

Wolfe the closet Gnostic. (or, "Gene I hardly gnew ye.")

The Urth list — 27 messages, 9 voices, 24 Jun 2005

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4462>

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Kieran Mullen — 24 Jun 2005, 14:33

Begin forwarded message:

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

It is this sort of postmodern meta-analysis that I find most annoying.

First, Gnostic is such a syncretic and malleable tradition that it is possible to read it into almost anything in which a powerful ruling figure is overthrown by appealing to a more benign, more powerful figure.

Second, Severian's name was chosen 13 years before Silk was created. Do you think that when Wolfe set out to create a character that people whose wardrobe fans would emulate at sci-fi cons, he intended to write a pro-Gnostic work over a decade later?

Third, do you think Wolfe, the author of such works as "The Detective of Dreams" and "Westwind," would write a pro-Gnostic set of novels?

Fourth, why should having an appealing hero make him necessarily pro-Gnostic? Isn't Silk closer to Moses than to Christ?

Fifth, name play gets a bit silly. Silk was common in New Testament times, and was called "damask", since it was manufactured in Damascus. No doubt by choosing the name "Silk", Wolfe was making an allusion to the role Syria plays in international terrorism.

Sixth... Oh well. You get the point.

Kieran Mullen

Chris — 24 Jun 2005, 14:56 · in reply to Kieran Mullen

I was about to playfully suggest as a universal rule that one should not postulate clones beyond necessity. (And it still seems like something of a good idea, I must admit).

But then it occurred to me that maybe a proliferation of clones actually *reduces* the number of entities (by making some people the same as others), so maybe Occam would approve. On that note I devised the following theory: everyone on Urth is genetically Severian, including Typhon.

We know that Severian, as Conciliator, weaves back and forth through time and leads a number of lives (Apu Punchau, etc), sometimes going quite a ways back in history. This being the case, all things being equal his genes would so dominate the gene pool that it would lead to hopelessly inbred children and the degeneration of the human race. To prevent this the Hierogrammates implemented a plan which replaced natural reproduction with technology similar to that used to resurrect Severian, but with a twist: it creates an *embryonic Severian* already in place in the womb. The embryo (and subsequent human) is then manipulated through hormones to generate a variety of appearances as necessary, including development of male or female reproductive organs as needed. And this, by the way, is the capping point that proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that this theory is correct: people on Urth *have* to be clones because they are *incapable* of reproducing naturally - despite appearances they are all genetically male!

This also explains how there's always a new Severian-body around for the Conciliator to pop into when he dies, no matter what place and time it happens to be.

This explains trivially why there are so many clones on the Whorl. All of the original passengers were clones of Severian. It's not that we have identified too many clones, it is that we have noticed too few.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 24 Jun 2005, 15:10 · in reply to Chris

Chris --

The very best part of this theory is that it resolves the Problem of the Spanish Barber.

"In a certain village in Spain, there is a barber, who shaves everybody in the village who does not shave himself. Who shaves the barber?"

Well, since everybody in the village is himself, he doesn't shave anyone. QED.

On 6/24/05, Chris <rasputin_ at hotmail.com> wrote:

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Maru Dubshinki — 24 Jun 2005, 15:11 · in reply to Chris

On 6/24/05, Chris <rasputin_ at hotmail.com> wrote:

I was about to playfully suggest as a universal rule that one should not postulate clones beyond necessity. (And it still seems like something of a good idea, I must admit).

But then it occurred to me that maybe a proliferation of clones actually **reduces** the number of entities (by making some people the same as others), so maybe Occam would approve. On that note I devised the following theory: everyone on Urth is genetically Severian, including Typhon.

We know that Severian, as Conciliator, weaves back and forth through time and leads a number of lives (Apu Punchau, etc), sometimes going quite a ways back in history. This being the case, all things being equal his genes would so dominate the gene pool that it would lead to hopelessly inbred children and the degeneration of the human race. To prevent this the Hierogrammates implemented a plan which replaced natural reproduction with technology similar to that used to resurrect Severian, but with a twist: it creates an **embryonic Severian** already in place in the womb. The embryo (and subsequent human) is then manipulated through hormones to generate a variety of appearances as necessary, including development of male or female reproductive organs as needed. And this, by the way, is the capping point that proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that this theory is correct: people on Urth **have** to be clones because they are **incapable** of reproducing naturally - despite appearances they are all genetically male!

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This explains trivially why there are so many clones on the Whorl. All of the original passengers were clones of Severian. It's not that we have identified too many clones, it is that we have noticed too few.

But of course! That ties in with Platonism brilliantly! Since you have the Ideal New Sun, and everybody is an inferior reflection of that pure essence, striving to return to the Realm of the Ideal/God. The Hs are merely a little closer to that perfection, but not at or past (else why would they need the New Sun to usher in Ushas, hmm?). This also explains easily how 'minds' could be shared in the New Sun (or Long Sun), an otherwise utterly ludicrous proposition- if everybody starts from the same basic Severian-mind, sharing a mind is like moving a program from one Linux computer to another Linux computer; nothing needs to be changed or ported (unlike say going from Linux to Mac or Windows). Ditto for scanning- instead of discovering a custom-mental-model for each and every distinct person who needs to be scanned, you can

simply build that mental model once, and only scan what's new.

~Maru

Somewhere, Popper is rolling over in his grave.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 24 Jun 2005, 15:19 · in reply to Maru Dubshinki

Maru,

On 6/24/05, Maru Dubshinki <marudubshinki at gmail.com> wrote:
But of course! That ties in with Platonism brilliantly! Since you
have the Ideal New Sun, and everybody is an inferior reflection of
that pure essence, striving to return to the Realm of the Ideal/God.

Which leads us ineluctably to the all-important question:

"Does a chem have Severian-nature?"

Mu,

--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>

James Wynn — 24 Jun 2005, 17:19 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Chris said:

I devised the following theory:
everyone on Urth is genetically Severian, including Typhon.

Ha ha! Dan'l already devised that retort the day I first declared that the explanation for Wolfe's answer was that Tussah was a clone of Typhon (although he may not remember it).

I don't think it's unworkable, I just think it's significantly awkward.

Yes, but you find it awkward because (I find this stunning) you found nothing particularly suspicious about Tussah's declaration that Silk was somehow his "son". I found the statement absurd. There was certainly no requirement that Tussah be succeeded by a blood heir. Silk's bio-mom was not Tussah's wife. Tussah certainly had other women. Furthermore, the circumstances of Silk's implantation were never revealed and could never be proven and would probably work against Silk's popularity if it were. Why assert that his "son" would follow after him?

And why go out of your way to have an embryo succeed you?

And how did he know that Silk would become Calde'? After all, with his leadership skills, he might have ascended to the Ayuntamiento or succeeded Quetzal? And since Silk's embryo came from the Whorl, how did his second set of parents get in the Mainframe?

As I said, I didn't go trying to figure out how to get clones on Whorl. As I saw it, Wolfe left no other explanation.

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 think Tussah, under the self-evident circumstances in the text, can be called Silk's "father" even figuratively. If I go with your interpretation, I'm left with the explanation that Wolfe totally misunderstood the question (and responded with unnecessarily abrupt dismissiveness) or ultimately lied. But why lie if the answer to Silk's ancestry is merely that Silk's parentage is that they are not characters in the story? For these reasons, Wolfe's answer -- unlooked for -- hit me like a ton of bricks.

[Typhon] *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.

I did not say this as proof that Tussah was a clone of Typhon. I was responding to your assertion that Pas would prefer a clone of himself to lead the colonists rather than a clone of his son. I was agreeing with you.

We don't know what went on at other cities. This is a story about one particular city.

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.

But the embryos *were* sent on the Whorl with the very intent that they would use their predispositions for leadership to make the colonies successful. That is stated explicitly. We know that. I didn't decide that a clone of Typhon had to be among them. Well before I fingered Tussah as a clone, there were discussions on this list about the similarities between Silk and Typhon. Many people were comfortably certain that the Silk-embryo was a clone of Typhon. I still think there are enough clues to make that theory inviting. I believe it was James Jordon who first asserted that Silk was a clone of the son of Typhon and proto-Kypris. I didn't like the idea at first...actually not until I was convinced that Tussah was a clone.

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.

I think that is one of the themes of the story.

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.

I think the failure of Typhon's plan to go off unhitched is pretty much a backstory of LS/SS. By the time, the colonists actually disembark, the Whorl is falling apart, the Mainframe's modules are at war, the chems have practically lost their ability to procreate since the females wore out, people have been using their shuttle cards for money and breaking them up into "bits".

The plan as it ends up is not Typhon's but Pas's. And of course the Pas that is resurrected is not the Pas that left Urth.

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.

Okay. For the record, we've moved off of Tussah and on to Horn.

First of all, it was only a guess. Secondly, Horn was about 15. That makes his birth a good deal less than 10 years after Tussah's murder. Tussah, I presume, knew who was his "son not of his body". Everyone guessed he was already out there somewhere. It didn't require special knowledge of their future at all. It only requires knowledge that the embryos were granted special propensities in leadership. That ability was the greatest threat to the Ayuntamiento since they were for no one's good but their own. We're never told how Horn found out about the leadership abilities by the way. Who told him?

I fingered Quetzal because he is the only non-simulated character in the story with a vested interest in seeing the Plan of Pas come off.

