorl!!!
That's hardly the Gnostic story.

If Wolfe were determined to avoid the chance of people thinking he was endorsing the

Gnosticism then he should have avoided making Silk so appealing or naming his hero in The New Sun after a Gnostic sect.

~ Crush

Roy C. Lackey — 24 Jun 2005, 13:10 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Crush wrote:

Well, I consider it self-evident that Typhon's scan occurred after he got his new body, since Pas has two heads. I don't have my books, but I seem to recall a suggestion that Typhon had *just* got Piaton's body when he met the Conciliator. That would place the Whorl's launch just before or very soon after his confrontation with the Conciliator. In that case, the scan must have occurred as the capstone to the Whorl project before launching. Since I say the taking of Piaton's body was punishment for his taking part in the rebellion with his siblings and mother, there is the very real possibility that Typhon had himself rescanned with this new body after executing his family. Would Typhon have permitted his rebellious family to be a worshiped pantheon on the Whorl after they had betrayed him? Well, look how their are depicted and you tell me. Pas and Kypris depicted naturalistically. The rest of his family are monsters. Typhon might have had himself scanned again simply because he wanted Pas to be knowledgeable of his family's potential treachery.

I've pointed this out before, though it keeps being ignored -- perhaps because it plays hell with all sorts of beloved theories, but the textual fact of the matter is that Typhon's children were exactly that -- little children -- at the time they were scanned for the _Whorl_. Cilinia (Scylla), Echidna's firstborn, was close to the age of puberty:

"I saw the bird was really a girl old enough to take care of other sprats but not old enough to get married." "[. . .] a big girl that would be a woman in another year." (RTTW, 347)

And:

"I died young. It can't have been long after I was scanned for the _Whorl_." (392)

Her siblings were all younger; the youngest could not have been much more than six years old when scanned. The idea that seven little kids took part in any meaningful way in a conspiracy against their father is laughable on the face of it, for the same reason I laugh when I see one of our kittens in mock-attack mode take a swipe at one of our old toms.

I don't know if it's possible for a computer persona to "grow up" over the years, and grievances arise, but if it happened to Typhon's children, it happened on the _Whorl_, not Urth. The rebellion against the father can have taken place only on the _Whorl_, not Urth, in so far as the textually-given insurrection influenced events in the LS and SS books. The ship was gone before the children even grew up.

As for the notion that Piaton was/is Typhon's son . . . my blood pressure is much too high as it is. A moment's reflection on the above textual facts should suffice to show that it couldn't have happened as Crush theorized. And if that's not enough, just read chapter XXV of SWORD, where it tells how and why Piaton was chosen. Piaton was a slave chosen, after testing, for his physical strength. That's all there was to it.

-Roy

Chris — 24 Jun 2005, 14:22 · in reply to James Wynn

Crush said:

I do think Wolfe was being "conversationally perverse" as you put it. The questioner asked about Silk's ancestry. He is taking it as a given that Silk is not the natural son of Tussah. Wolfe acts dumb...he answers the question but with a major misdirection. I *was* stunned by this answer since at first glance it seemed be saying Silk was Tussah's natural born son. I recall that Don Doggett, on reading this response was initially prepared to scrap every all his clone theories and start from scratch...after all, if the text could be misread to this extent....

But Calde' is not an unworkable appellation for Typhon.

I don't think it's unworkable, I just think it's significantly awkward. And when you start trying to divine his intention here, you can go a number of ways. Just as one example, does he mean the "Calde" (in its non-obvious sense) is Silk's father, or does he mean the Calde (Tussah) is his "father" (in a figurative sense - even given the question was about Silk's "ancestry", even this can be taken figuratively). I'm sure other interpretations are possible, and I'm skeptical of all of them - I don't think this quotation does much to back up any theory.

I don't know whether Typhon intended Pas to inhabit a body when the colonists disembarked. I kind of doubt it since why would he tinker with the embryos to give them added leadership abilities if he was only going to possess a host with a simulation of himself? He *did* clone himself. When the Whorl came in to orbit around their destination, TUSSAH was in charge.