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 text says that embryos had to be procured from the black market. They weren't easy to get. Why would you assume the person who did it could time it? I'm not certain any living person knew that Silk was the "son" or whether the son had died of measles at 10.

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

The point was that he would have powers that could be used. According to [I don't remember who] Blood had Mucor emplaced just to see what powers she would have.

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.

Come on! You're telling me that anyone would recognize you as your father's son without the two of you compare side by side, even if one of your was paunchy and balding and the other was rail-thin, had long white hair, and a missing eye?

~ Crush

Chris — 25 Jun 2005, 02:15 · in reply to James Wynn

Not a retort, this post was meant to lighten up where I felt I was getting too serious. And you have to admit, the many-Severians theory has the virtue of absolving Severian of the sin of having intercourse with his own grandmother. Of course, whatever it is that he was doing

instead would probably be quite a sin in its own right, though I'm not sure anyone has devised a name for it yet.

Not to mention the ability to bring in anecdotes about Spanish barbers or the set of all clones who aren't clones of themselves.

I don't think you deserve a glib or dismissive answer to your actual argument, which is why I posted this separately. I'll continue separately and on a more serious note tomorrow.

Crush said:

Chris said:

I devised the following theory:
everyone on Urth is genetically Severian, including Typhon.

Ha ha! Dan'I already devised that retort the day I first declared that the explanation for Wolfe's answer was that Tussah was a clone of Typhon (although he may not remember it).

James Wynn — 25 Jun 2005, 11:44 · follows Chris

Chris said:

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Crush said:

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Chris said:

Not a retort, this post was meant to lighten up where I felt I was getting too serious....I don't think you deserve a glib or dismissive answer to your actual argument, which is why I posted this separately. I'll continue separately and on a more serious note tomorrow.

Thank you, Chris. An infinite number of Severians would certainly explain why one they would need to wear masks. And you are right, if Severian is a clone then his "grandmother" relation is formal rather than genetic, and there is still the fact that his crypt is Typhon's family mausoleum.

But I should say that while you did not consider the post as a retort or intend it as dismissive, I consider "multiplying clones to absurdity" to be the most difficult response to deal with, because....

It is not self-evident that Tussah is a clone of Typhon, and many (possibly most) readers find nothing askance in Tussah's "son not of my body" declaration.

So, naturally, the most reasonable assumption for those is that a rather incestuous "clone theory" (there's Severian and his grandmother again) is a cop-out...that I devised a curly-whorly yarn out of Himalayan thin air rather than carefully examine the text of the books for Wolfe's true intent. The opposite is true, but if one sees nothing wrong with Tussah's "son" declaration, then he is never going to abandon the "spiritual son of Tussah" reading regardless of how cozily I can show that an alternate reading fits the story and that the "obvious" reading does not.

I hope I took it like a man and laughed about it in the sense that I assumed it was intended. (If

you don't like people taking pot-shots at the moon, don't drop your pants.) But of all jokes, that one stings the most.

~ Crush

Stanisław Bocian — 25 Jun 2005, 12:34 · in reply to James Wynn

Saturday, June 25, 2005, 8:44:53 PM, James Wynn wrote:

JW> It is not self-evident that Tussah is a clone of Typhon,
JW> and many (possibly most) readers find nothing askance in Tussah's "son not JW> of my body" declaration.

JW> So, naturally, the most reasonable assumption for those is that a rather JW> incestuous "clone theory" (there's Severian and his grandmother again) JW> is a cop-out...that I devised a curly-whorly yarn out of Himalayan thin air JW> rather than carefully examine the text of the books for Wolfe's true JW> intent. The opposite is true, but if one sees nothing wrong with Tussah's JW> "son" declaration, then he is never going to abandon the "spiritual son of JW> Tussah" reading regardless of how cozily I can show that an alternate JW> reading fits the story and that the "obvious" reading does not.

I must note that implanting an embryo which is genetically not related neither to mother not to father is perhaps rare, but it is a really happening infertility treatment. If you maintain that implanted genetically uncognate embryo cannot be someone's son, and if this is the whole argument, it seems to me rather weak.

Stanisław Bocian

OMNIXMAIL! Jesli masz telefon w sieci Era i dostep do WAP, to mozesz na komorce odbierac poczte ze wszystkich swoich kont poczty e-mail!
OMNIXMAIL jest w Era Omnix: <http://link.interia.pl/f1896>

James Wynn — 25 Jun 2005, 14:15 · follows Stanisław Bocian

Stanislaw Bocian said:

I must note that implanting an embryo which is genetically not related neither to mother not to father is perhaps rare, but it is a really happening infertility treatment. If you maintain that implanted genetically uncognate embryo cannot be someone's son, and if this is the whole argument, it seems to me rather weak.

Well, that is certainly not the whole argument.

In cases of embryo implantation now, fatherhood rights are tenuous. They are recognized if the man positively asserts that right through a relationship with the child. But, yes, Tussah could still assert that right if he wanted to since he did pay for the implantation.

But the question remains "why did he want to assert that right?" There's no reason to believe he was sterile, assuming Chenile was his naturally conceived daughter. On the otherhand, there is no textual proof Tussah even had sexual relations with Silk's mother. Silk even never met Tussah in life.

But if only mundane family-law questions were the only mysteries regarding Silk and Tussah. As I said before....

There was certainly no requirement that Tussah be succeeded by a blood heir. Silk's birth-mom was not Tussah's wife, so Silk was no legal heir. Tussah certainly had other women. Furthermore, the circumstances of Silk's implantation ("the son not of my body") did not in fact bolster his right to the Caldeship, because the circumstances were never revealed on the Whorl and could never be proven and would probably work against Silk's popularity if it were. Why assert that his "son", not just any son but one "not of his body" would follow after him? Why not name a trusted grown-up who could protect himself?

And why go to such extremes to have an expensive black market embryo succeed you as your son? Especially if you could produce an heir naturally yourself, and especially if you knew no more about what it would be when it developed than Blood did regarding Mucor? And how did he know that Silk would become Calde'? After all, with his leadership skills, and without Tussah's direct guidance, he might have ascended to the Ayuntamiento or succeeded Quetzal. (Horn asked Silk this directly without getting an answer.) And since Silk's embryo came from Urth, how did his second set of parents get in the Mainframe?

So how's that? Have I stirred up any doubts in anyone regarding the straightforwardness of the "son not of my body" issue? I doubt it.

~ Crush

Chris — 25 Jun 2005, 16:48 · in reply to James Wynn

I do recognize that this plays on the biggest weakness of an attempted clone theory, but then in a broader sense almost any constructive theory of this kind from Wolfe's work has problems with "economy". Wolfe does not make it easy to draw clean, economical interpretations of his stories (which is not to say we shouldn't still *try* to be economical in our interpretations). That said I would just take it as implicit that a theory like this faces an uphill battle, and needs fairly strong arguments to be convincing, and leave it at that.

Crush said:

I don't think it's unworkable, I just think it's significantly awkward.

Yes, but you find it awkward because (I find this stunning) you found nothing particularly suspicious about Tussah's declaration that Silk was somehow his "son". I found the statement absurd.

This strays from my original point as far as the Wolfe quotation goes: if we take it as granted that Wolfe was speaking figuratively, then the quotation doesn't really provide usable evidence for any theory, yours or otherwise. Yes, I can see how you could read it the way you do, but I can also see how it can be read in other ways *even if your theory were correct*.

But you are correct in that I don't find it unreasonable for Tussah to consider his chosen heir, who he has taken extraordinary effort to set up and protect, as his "son" in a sense. It's just that this isn't my reason for finding your reading awkward. I find it awkward because referring to Typhon as "Calde" in a context where the term is sure to be taken as referring to someone else flouts basic conversational rules - which is obvious, and we agreed on from the beginning. And no, I don't take the awkwardness to be decisive in ruling out your reading, because it's not beyond Wolfe. I just don't see any possibility of a decisive interpretation of that statement either way.

And why go out of your way to have an embryo succeed you?

It has been too long since I read the Long Sun series to try to psychoanalyze Tussah, and I doubt there's enough in the text to allow that anyway, but possibly because he wanted an especially effective leader to follow him? Because he cared for the people under his rule? Or possibly as a final gesture of his own power beyond death, in choosing and maneuvering the person who would carry on after him? (I would have to dig, but I seem to recall Machiavelli putting a similar sentiment in the mouth of some historical ruler or other). Maybe out of pure spite for his political enemies, wanting to be sure his successor would be strong enough to defeat/destroy them.

And how did he know that Silk would become Calde'? After all, with his leadership skills, he might have ascended to the Ayuntamiento or succeeded Quetzal?

This leads to an odd bit of speculation which I don't know whether there's any solid evidence to be found, but... I seem to recall there is something very odd towards the beginning of the Long Sun series, where someone has put up a huge graffiti to the effect of "Silk for Calde!" long before Silk is well-known or has done anything to attract public attention to himself. It always seemed quite out of place. It seemed to me that someone, before the story even begins, is preparing to maneuver Silk into taking over, and it is a mystery as to who's behind it. Possibly agents secretly loyal to Tussah who were left to watch Silk and push him into leadership when the time came?

And since Silk's embryo came from the Whorl, how did his second set of parents get in the Mainframe?

As I said, I didn't go trying to figure out how to get clones on Whorl. As I saw it, Wolfe left no other explanation.