Tussah was in charge of one city, among how many? Hundreds? I don't think this provides any special reason to believe that Tussah is a clone of Typhon. And I don't see how it would be especially advantageous to have a clone of Typhon "in charge" when the time came - sure, such a clone might be genetically predisposed to successful leadership, but then *anyone* who gained and held that post* would likely be predisposed to successful leadership. And children don't always turn out the way you'd like them to, even if they have the "right genes" - unless of course Pas was going to possess Tussah when the time came, but you've already argued against that.

Here I'd like to make a general comment that applies to things brought up in several different posts (and not specifically here) - we have to be careful not to give Typhon too much credit for omniscience. What he did was a feat of social engineering on a massive scale; it's an inexact science, but all in all it seems to have worked fairly well. Still, the plan worked far from perfectly. Furthermore this kind of planning does *not* let you micro-plan events at an individual level, nor would you want to go about long-term planning on such a level. If you put

your eggs in the basket of a single individual, no matter what their genes, there are just too many unpredictable things that can happen to disrupt your planned development.

Nor is there any indication of who, if anyone, would give such an embryo to them to raise, or why.

This is a very good point. In my opinion, the person was Quetzal and his purpose was as a backup plan in case neither Silk nor Awk succeeded in bringing about the Plan of Pas. That's my guess.

I don't understand this, for reasons somewhat connecting with what was said above - it implies instrumental roles for specific individuals in "the Plan of Pas", sight unseen. Quetzal would then have to have known their roles something like 12 years in advance to get Horn in place. And since Pas had been out of commission for some time before that, Pas would have had to have planned out the course of events before many of the key players were even born.

Aside from that it seems impossible that Horn could possibly have filled in for Silk, even if he had supergenes. If the plan was for him to be a backup, it would seem safer to seed him in place much earlier.

The alternative here seems to be either to say that cloneHorn was dropped into place by some supreme agency capable of micro-managing individual lives in a city full of people just from their genes, or else Horn is there for some other (possibly purely incidental) reason. I don't think the former is viable, and offhand I can't think of a convincing argument for the latter.

Later on, there should have then been a marked similarity between Horn (genetically Typhon) and Silk (genetically Typhon's son). This is something that lots of people should have noticed.

As the text states, there were very few people who knew Silk first hand... certainly not for very long. Most of those who did, were still on the Whorl.

Without the two side-by-side, whose to compare them?

Lots of people in New Viron knew Horn first hand. And they get to see Silk's body when Silkhorn returns to New Viron. I do not think Silk was so old that a family resemblance would have been that impossible to discern. Especially in a family that striking.

Well, you might have said the same thing about Silk prior to the revolution.

Horn was "the leader of the boys at the palaestra". He led a revolt against the Inhumi on Green. Even if you are right that the leaders of Viron were trying to get rid of him, what does that say? A hermitic paper manufacturer is a threat to them?

If it is The Book of Silk that is the danger, then they should have sent Nettle too.

There are subtleties in play which I only loosely grasp, but they wouldn't have sent Nettle because they don't want to lose their ability to manufacture paper. Besides which with Horn gone, Nettle presumably falls into line out of a keen awareness of how vulnerable she and her family are. They want to maneuver it so that Horn's departure is voluntary, to avoid creating a martyr. By making the pretext a search for Silk - which they presume to be more or less impossible - Horn can go (in which case they can later scorn him as a failed prophet) or he can stay (in which case he has failed to put his money where his mouth is). Either way, regardless of Nettle they can use this to try to discredit the *Book*, and the Book is more of a threat to them than Horn and Nettle off on their little island.

Stanisław Bocian — 25 Jun 2005, 12:23 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Friday, June 24, 2005, 2:36:51 AM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

....

DIDO> Ummmm ... not really what I had in mind.