All of the original Whorl colonists, including the ones in stasis, originally came from Urth. Perhaps a couple of them were Silk's parents? It wouldn't require that much of a stretch.

As an aside, Mainframe is a concept that always struck me as odd, and I just don't see how it can possibly work as presented (or why its designer would want to set it up that way). Which possibly points to some further secret about the nature of Mainframe, but if so I haven't been able to place it.

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.

I did not say this as proof that Tussah was a clone of Typhon. I was responding to your assertion that Pas would prefer a clone of himself to lead the colonists rather than a clone of his son. I was agreeing with you.

Well, backing up from the question of Typhon's preferences for a second: in the broadest terms, either Tussah's being a clone of Typhon was an intended part of the plan for evacuating the ship, or it was not. If it was part of the plan, then this suggests that the same thing would be true in the other cities as well, implying lots of clones brought into play (though I am not sure how that would work in a matriarchal city, for example). If it was not part of the plan, then Tussah's being a clone of Typhon ends up being incidental, and we are left with a big question of how/why this came about that has no good answer.

But the embryos *were* sent on the Whorl with the very intent that they would use their predispositions for leadership to make the colonies successful. That is stated explicitly. We know that.

Right. And this to me falls into a category of planning that is something like: "give them good starting materials, and hope for the best." And that does seem to be the way Typhon operated. What I don't see happening, though, is a sort of micro-manipulation where Pas, from the beginning of the voyage, says: "At time X I want a person with THIS set of genes in THIS particular position."

But this is just another way of working on the angle that either having a clone (Tussah) in place at that time is intentional, or it is not. If it's intentional, it really stretches the bounds of what we can reasonably expect Pas to have planned, even if he made the plan on the spot just before decanting the clone. And this also does not seem to be a sensible or workable way to plan things.

Okay. For the record, we've moved off of Tussah and on to Horn.

First of all, it was only a guess. Secondly, Horn was about 15. That makes his birth a good deal less than 10 years after Tussah's murder. Tussah, I presume, knew who was his "son not of his body". Everyone guessed he was already out there somewhere. It didn't require special knowledge of their future at all.

Well, OK, here I should ask: if Horn was also a decanted embryo, do you think his being present at the same mantelion where Silk would eventually end up was intended, or mere coincidence? If coincidence, what would be the purpose of taking an exorbitantly expensively embryo and dropping him into a poor family, in a location where he is unlikely to get a great education and where statistically he stands a greater chance of being killed in some random accident or crime before reaching a reasonable age? If he's meant to play some role, or be a backup, why not decant him earlier so that he could be a more reasonable age when the time came?

On the other hand if he was meant to be there under the tutelage of Silk, whoever put him there would have to have an unrealistically exact sense of what was going to happen and when.

The text says that embryos had to be procured from the black market. They weren't easy to get. Why would you assume the person who did it could time it? I'm not certain any living person knew that Silk was the "son" or whether the son had died of measles at 10.

I agree, and this goes right along with what I was trying to get at. It makes Horn's presence at that place and time even more inexplicable.

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.

Come on! You're telling me that anyone would recognize you as your father's son without the two of you compare side by side, even if one of your was paunchy and balding and the other was rail-thin, had long white hair, and a missing eye?

For the average person, perhaps not (but realistically, maybe). But we're supposedly talking about someone for whom facial features are extremely important, this is what I was getting at. If the "face of command" is genetically passed on, then someone who actually has it will have

certain distinctive features, won't they? And if Horn didn't get the features, then he wouldn't have had the face and uncanny leadership skills you assume him to have. Though for the record I do not think Horn had any particularly uncanny leadership skills other than having learned from a good teacher - but then again, I don't think Horn is a clone either.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 25 Jun 2005, 17:15 · in reply to Chris

On 6/25/05, Chris <rasputin_ at hotmail.com> wrote:

This leads to an odd bit of speculation which I don't know whether there's any solid evidence to be found, but... I seem to recall there is something very odd towards the beginning of the Long Sun series, where someone has put up a huge graffiti to the effect of "Silk for Calde!" long before Silk is well-known or has done anything to attract public attention to himself.

This is in volume 2, if I recall correctly - or late in V1. But I think it's V2.

Doctor Crane turns out to be behind it, though we have to infer this from his letter home.

--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>

James Wynn — 26 Jun 2005, 12:12 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Chris said:

That said I would just take it as implicit that a theory like this faces an uphill battle, and needs fairly strong arguments to be convincing, and leave it at that.

Yes, I know. And, I admit, that for someone to find this theory appealing *at all* you have to be unsatisfied with the "obvious" explanation. It has strong arguments behind it if that is true, or even if one has serious misgivings about that "weak railing" of Silk's second set of parents in the Mainframe.

Otherwise, its arguments are not strong at all, and seem to fly out of nowhere.

Crush said:

You find it awkward because (I find this stunning) you found nothing particularly suspicious about Tussah's declaration that Silk was somehow his "son". I found the statement absurd.

Chris said

If we take it as granted that Wolfe was speaking figuratively [when he said of Silk's "ancestry" that he was the son of the Calde and his mistress], then the quotation doesn't really provide usable evidence for any theory, yours or otherwise.

I find it awkward because referring to

Typhon as "Calde" in a context where the term is sure to be taken as referring to someone else flouts basic conversational rules - which is obvious, and we agreed on from the beginning. And no, I don't take the awkwardness to be decisive in ruling out your reading, because it's not beyond Wolfe. I just don't see any possibility of a decisive interpretation of that statement either way.

Well, "figuratively" not the word. He was answering "puckishly". I think Calde' is the correct term for Typhon in Wolfe's mind. Perhaps "Calde" the the very title Typhon held in whatever fabled backstory Wolfe designed for "The New Sun". He answer precisely and in a manner

intended to mislead. If on a witness stand, he could be charged with perjury for an answer like that, but otherwise, it is technically an "honest" answer.

It is a matter of easy deduction: If he answered "figuratively" for "son" then he must be speaking figuratively regarding "ancestry". But there is no figurative sense for ancestry. If he was answering candidly, then we must explain how Tussah is in the ancestry of Silk.

As I read it, his answer did not *answer* any questions. But it did rule out several strong alternatives. That's how I came to say "Tussah=Typhon". It was exasperating because I realized that while it answered every problem I had regarding Silk's parentage, it could NEVER be determined, to the exclusion of other possibilities, simply from the text.

Yes, I can see how you could read it the way you do, but I can also see how it can be read in other ways *even if your theory were correct*.

I would be really REALLY interested in those other ways since, as I said I found all other doors shut to me. Of course, Tussah=Typhon, cozily answers every open question I had regarding Silk's parentage, but if you've got some other options I would love (honestly, I mean it) to hear them.

Crush asks:

And why go out of your way to have an embryo succeed you?

[Chris some decent psychoanalytical answers.]

Crush asks:

And how did he know that Silk would become Calde'? After all, with his leadership skills, he might have ascended to the Ayuntamiento or succeeded Quetzal?

Chris:

[Chris notes the "Silk for Calde" signs around Viron]
Possibly agents secretly loyal to Tussah
who were left to watch Silk and push him into leadership
when the time came?

As Dan'I pointed out, Crane was behind those and Blood's driver (who was a Trivigaunte agent) confessed to writing them. But that was one the methods that brought Silk to the front even though he really did nothing to place himself in that position. It doesn't explain how Tussah knew it would happen. I think I know how he knew. See below.

Crush said:

And since Silk's embryo came from the Whorl, how did his second set of parents get in the Mainframe?

Chris:

All of the original Whorl colonists, including the ones in stasis, originally came from Urth. Perhaps a couple of them were Silk's parents? It wouldn't require that much of a stretch.

Alright, see IMO that *is* a major stretch. Wolfe remarked about "literary rules" that if "gun is on the table in Act 1, someone has to fire it." To have unnamed undescribed colonists from Urth who are otherwise unnoted in the story appear in the Mainframe as Silk's parents and then go away is a serious storytelling violation. Fifteen to Life if you can show the writer is not a hack. I just do not believe it would have gotten into the book without Wolfe or his editor noting that.

As an aside, Mainframe is a concept that always struck me as odd, and I just don't see how it can possibly work as presented (or why its designer would want to set it up that way). Which possibly points to some further secret about the nature of Mainframe, but if so I haven't been able to place it.

I've decided that Wolfe wanted a complete religious cosmos for the Whorl. He has a clockwork world, he has clockwork gods, he needs a clockwork Heaven. I agree that explaining how it works is problematic. How do chems get there? That's easy. How do people get there? That's a toughie. But it is not beyond the realm of possibility and I think that was enough for Wolfe's purposes. Just as Damon Knight's story "Life Edit" does not explain how lives were actually gone back in time and edited.

Well, backing up from the question of Typhon's preferences for a second: in the broadest terms, either Tussah's being a clone of Typhon was an intended part of the plan for evacuating the ship, or it was not. If it was part of the plan, then this suggests that the same thing would be true in the other cities as well, implying lots of clones brought into play (though I am not sure how that would work in a matriarchal city, for example). If it was not part of the plan, then Tussah's being a clone of Typhon ends up being incidental, and we are left with a big question of how/why this came about that has no good answer.

Well, IMO, Tussah being a clone of Typhon explains the questions of Silk's parentage. Not much more, except that it opens the door on the question "Are there any more like him?" There are still odd reference, themes, and parallels that connect Silk to Pas *and* Tussah well before Silk *becomes* Pas. Tussah being a clone does not solve that.

As for "other clones", I presume there are other clones in the other cities. Why would we assume only Viron had a refrigerator full of embryos under it? As you already know, I think there are multiple Typhons walking around, I think Silk is a clone. If the embryos are clones then we know that there are female embryos as well (Mucor). The obvious assumption is that Typhon cloned his family and favorites for the trip, and Wolfe may have been quite aware who they were when/if they appeared in the story. We know more about Silk, and Tussah as his "father" is important to the story, so pinning a name on them is more likely to resolve significant questions than with other hypothetical embryos.

But it does open up questions on Mucor.

But this is just another way of working on the angle that either having a clone (Tussah) in place at that time is intentional, or it is not. If it's intentional, it really stretches the bounds of what we can reasonably expect Pas to have planned, even if he made the plan on the spot just before decanting the clone. And this also does not seem to be a sensible or workable way to plan things.

You make a good point. Pas MIGHT NOT have initially wanted his clone to lead Viron. He might have not cared beyond that embryos be there to lead it. I thought it remarkable (only after deciding that Tussah=Typhon) that just before planned disembarkation, Tussah was Calde over Viron. But that could just be a coincidence, or a planned literary parrallel on Wolfe's part (Pas murdered, Tussah murdered).

Okay. For the record, we've moved off of Tussah and on to Horn.

Well, OK, here I should ask: if Horn was also a decanted embryo, do you think his being present at the same manteion where Silk would eventually end up was intended, or mere coincidence?

It only means that Horn was implanted in Viron in a poor family. For Tussah to drop his heirs among poor families seems to be is M.O., presumably to better hide them. We have some information regarding Horn's family but I'm not yet prepared to debate why or under what circumstances Horn came to be there. It seems likely to me that positioning Silk over that manteon (he didn't want to go there) might have been to get the surreptitiously placed embryos together so they could support one another.

But I think it is a mistake to ascribe Silk's ascendancy to mere coincidence or even his leadership skills. The gods are in the background possessing and quietly influencing decisions in Viron as with everywhere else. I think that is the only explanation for Silk's rapid rise. And I think Quetzals desire to limit the gods' direct influence in Viron was his specific reason for taking steps to limit any sacrificial appearance by the gods.

If coincidence, what would be the purpose of taking an exorbitantly expensively embryo and dropping him into a poor family, in a location where he is unlikely to get a great education and where statistically he stands a greater chance of being killed in some random accident or crime before reaching a reasonable age? If he's meant to play some role, or be a backup, why not decant him earlier so that he could be a more reasonable age when the time came?

I don't have my books and Amazon "Search Inside" does not provide the "People and Places" section of the books, however, IIRC Horn is named there as "the leader of the boys in the palaestra". So he was still excelling in that regard.

"My lack of education hasn't hurt much,
I can still read the writing on the wall." -- Paul Simon

Furthermore, as I hinted above, I'm not convinced that Horn and Tussah were the only clones of Typhon or anyone else walking around in the story. (Here we get back to "everyone is a clone of Severian" joke, which is so funny and so biting because it rings so true.)

Crush said
Come on! You're telling me that anyone would recognize you as your father's son without the two of you compare side by side, even if one of your was paunchy and balding and the other was rail-thin, had long white hair, and a missing eye?

For the average person, perhaps not (but realistically, maybe). But we're supposedly talking about someone for whom facial features are extremely important, this is what I was getting at. If the "face of command" is genetically passed on, then someone who actually has it will have certain distinctive features, won't they?

I'm not sure where the term "face of command" comes from although I've seen it used a lot on the list. I don't think Typhon's powers of leadership come from something special about his face. Neither so for Silk or Horn.

If we assume,
and I do, that Chenille's face was the image of Tussah's, then we will have to assume based on Horn's statement that Silk's face was not really that much like Tussah's. That's why I ruled out Silk being a clone of Tussah (which would have explained how the second set of parents got in the Mainframe after all, among other things).

Is it possible for a son to share the same hair color with his father (and even have a reddish beard, which, incidentally, is a sign of being a "Typhonian"), yet not look much like him otherwise? Sure it is.

~ Crush

Mark Millman — 26 Jun 2005, 13:32 · in reply to James Wynn

Dear Mr. Wynn,

In the earlier of your two (so far) messages today, you refer twice to "the Mainframe", presumably meaning the computer construct on the Whorl that takes the place of Heaven. Silk's seeing two sets of parents there is important to your theory of cloning and ancestry.

It seems to me, however, that the "Mainframe" in which he sees his two sets of parents is not the computer construct--it's the real Heaven of the Outsider. Silk describes it as Mainframe because he has no other terms for it; to him, Mainframe is Heaven. While there, Silk sees both his spiritual parents (his birth mother and Tussah) and his physical parents (whoever they may be).

You may decide that this doesn't affect your theory; I confess that I've lost track of the details and so can't judge the likelihood of this for myself. To me, it makes explicit some of the unexpressed assumptions in this conversation, and helps resolve some of the contradictions that seem to have led to the current form of your hypothesis.

Mark Millman

James Wynn — 27 Jun 2005, 16:11 · follows Mark Millman

Mark Millman said:

In the earlier of your two (so far) messages today, you refer twice to "the Mainframe", presumably meaning the computer construct on the Whorl that takes the place of Heaven. Silk's seeing two sets of parents there is important to your theory of cloning and ancestry.

It seems to me, however, that the "Mainframe" in which he sees his two sets of parents is not the computer construct--it's the real Heaven of the Outsider.

[...]

You may decide that this doesn't affect your theory; I confess that I've lost track of the details and so can't judge the likelihood of this for myself. To me, it makes explicit some of the unexpressed assumptions in this conversation, and helps resolve some of the contradictions that seem to have led to the current form of your hypothesis.

Well, having Silk's reunion with his parents NOT occur in the Mainframe would certainly eliminate the question of how his second set got there, you've definitely got your finger on a major issue in this case. Here's my problem with that:

1) We have another instance of people meeting dead parents -- it occurs at the end of the story when everyone sails to the beginning of the Sun and it undeniably occurs in the Mainframe.

2) The 2nd set of parents in the Mainframe (or Heaven) is a big one to me but it is not the only one. I think I laid out my questions to the best of my ability here:
<http://listserver.dreamhost.com/pipermail/urth-urth.net/2005-June/001214.html>

Here, at last, the joke about Occam's Razor and infinite clones simplifying matters for once works in my favor. Most readers have presumed that Tussah was speaking figuratively when he called Silk "the son not of my body" since "what other explanation was there?". Chris has proposed a vast array of psychoanalysis on Tussah to explain his need for an embryo to succeed him. And now you have offered an alternate understanding of the Mainframe...supposing that that the place where Silk met his parents the first time is different from the place where he and Remora and Hyacinth and everyone else met their parents at the *end* of the story.

At this point, by comparison, Tussah as a clone of Typhon is demonstrably not awkward at all:

Tussah was a clone of Typhon. The embryos with the special abilities were clones...clones of Typhon and his family and possibly his courtiers. He had to get them from somewhere, why not pick (as he saw it) the best of the best and duplicating them over and over rather cull multiple unique ones? Tussah implanted an embryo in Silk's mother knowing that genetically that clone was his son. That's why he called him "the son not of my body." He was not speaking figuratively. He was merely stating a fact. (There nothing more Wolfean that offering a lie or a figure of speech and suddenly discovering it was true.) And, finally, the four people Silk met when he briefly died were Tussah, his birth-mother, Typhon, and Kypris.

(and if you consider the implications that the Rajan consistently called the inhumu Juganu his sister, that during soul-travel she had red hair, and when she wandered into a dark bar drunk the Rajan at first thought she was Chenille, you might consider that a)we do have reason suspect who Juganu's mother fed on before she was born and b) it is possible that fewer people are using familial terms figuratively that we supposed at first reading.)

~ James Wynn

Chris — 27 Jun 2005, 17:59 · in reply to James Wynn

Crush said:

Yes, I know. And, I admit, that for someone to find this theory appealing *at all* you have to be unsatisfied with the "obvious" explanation. It has strong arguments behind it if that is true, or even if one has serious misgivings about that "weak railing" of Silk's second set of parents in the Mainframe.

Otherwise, its arguments are not strong at all, and seem to fly out of nowhere.

Yes, it is pretty much exactly as you say. And I'd even put this together with something you mentioned earlier - it's not just about the Wolfe quote from the interview, or even primarily about it. The quote is extra-textual, and by some schools of thought that precludes it from entering into the interpretation process at all. But for all the attention we've given it your theory doesn't (or at least as far as I can tell shouldn't) rest on it. The meat of the issue lies elsewhere; I've just unfortunately let myself devote too much time to arguing that the quote is ultimately unhelpful. Because:

Well, "figuratively" not the word. He was answering "puckishly".

Whether you call it "figurative", "puckish", "mendacious" or merely "non-literal", it doesn't make for good evidence for much of anything. Nor is it even *capable* of ruling out much of anything, either.

I would be really REALLY interested in those other ways since, as I said I found all other doors shut to me. Of course, Tussah=Typhon, cozily answers every open question I had regarding Silk's parentage, but if you've got some other options I would love (honestly, I mean it) to hear them.