DIDO> What I'm saying (and have been saying for a couple of years DIDO> now) is that the _Whorl_ itself is a miniature Gnostic Kosmos, DIDO> with Pas/Typhon as the Demiurge who creates it and the DIDO> Outsider as the True God. Silk's "enlightenment" - for which DIDO> I have no proper name in terms of the "orthodox" true DIDO> Creation; perhaps it might be likened to a moment of DIDO> prophetic vision? - is, within the context of this miniature DIDO> Kosmos, a moment of pure Gnosis. In pretending to be a DIDO> whole and self-contained universe, the Whorl is thus a DIDO> parody of the true Creation.

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DIDO> I'm still not saying this very well. I have a clear vision of DIDO> what I'm saying but it's hard to put into words. I need DIDO> to draw pictures or something.

....

DIDO> --Dan'l

Yes. One of constant topics of Wolfe is that we became something by acting like it.

And something not quite on topic, but, I think, interesting. In "When I was Ming the Merciless" Wolfe alludes to a passage from "City of God" of St Augustine. The most striking fragment of that passage are:

"This Egyptian, however, says that there are some gods made by the supreme God, and some made by men. .. he asserts that visible and tangible images are, as it were, only the bodies of the gods, and that there dwell in them certain spirits, which have been invited to come into them, and which have power to inflict harm, or to fulfil the desires of those by whom divine honors and services are rendered to them."

"Dost thou not know, O AEsculapius, that Egypt is an image of heaven, or, more truly, a translation and descent of all things which are ordered and transacted there, that it is, in truth, if we may say so, to be the temple of the whole world?"

It should also be noted that for Gnostics Egypt was the symbol of the false world of matter, created by Demiurg, in which we live. So, I think that there can be no doubt that Whorl is symbolically Egypt, and leaving the Whorl is the Exodus.

Gene Wolfe "When I was Ming the Merciless"

"He had a theory-I don't know whether he believed it himself. I didn't, but still. . . . There was

something in it. Do you understand what I mean? It wasn't true; but still. . . .

"All right, here's what he thought. Or anyway, what he said he thought. That there are things we don't know about that live in the world with us-things in another plane of reality. And when you make something like that, it comes- one of them comes. It shapes itself to fit your image of it, becoming the real Spirit of the Yellows. Anyway, when we had the torchlight processions, sometimes you might think you could see it move. It was just the flickering light, of course, and the fact that because it was so tall the face was illuminated from the bottom. Any face will look strange when you light it from below, I suppose. We caught rats and pigeons when we built it and put them inside, so it would make strange sounds; some of them must have lived a long time.

"No, I don't know what happened to it, and I don't care. You can't kill the thing, the Spirit of the Yellows. Not unless you kill all of us, and you won't do that. We'll be free someday. How could we forget? The experiment was the greatest thing in our lives. At night, before we had won, we used to sit around the fire-outside, the buildings were too dangerous then-and talk. You've never done that. You weren't there.

St Augustine "City of God"

<http://ccel.org/fathers/NPNF1-02/Augustine/cog/t45.htm#t45.htm.0>

" The Egyptian Hermes, whom they call Trismegistus, had a different opinion concerning those demons. Apuleius, indeed, denies that they are gods; but when he says that they hold a middle place between the gods and men, so that they seem to be necessary for men as mediators between them and the gods, he does not distinguish between the worship due to them and the religious homage due to the supernal gods. This Egyptian, however, says that there are some gods made by the supreme God, and some made by men. Any one who hears this, as I have stated it, no doubt supposes that it has reference to images, because they are the works of the hands of men; but he asserts that visible and tangible images are, as it were, only the bodies of the gods, and that there dwell in them certain spirits, which have been invited to come into them, and which have power to inflict harm, or to fulfil the desires of those by whom divine honors and services are rendered to them. To unite, therefore, by a certain art, those invisible spirits to visible and material things, so as to make, as it were, animated bodies, dedicated and given up to those spirits who inhabit them,--this, he says, is to make gods, adding that men have received this great and wonderful power. I will give the words of this Egyptian as they have been translated into our tongue:

"And, since we have undertaken to discourse concerning the relationship and fellowship between men and the gods know, O AEsculapius, the power and strength of man. As the Lord and Father, or that which is highest, even God, is the maker of the celestial gods, so man is the maker of the gods who are in the temples, content to dwell near to men."