It seems like what needs to be answered, at least in part, is why Tussah feels that Silk is his "son". Because regardless of questions of DNA and physical fatherhood, you have additionally raised this as a question. I gave some possible impressions there, if only partial.

Now, on your picture Tussah is a clone of the person whose son Silk is a clone of. (Pardon the awful grammatical construction). This is a position to take toward the DNA aspect; do you count it as the answer to the psychological question as well? Because if that's what you are implying then you're putting forward an even stronger assertion than I thought, since it implies that Tussah somehow knows all this.

I do have some thoughts about Silk's parentage but they are just hazy enough that I will have to put them on hold until I can go back and re-read the series to get the context of the passages I'm thinking of - I have made mistakes on that before. So I am not much help there.

Crush asks:

And how did he know that Silk would become Calde'? After all, with his leadership skills, he might have ascended to the Ayuntamiento or succeeded Quetzal?

Chris:

[Chris notes the "Silk for Calde" signs around Viron]
Possibly agents secretly loyal to Tussah
who were left to watch Silk and push him into leadership
when the time came?

As Dan'l pointed out, Crane was behind those and Blood's driver (who was a Trivigaunte agent) confessed to writing them. But that was one the methods that brought Silk to the front even though he really did nothing to place himself in that position. It doesn't explain how Tussah knew it would happen. I think I know how he knew. See below.

Well, Quetzal also provides a fairly practical vector for Tussah to count on. Just how much he'd count on Quetzal I don't know, but he's not an insignificant factor by any means.

Alright, see IMO that *is* a major stretch. Wolfe remarked about "literary rules" that if "gun is on the table in Act 1, someone has to fire it." To have unnamed undescribed colonists from Urth who are otherwise unnoted in the story appear in the Mainframe as Silk's parents and then go away is a serious storytelling violation. Fifteen to Life if you can show the writer is not a hack. I just do not believe it would have gotten into the book without Wolfe or his editor noting that.

Do they have to be unnamed? Has anyone ever suggested Mamelta? She actually might be another instance of a "gun on the table", come to think of it. The only thing I can find from Wolfe on the subject of Mamelta is that the etymology is probably "Not Careless".

This of course seems a stretch. But right now we're only talking about guns on tables needing to be fired, and it's as good an answer as any.

As an aside, Mainframe is a concept that always struck me as odd, and I just don't see how it can possibly work as presented (or why its designer would want to set it up that way). Which possibly points to some further secret about the nature of Mainframe, but if so I haven't been able to place it.

I've decided that Wolfe wanted a complete religious cosmos for the Whorl. He has a clockwork world, he has clockwork gods, he needs a clockwork Heaven. I agree that explaining how it works is problematic.

Or perhaps it's unproblematic, it's just that what Mainframe *does* is not what they think it does. Or perhaps, per the "heaven" suggestion, it's not Mainframe we should be thinking about at all. I agree with you about the role of Mainframe in the story as far as Wolfe is concerned, though.

Well, IMO, Tussah being a clone of Typhon explains the questions of Silk's parentage. Not much more, except that it opens the door on the question "Are there any more like him?" There are still odd reference, themes, and parallels that connect Silk to Pas *and* Tussah well before Silk *becomes* Pas. Tussah being a clone does not solve that.

As for "other clones", I presume there are other clones in the other cities. Why would we assume only Viron had a refrigerator full of embryos under it? As you already know, I think there are multiple Typhons walking around, I think Silk is a clone. If the embryos are clones then we know that there are female embryos as well (Mucor). The obvious assumption is that Typhon cloned his family and favorites for the trip, and Wolfe may have been quite aware who they were when/if they appeared in the story. We know more about Silk, and Tussah as his "father" is important to the story, so pinning a name on them is more likely to resolve significant questions than with other hypothetical embryos.

Elsewhere you suggest that the modified embryos put in storage would be based on Typhon and his family, but if we're talking about a significant number of clones then there is a practical reason you *wouldn't* want to do it this way: genetic diversity. You may laugh this off as a factor but as the number of clones increases it becomes more and more of a concern. And not just for reproductive reasons - entering a new and unpredictable environment, it would be a bad thing for all of your uberleaders to be genetically vulnerable to the same diseases. All things being equal and given the resources you're spending on the project, why not make things as diverse as possible.

It only means that Horn was implanted in Viron in a poor family. For Tussah to drop his heirs among poor families seems to be his M.O., presumably to better hide them.

Silk's mother was not quite *that* poor. Horn's family lived, basically, in a slum. And arrangements were made, for Silk, as well. He got a very good education, and he didn't enter the priesthood by accident.

On the other hand there's no apparent reason at all to put Horn where he was, and no special opportunities afforded by that position, UNLESS you count exposure to Silk.

or under what circumstances Horn came to be there. It seems likely to me that positioning Silk over that manteon (he didn't want to go there) might have been to get the surreptitiously placed embryos together so they could support one another.

Quetzal certainly had the power to arrange it this way. But it's difficult to explain *why* he would - if he really were making these plans 15+ years in advance, he could have equally arranged to put them together under other circumstances. But this starts to suggest the same sort of long-term micro-management that I find dubious.

"My lack of education hasn't hurt much,
I can still read the writing on the wall." -- Paul Simon

I am not at all suggesting that the uneducated can't be good leaders. I am however suggesting that if you're going to make an expensive long-term gamble, you'd try to give the child in question every advantage possible. Even the rich in our own world do not make a point of sending their children to poor inner-city schools.

I'm not sure where the term "face of command" comes from although I've seen it used a lot on the list. I don't think Typhon's powers of leadership come from something special about his face. Neither so for Silk or Horn.

In this case you disagree with Typhon, then. And ultimately Typhon is the one who arranged the pleasure-cruise; if anybody made arrangements to put clones on board, it would have been him.

Mark Millman — 27 Jun 2005, 21:54 · in reply to Chris

Dear Chris and James,

On Mon, 27 Jun 2005, Chris wrote, quoting James Wynn:

I'm not sure where the term
"face of command" comes from
although I've seen it used a
lot on the list. I don't
think Typhon's powers of
leadership come from some-
thing special about his face.
Neither so for Silk or Horn.

In this case you disagree with Typhon,
then. And ultimately Typhon is the one
who arranged the pleasure-cruise; if
anybody made arrangements to put
clones on board, it would have been
him.

The term "face of command" comes from Typhon himself. In explaining why he chose to have his head transplanted onto Piaton's body, he tells Severian two things: first, that the operation to transplant the entire head was simpler than a brain-transplant; and second, and more importantly, that the head-transplant, unlike a brain-transplant, would preserve the face that his subjects were accustomed to obey. This is the context in which "face of command" occurs (though they may not be Typhon's exact words--I cannot check

at this moment--in any case Typhon certainly expresses this concept).

I must agree with Mr. Wynn here. I don't think that Typhon believes that there is anything inherently special in his face that aids his ability to rule. The key point is that he must be recognized as himself, the Monarch, even after the operation. Call to mind as well Master Malrubius' lesson on the highest form of government (or is it the highest form of loyalty?--I can't, at the moment, remember, and it makes little difference to this argument), and take into account that Typhon is in part an analogue of Lucifer; he will have an inverted or perverted form of government (or his followers' loyalties will be perverse), which mocks the virtuous or pure model.

Best,

Mark Millman

James Wynn — 28 Jun 2005, 16:36 · follows Mark Millman

Chris said:

Now, on your picture Tussah is a clone of the person whose son Silk is a clone of. (Pardon the awful grammatical construction). This is a position to take toward the DNA aspect; do you count it as the answer to the psychological question as well? Because if that's what you are implying then you're putting forward an even stronger assertion than I thought, since it implies that Tussah somehow knows all this.

Yes. I am saying that Tussah KNEW he is a clone of Typhon. It is likely he even knew that Pas had that name on the Red Sun Whorl (the Rajan was aware of it). Lemur knows a lot of details about the family of Typhon. Those on the "inside" in Viron may know more about the details of the rulership of Typhon than the sleepers since apparently a lot of their memories have been wiped and changed. I strongly suspect that by the final chapters of "Exodus", Silk knows he is a clone and he knows his genetic relationship to Typhon. I've hypothesized in my last response to Roy that Tussah might not have procured Silk from the black market although Remora presumed he had. He might well have simply gone to the refrigerator that Silk and Mamelta found (or one like it).

I do have some thoughts about Silk's parentage but they are just hazy enough that I will have to put them on hold until I can go back and re-read the series to get the context of the passages I'm thinking of...

Okay. Let me know when you start. I might be ready for a re-read by then as well.

Crush asks:

And how did he know that Silk would become Calde'? After all, with his leadership skills, he might have ascended to the Ayuntamiento or succeeded Quetzal?

Chris says:

Well, Quetzal also provides a fairly practical vector for Tussah to count

on. Just how much he'd count on Quetzal I don't know, but he's not an insignificant factor by any means.

Actually, I think he's a very powerful factor. But not that powerful I think. I really think Tussah must have felt able to count on divine help in that matter.

JW said:

Alright, see IMO that *is* a major stretch [that Silk's parents were passengers on the Whorl]. Wolfe remarked about "literary rules" that if "gun is on the table in Act 1, someone has to fire it." To have unnamed undescribed colonists from Urth who are otherwise unnoted in the story appear in the Mainframe as Silk's parents and then go away is a serious storytelling violation.

Chris responds:

Do they have to be unnamed? Has anyone ever suggested Mamelta? She actually might be another instance of a "gun on the table", come to think of it. The only thing I can find from Wolfe on the subject of Mamelta is that the etymology is probably "Not Careless".

Funny you should say that. Go back and search the archives for the discussion on whether Mamelta is Kypris and Silk's mother. Although, I can't remember whether the arguments *assumed* that Kypris was Silk's mother and that if Mamelta was one she had to be the other.

However, Kypris *does* say that in life she looked kind of like Hyacinth (Hy and Mam both had dark hair). And that business I mentioned earlier about Mamelta's bird "Chico" in the "People" section of "Exodus" (or maybe "Lake" or "Calde") is a big sign to me that ties her both to Kypris and "Bird of the Woods" in "The Book of the New Sun".

This of course seems a stretch. But right now we're only talking about guns on tables needing to be fired, and it's as good an answer as any.

Not much of a stretch to me, but that's just me. That Mamelta is Silk's bio-mom is exactly what I believe and it might *be* that Silk meets her in the Mainframe rather than Kypris, but we still have his other father to account for.

Elsewhere you suggest that the modified embryos put in storage would be based on Typhon and his family, but if we're talking about a significant number of clones then there is a practical reason you *wouldn't* want to do it this way: genetic diversity. You may laugh this off as a factor but as the number of clones increases it becomes more and more of a concern. And not just for reproductive reasons - entering a new and unpredictable environment, it would be a bad thing for all of your uberleaders to be genetically vulnerable to the same diseases. All things being equal and given the resources you're spending on the project, why not make things as diverse as possible.

Maybe, but once I accepted the possibility that there were multiple embryos who are clones of Urth's court, REAL familial relationships began to present themselves as answers to the bizarre thematic relationships I noted on my first read. There are characters that are treated thematically as the same person or as related in ways that made no sense. I would literally have to annotate book to explain these, but when I was able to say "Ah! Hieros! or "Hah, hah! 'Son' indeed!" suddenly a lot of the wierdness just fell away.

Granted, it *could* be a case where having only a hammer in one's tool- box, everthing looks like a nail, but I don't think I *did* approach the story with only a hammer -- I initially tried several other tools, but then at last saw my problems "driven down"

JW said

It only means that Horn was implanted in Viron in a poor family. For Tussah to drop his heirs among poor families seems to be his M.O., presumably to better hide them.

Chris said:

Silk's mother was not quite *that* poor. Horn's family lived, basically, in a slum. And arrangements were made, for Silk, as well. He got a very good education, and he didn't enter the priesthood by accident.

Well, Chenille's is supposed to be the *natural* daughter of Tussah and *she* grew up in the same slum. The money got pretty tight for Silk's mom after Tussah died. Silk's education was her responsibility alone and no one helped her with it as far as we are told. Joining the Charter was Silk's decision and it was against his mother's desires.

On the other hand there's no apparent reason at all to put Horn where he was, and no special opportunities afforded by that position, UNLESS you count exposure to Silk.

How about exposure to Chenille? How about exposure to Quetzal who spent time in Horn's district to feed on the inhabitants. He was born well after Tussah's death. It would have to be someone else who put him there, and I agree it had to be someone with money. That's why I suggested Quetzal.

JW said:

or under what circumstances Horn came to be there. It seems likely to me that positioning Silk over that manteon (he didn't want to go there) might have been to get the surreptitiously placed embryos together so they could support one another.

Chris said:

Quetzal certainly had the power to arrange it this way. But it's difficult to explain *why* he would - if he really were making these plans 15+ years in advance, he could have equally arranged to put them together under other circumstances. But this starts to suggest the same sort of long-term micro-management that I find dubious.

It doesn't strike me as micro-management at all. It strikes me as opportunistic. Silk joined the Charter on his own. That gave Quetzal some real control, but if he had gone into politics, Q would still have had access to him. The only real problem would have been if Silk had become a grocier in a small town outside of Viron. But the gods could have found him an arranged ascension no matter where he was. Tussah's plan could not have depended solely on Quetzal. And once again, Tussah calls Silk his son but it does not help him assume the Caldeship. Thus, I say, he calls Silk his son because it is a fact, not to help people identify him (what could be more hands-off than that?)

I am not at all suggesting that the uneducated can't be good leaders. I am however suggesting that if you're going to make an expensive long-term gamble, you'd try to give the child in question every advantage possible. Even the rich in our own world do not make a point of sending their children to poor inner-city schools.

If it were important to hide a child from the eyes of the powerful, then the best schools might be the worst place for his welfare. The Ayuntamiento certainly could not know when Tussah had implanted his "heir" or even if someone were implanting it after he died. You mentioned the question of whether Silk looked like Tussah. Well, I assert that Horn looked very much like

Tussah indeed. Putting him the in best schools probably would have been murder.

JW said:

I'm not sure where the term "face of command" comes from although I've seen it used a lot on the list. I don't think Typhon's powers of leadership come from something special about his face. Neither so for Silk or Horn.

Chris responded:

In this case you disagree with Typhon, then. And ultimately Typhon is the one who arranged the pleasure-cruise; if anybody made arrangements to put clones on board, it would have been him.

Based on Mark Millman's hint found the relevant quote on page 139 of "Sword and Citadel". What Typhon says of his face is that "it is the face that men are customed to obey". Obviously that is not an issue on the Whorl unless Typhon intends the colonists to be ruled by physical representations of monsters.

Sarah Dorrance-Minch — 30 Jun 2005, 21:03 · in reply to Kieran Mullen

--- Kieran Mullen <kieran at ou.edu> wrote:

Second, Severian's name was chosen 13 years before Silk was created. Do you think that when Wolfe set out to create a character that people whose wardrobe fans would emulate at sci-fi cons, he intended to write a pro-Gnostic work over a decade later?

Just to diverge from this interesting discussion onto a tangent...

The name Severian (or Severus, or Severin) crops up from time to time in other works. I have no idea if Wolfe ever read either of them, but if he is anything like me (if it's in print, I'm interested, if it has a reputation, I'm very interested!) he probably has.

The name of one of the villains in Justine (the libertine who deflowers Justine) is named Severin.

The name of the hero in Venus in Furs, if I remember correctly (it's been a long while) was named Severin.

One of the key supporting musicians of Siouxsie and the Banshees, and her boyfriend before she broke up with him and settled down with Budgie, used the stage name Severin. Not that this would have been a factor in the writing of Wolfe's novels, but I thought it amusing.

Oh, and Severus (and its feminine form, Severina) were not uncommon names in ancient Rome. A child named such was meant to reflect upon the quality/virtue of "severity," which today would probably best be thought of as "seriousness," "dignity," or "having a strong moral backbone." Severine is, I am given to

understand, still occasionally used as a name for girls in France, although I've never met anyone with that name (then again, I didn't socialize much when I was studying for my M.Phil a few years ago, so maybe I'm not the best person to say).

Personally I think Severian might simply have been given his name because whatever guildmaster who named him wanted him to embody the quality of sternness. But then again, maybe not.

And now back to the regularly scheduled programming.
(Dare I call it the Clone Wars?)

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

Mother to Sophie and Liesl and militant lactivist cult member

Sarah Dorrance-Minch — 30 Jun 2005, 21:12 · in reply to James Wynn
does that mean he's his own Grandpa?

Sorry. I had to. :)

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

Mother to Sophie and Liesl and militant lactivist cult member

Roy C. Lackey — 30 Jun 2005, 21:23 · follows Sarah Dorrance-Minch

Sarah Dorrance-Minch wrote:
does that mean he's his own Grandpa?

Sorry. I had to. :)

That's been brought up here before. By me, I'm afraid, a long time ago. But at least it didn't involve clones. <g>

-Roy

Roy C. Lackey — 01 Jul 2005, 11:30 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Sarah Dorrance-Minch wrote:
does that mean he's his own Grandpa?

Sorry. I had to. :)

That's been brought up here before. By me, I'm afraid, a long time ago. But at least it didn't involve clones. <g>

I hope my comments weren't misconstrued. I was expressing chagrin over the theory, which I later recanted. See [here](#):

<http://www.urth.net/urth/archives/v0207/1485.txt.shtml>

-Roy

James Wynn — 01 Jul 2005, 12:52 · follows Sarah Dorrance-Minch

Just to diverge from this interesting discussion onto a tangent...

Where would I be without tangents?

The name Severian (or Severus, or Severin) crops up from time to time in other works.

Weeeeeell, *Severin* is not necessarily *Severian*.

1) There are saints named of Severian, of course. One martyred in North Africa and one who died in 320 by having his flesh torn off by rakes. There are a lot of Severus? and Severius? but that's not quite right (although it is possible Wolfe had a source that called one or some of them "Severian"). Everyone in the Commonwealth is named after saints. In the case of the flayed Severian, *I* could develop an argument that links Severian to the flayed god of Mesoamerican mythology, but I can't imagine many people going along with it.

2) There is Severian, the Bishop of Gabala in Syria, who was active in Chrysostom exiled.

3) There was a dynasty of Roman emperors starting with Septimus Severus in the early 3rd century that are called collectively the Severan or Severian emperors. Their rulership was not particularly singular from Roman or Christian church standards. The most famous is Caracalla.