And a little after he says, "Thus humanity, always mindful of its nature and origin, perseveres in the imitation of divinity; and as the Lord and Father made eternal gods, that they should be like Himself, so humanity fashioned its own gods according to the likeness of its own countenance."

When this AEsculapius, to whom especially he was speaking, had answered him, and had said, "Dost thou mean the statues, O Trismegistus?

"--" Yes, the statues," replied he, "however unbelieving thou art, O AEsculapius,--the statues, animated and full of sensation and spirit, and who do such great and wonderful things,--the statues prescient of future things, and foretelling them by lot, by prophet, by dreams, and many

other things, who bring diseases on men and cure them again, giving them joy or sorrow according to their merits. Dost thou not know, O AEsculapius, that Egypt is an image of heaven, or, more truly, a translation and descent of all things which are ordered and transacted there, that it is, in truth, if we may say so, to be the temple of the whole world? And yet, as it becomes the prudent man to know all things beforehand, ye ought not to be ignorant of this, that there is a time coming when it shall appear that the Egyptians have all in vain, with pious mind, and with most scrupulous diligence, waited on the divinity, and when all their holy worship shall come to nought, and be found to be in vain."

Hermes then follows out at great length the statements of this passage, in which he seems to predict the present time, in which the Christian religion is overthrowing all lying figments with a vehemence and liberty proportioned to its superior truth and holiness, in order that the grace of the true Saviour may deliver men from those gods which man has made, and subject them to that God by whom man was made. But when Hermes predicts these things, he speaks as one who is a friend to these same mockeries of demons, and does not clearly express the name of Christ. On the contrary, he deplores, as if it had already taken place, the future abolition of those things by the observance of which there was maintained in Egypt a resemblance of heaven,--he bears witness to Christianity by a kind of mournful prophecy. "

Stanislaus Bocian

Dziewczyny z Warszawy... >>> <http://link.interia.pl/f1894>

Chris — 25 Jun 2005, 15:32 · in reply to James Wynn

Crush said:

Even if the Whorl is a miniture Gnostic universe, Silk, Horn, and Horn! become the Rajan mostly OUTSIDE it. If Wolfe were *merely* trying to create a Gnostic set-piece then the Rajan Trinity confuses or devastates it. Horn, a clone of Typhon, is *ironically* the FATHER the Trinity. But he is neither Typhon himself nor Pas. He was reared in a vastly different environment than Typhon. Horn! the Neighbor is the Spirit. They become 3-1 on the Whorl when they join with the Son (Silk). Fine for our Gnostic story, although Silk has already been enlighten and so this event is out of order. But THEN the Rajan preaches the will of Pas to the Whorl!!! That's hardly the Gnostic story.

If Wolfe were determined to avoid the chance of people thinking he was endorsing the Gnosticism then he should have avoided making Silk so appealing or naming his hero in The New Sun after a Gnostic sect.

There is some sense to this, of course, but the thematic interpretation still *feels wrong* in a way that's difficult to put a definitive expression to. My intuitive reaction to this is that I could accept the proposed trinity as ironic if it were a case of it being an *apparent* construction whose meaning on further examination is called into question. In this case the trinity analogy is not "apparent", not without considerable examination and scrutiny (more so even than the

average effort that goes into reading one of Wolfe's stories). So even if on *further* further examination it turns out not to be so, the reader's attitude on reaching the construction you suggest is not one of surface appearances but one of having uncovered deep secrets. So the ironic mode does not seem to drop into place entirely naturally.

I can't say that it's an invalid reading, if there is such a thing (I think there is, but that's just me), but the constellation of meanings and insights that can be drawn here all just seem fundamentally "off" to me; they also don't seem to represent an improvement over the meanings that can be drawn from the story without the Typhonic trinity. I'm aware that this seems a weak criticism, but at the same time I also think about half the magic to textual interpretation consists in that intuitive feeling of rightness or wrongness that leads you to settle on a meaning, or else keep looking.