However, there ARE a couple links from the Severian dynasty to Wolfe/New Sun:

a) Septimus, claimed (falsely) to be a son of Marcus Aurelius. There are of course shadows of Marcus Aurelius in the New Sun.

b) This second one requires some understanding that Wolfe believes there is evidence of direct contact over the centuries between Mesoamerica and ancient Asia/the Mediterranean. There was a Roman type sculpture found in a pre-Hispanic Columbian temple dated from the *Severan*

period. It was found in the 1930s and rediscovered in the mid-sixties.

It would not be surprising to me if Wolfe were aware of it.

Here's a link with a picture: <http://www.econ.ohio-state.edu/jhm/arch/calix.htm>

Still #3 seems awfully tenuous to me, and as many will tell you, that's saying something.

4) Finally, there is the Gnostic 2nd sect, that Irenaeus mentioned in his book "Against the Heresies": <http://www.urth.net/urth/archives/v0206/1204.txt.shtml>

#4 seems the strongest to me, but that's just me. Granted that none of them blow any dresses up, but that's not the only Gnostic tag in the New Sun story.

~ James Wynn

Stanisław Bocian — 03 Jul 2005, 03:20 · in reply to James Wynn

Friday, July 1, 2005, 9:52:08 PM, James Wynn wrote:

JW> ...that's not the only Gnostic tag in the New Sun story.

I would like to point out that the New Sun is generally neoplatonic. Such things as emanations, Aeons etc, hierarchies of angels and of worlds belonged to common religious heritage of all the religions of the Middle East, which conquered the whole Roman Empire. (Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Neoplatonism, Mithraism, Islam). Eg Kabbalah, which undoubtedly influenced New Sun, has great similarities with neoplatonism (along with important differences, of course).

Even dualism isn't specific to gnostics. The battle between Ahura Mazda and Ahriman is one of the main points of Zoroastrianism, and Zoroastrian church persecuted Gnostics even more than Christians (more than they persecuted Christians and more than Christians persecuted Gnostics).

The special gnostic idea is different. It is the revolutionary change of polarities - the God which all others worship is the Devil, we have found the true God.

This could be the point of the Long Sun, although not necessarily. There are many gods there, without one ruling Evil Demiurg, and Pas isn't exactly devil. The revelation of Silk can be interpreted as well as Christian attitude towards pagan gods. Christians commonly claimed the so called pagan gods are really demons, although there were other opinions. In the New Sun I don't see anything specifically Gnostic.

Stanislaus Bocian

Jak powstaje auto? >>> <http://link.interia.pl/f1898>

Chris — 04 Jul 2005, 19:32 · in reply to James Wynn

Crush said:

Chris said:

Now, on your picture Tussah is a clone of the person whose son Silk is a clone of. (Pardon the awful grammatical construction). This is a position to take toward the DNA aspect; do you count it as the answer to the psychological question as well? Because if that's what you are implying then you're putting forward an even stronger assertion than I thought, since it implies that Tussah somehow knows all this.

Yes. I am saying that Tussah KNEW he is a clone of Typhon. It is likely he even knew that Pas had that name on the Red Sun Whorl (the Rajan was aware of it). Lemur knows a lot of details about the family of Typhon.

I think this is a bigger assertion than you appear to think it, at least based on the cursory treatment of it so far.

Knowing some details about the history of Typhon, knowing that Pas is Typhon, these are significant things to be sure - and one can imagine a few vectors this knowledge might be acquired. It seems *unlikely*, though, that Pas himself would deliberately make it known to anyone because it simply doesn't offer him any advantage.

That said, the only way I can possibly think of for Tussah to know *who* he was a clone of is to

get it directly from one of the gods. Presumably Pas, because Tussah's conjectured position in Pas's plan puts him at odds with the other gods. [Unless, of course, ALL the cloned embryos on board are clones of Typhon, which would immediately tell you who you were a clone of given the knowledge that you were grown from one of those embryos. But you've denied this possibility, and I don't find it especially likely either.] Why would Pas tell him this? Neither Typhon nor Pas seem inclined to invite someone into an equal partnership if they could just use them as an instrument instead.

Telling him who Silk was supposedly a clone of seems similarly unmotivated, if not counterproductive. And I suspect that there would be even fewer people who might have that information from the beginning.

The answers to these questions are going to have a distinct impact on just what you think was actually going *on* here.

Also, elsewhere you state more explicitly than before:

"I do say that SILK and TUSSAH and were part of the Plan of Pas with respect to Viron. But it was not necessary for Typhon to plan it from Urth. Tussah's implantation could be argued to be timed with the Whorl's arrival to Blue, but Silk's was done by Tussah after Pas's erasure."

But this puts Pas/Typhon in the position of doing *just* the kind of planning that seems most problematic, and least likely, given the shape of his overall plan from the beginning. And there seems no reason at all to go to the trouble of raising Tussah from an embryo and engineering his rise to Calde-hood, instead of just working with whoever happens to be in place at the time.

Funny you should say that. Go back and search the archives for the discussion

on whether Mamelta is Kypris and Silk's mother. Although, I can't remember whether the arguments *assumed* that Kypris was Silk's mother and that if Mamelta was one she had to be the other.

Maybe something's wrong with the archives, or with my brain, but google is giving me a set of hits that don't include this discussion. I looked for conjunctions of "Mamelta" with both "Kypris" and "mother", separately, and no dice.

Not much of a stretch to me, but that's just me. That Mamelta is Silk's bio-mom is exactly what I believe and it might *be* that Silk meets her in the Mainframe rather than Kypris, but we still have his other father to account for.

Well, assuming we are actively distinguishing between Kypris and the biological person that became Kypris, suggesting that Silk meets Mamelta rather than Kypris in Mainframe would imply that the same would apply to his father; since we know Typhon doesn't make it on the Whorl, it would imply that Silk's father is someone other than Typhon. So I don't think that interpretation is favorable for your purposes.

On the other hand there's no apparent reason at all to put Horn where he was, and no special opportunities afforded by that position, UNLESS you count exposure to Silk.

How about exposure to Chenille? How about exposure to Quetzal who spent time in Horn's district to feed on the inhabitants. He was born well after Tussah's death. It would have to be someone else who put him there, and I agree it had to be someone with money. That's why I suggested Quetzal.

Chenille? That is no better an answer than Silk - it implies micro-management of her life to put her in that neighborhood, and for *no* apparent reason. And it implies a sort of micro-management that is mysterious and counter-intuitive, because it lands Chenille in a

brothel and both Horn and Chenille in a slum so that they can be in proximity to each other, for.... what reason?

And exposure to Quetzal doesn't seem any more or less likely in that neighborhood, nor are we given any indication that Horn and Quetzal had any familiarity with each other. So if Quetzal put him there for that purpose, he apparently never followed through with it.

Did Quetzal put him there to feed on, then? If so he could just as easily have put his personal veal-calf in a more controlled environment.

It's possible to throw out lots of "reasons" to go to that much trouble to put a clone in Horn's position, but none of them seem to be any *good*.

It doesn't strike me as micro-management at all. It strikes me as opportunistic.

Placing Horn in that neighborhood 15 years prior to the start of the story is not "opportunistic" because at the time he would have been placed there, there was no significant opportunity to take advantage of there.

If it were important to hide a child from the eyes of the powerful, then the best schools might be the worst place for his welfare. The Ayuntamiento certainly could not know when Tussah had implanted his "heir" or even if someone were implanting it after he died. You mentioned the question of whether Silk looked like Tussah. Well, I assert that Horn looked very much like Tussah indeed. Putting him in the best schools probably would have been murder.

To fly under the radar you have to place him in the worst place you can find? A nice middle-income neighborhood would have done just fine for concealment.

JW said:

I'm not sure where the term "face of command" comes from although I've seen it used a lot on the list. I don't think Typhon's powers of leadership come from something special about his face. Neither so for Silk or Horn.

Chris responded:

In this case you disagree with Typhon, then. And ultimately Typhon is the one who arranged the pleasure-cruise; if anybody made arrangements to put clones on board, it would have been him.

Based on Mark Millman's hint found the relevant quote on page 139 of "Sword and Citadel". What Typhon says of his face is that "it is the face that men are accustomed to obey". Obviously that is not an issue on the Whorl unless Typhon intends the colonists to be ruled by physical representations of monsters.

Incorporating Mark's insight here creates something of a pretzel of logic that is difficult to straighten out, but let me try it this way:

The first question is, did Typhon possess special genetic powers of leadership, or not?

If no, then Silk/Tussah (who *do* possess such special genetic abilities) are not of Typhon's line. So your answer here has to be "yes".

The second question is, if Typhon did possess special genetic powers of leadership, then why did he have to worry so much about his face?

One possibility is the one that has been widely assumed: that his genetic leadership ability manifested in some way related to his face. In which case you *would* expect clones of Typhon and his son - who shared this genetic leadership ability - to look alike.

If Typhon's concern for his face was unrelated to this superlative leadership ability then it would seem like more mundane factors like familiarity provide only minor motivation to go to so much trouble/discomfort, balanced as they are by the fact that as familiar as his face might be, the whole two-headed monster thing isn't exactly familiar (or positive, either). It gets points for intimidation, but a big penalty for anybody inclined to view him as a freak of "nature".

[And of course even without connecting the leadership genes to facial features, one still expects Typhon's son (if he is to have similar abilities) to take after his father quite a bit.]

James Wynn — 06 Jul 2005, 22:08 · follows Chris

I said:

I am saying that Tussah KNEW he is a clone of Typhon. It is likely he even knew that Pas had that name on the Red Sun Whorl (the Rajan was aware of it). Lemur knows a lot of details about the family of Typhon.

Chris responded:

I think this is a bigger assertion than you appear to think it, at least based on the cursory treatment of it so far. Knowing some details about the history of Typhon, knowing that Pas is Typhon, these are significant things to be sure - and one can imagine a few vectors this knowledge might be acquired.

The only way I can possibly think of for Tussah to know *who* he was a clone of is to get it directly from one of the gods. Presumably Pas...

I'm just supposing here, but if I were writing this story, having established Silk's remarkable perceptiveness, I would have had Tussah

deduce his nature. That said, I could imagine lots of ways for Tussah to know up to and including be *told* by his guardians. Nevertheless, it is

almost essential that he be aware of it (although subconscious knowledge cannot be ruled out since this is a Wolfe story).

I said:

SILK and TUSSAH were part of the Plan of Pas with respect to Viron. But it was not necessary for Typhon to plan it from Urth. Tussah's implantation could be argued to be timed with the Whorl's arrival to Blue, but Silk's was done by after Pas's erasure."

Chris responded:

But this puts Pas/Typhon in the position of doing *just* the kind of planning that seems most problematic...And there seems no reason at all to go to the trouble of raising Tussah from an embryo and engineering his rise to Calde-hood, instead of just working with whoever happens to be in place at the time.

Today in Iraq, there are over a hundred thousand US soldier organizing patrols and public works projects. I presume this is part of the Plan of US General Abizaid. But it is not necessary for Abizaid to have personally planned the current any specific activity. He has layer upon layer of individuals who are working to have his Plan succeed. They derive their daily duties from that Plan, but their focuses change from day to day as circumstances require.

Since it is an **inequivocal** fact that the embryos **were** on the ship to with added abilities to unite and direct the colonists, it seems obvious to me that they would start dropping those embryos a couple decades before the colonists' planned departure. Who did that? I would guess the technicians at either end of the Long Sun. Typhon did not have to **plan** that being done per se. It probably wasn't even his idea. The colonists on the Whorl came in three types: the Cargo who maintained varying cultures (presumably artificially created), the Sleepers (who also had their memories tinkered with to prevent them overawing the Cargo), and the Embryos, and the embryos with their pimped out genes. But the Plan went awry. Pas was murdered by the other Mainframe modules, Tussah--one of the hyped up embryos--was murdered, and some of the embryos were stolen and sold on the black market.

Tussah's implantation was **probably** part of the orderly Plan. But Silk's implantation and any subsequent similarly purposeful implantations (Mucor's type does count) only required parties with means to emplant them and a desire to see the Plan to succeed. It was CERTAINLY not necessary for Silk's ascension to the Caldeship be planned from Urth.

Well, Silk meets Mamelta rather than Kypris in Mainframe would imply that the same would apply to his father; since we know Typhon doesn't make it on the Whorl, it would imply that Silk's father is someone other than Typhon. So I don't think that interpretation is favorable for your purposes.

Buuuut, the father is NOT identified and Mamelta **is**. However, if Mamelta = Kypris then Silk's bio dad is Typhon (unless you think Ty was being cuckolded).

If it were important to hide a child from the eyes of the powerful, then the best schools might be the worst place for his welfare. Putting [child who was the image of Tussah] in the best schools probably would have been murder.

To fly under the radar you have to place him in the worst place you can find? A nice middle-income neighborhood would have done just fine for concealment.

No it would not. The essence of middle class is social mobility. If you want to hide someone from the eyes of the powerful in a limited space (such as a city), you have to place that person as far from the eyes of the powerful as possible...such as a neglected neighborhood. What difference would it make? With the leadership clones' innate skills they could overcome any social obstacles to rise like a cork from the bottom of the Mariana Trench. Doesn't Sik's ascension prove that? What was the plan in placing a clone in Horn's neighborhood? Have you read "A Confederacy Of Dunces"? There's a pivotal scene where Burma Jones, in an act of sabotage writes information identifying his employer on a bag of pornography. Why? How would that be sabotage? "Because it doesn't belong there," he says. He doesn't have a plan beyond that. By the same token, I doubt whoever implanted Horn had a specific plan for how he would be used either, but such a clone would be a powerful tool and it would have Tussah's face and it was against the Ayuntamientos perceived interests...so that would be enough. Quetzal looks like a better and better choice since Silk was MOVED to that neighborhood by the Charter. But, truth is not really stated.

Based on Mark Millman's hint found the relevant quote on page 139 of "Sword and Citadel". What Typhon says of his face is that "it is the face that men are customed to obey". Obviously that is not an issue on the

Whorl unless Typhon intends the colonists to be ruled by physical representations of monsters.

Incorporating Mark's insight here creates something of a pretzel of logic that is difficult to straighten out...

Well lets start by quoting the text then:

"Why should you desire to have such a thing done?"

"That I might have life, of course...My physicians, of whom I naturally had the best of many worlds, told me it might be possible for me to take a new body, their first thought being to enclose my brain in the skull previously occupied by another. You see the flaw in that?...The face--the face! The face would be lost, and it is the face that men are accustomed to obey!... I told them it wouldn't do. Then one came who suggested that the entire head might be substituted. It would even be easier, he said because the complex neural connections controlling speech and vision would be left intact. I promised him a palatinate if he should succeed."

"It would appear to me--" I began.

Typhon laughed once more. "That it would be better if the original head were removed first. Yes, I always thought so myself. But the technique of making neural connections was difficult, and he found that the best way--all this was with experimental subjects I provided for him--was to transfer only the voluntary functions by surgery. When that was done, the involuntary one's transferred themselves, eventually. Then the original head could be removed. It would leave a scar, of course, but a shirt would cover it."

"But something went wrong?" [...]

Mostly a matter of time." The terrible vigor of his voice, which had been unrelenting, now seemed, now seemed to wane. "Piaton was one of my slaves--not the largest, but the strongest of all. We tested them. It never occurred to me that someone with his strength might be strong, too, in holding to the action of the heart...It was a period of great confusion as well."

The first question is, did Typhon possess special genetic powers of leadership, or not?

If no, then Silk/Tussah (who *do* possess such special genetic abilities) are not of Typhon's line. So your answer here has to be "yes".

I disagree. Are you saying that if you had a grandchild with a genetic disorder who benefited from gene therapy, that he would not be of your line anymore?

Or are you saying that a clone who has had his genes tinkered with to some degree is by definition no longer a clone? Well then what of the multi-armed twin Number Five found? This is an interesting case for Sci-Fi family court, but it doesn't matter in this case, because I assert:

- 1) Tussah considered himself to be a clone of Typhon.
- 2) Tussah knew Silk's genetic relation to Typhon.
- 3) Tussah, therefore, called Silk "the son not of my body", NOT in order to differentiate his unnamed successor from all other claimants (since knowledge of that was clearly and ultimately not necessary), BUT because he considered it a fact. A simple fact.

The second question is, if Typhon did possess special genetic powers of leadership, then why did he have to worry so much about his face?

Well, I hope I shown that it is not necessary for Ty to have such special manufactured powers. And the text shows that that was not the reason for his concern over his face. The issue is that the people are ACCUSTOMED to obey his face. Enclose his brain in another body and to that extent he is starting from scratch. Enemies might even let out that he is NOT the real Typhon, but a usurper. The power of dictators lay in their ability to prove that coming against them is fruitless. If there were any question about who was really in there. The whole farce would collapse.

the whole two-headed monster thing isn't exactly familiar (or positive, either).

But Pas did not originally intend to have that head very long. His testimony states that Piaton held on to the involuntary bodily functions longer than expected and the do to all the "confusion" the an occasion never arose where it was convenient to figure out how to help it along.

[And of course even without connecting the leadership genes to facial features, one still expects Typhon's son (if he is to have similar abilities) to take after his father quite a bit.]

Sons don't always look like their fathers. Sometimes they look like their mothers instead. It happens. But Silk did inherit his father's blonde hair and physical supposed physical significance.

Chris — 07 Jul 2005, 18:16 · in reply to James Wynn

Combining, as well as I can, points from two separate threads. The discussion is getting more and more unwieldy, unfortunately.

Re: Cilinia and the tomb, JW said:

"If we presume Sev investigated every tomb, perhaps his memory is the key. Why presume that? For that matter, why presume that Cilinia's tomb is written a script that Severian can read?"

We don't need to presume he "investigated" every tomb in any intensive kind of way. The only assumption that need be made is that if there was a recognizable external feature of the tomb, Severian would have seen it in passing - that feature need not be written in any script at all. It is an assumption, but an economical one. And there are no alternatives here which don't rely on some sort of assumption that's even less modest than this.

This again leaves out the intriguing possibility that there is an organization to the way people are buried here. But ultimately a lack of information is going to prevent us from drawing any satisfactory conclusion about that.

JW said, concerning his position on the tomb:

"The reason why I hold it...is for the reason I gave: The description of its finding is not as it should be."

and, to me:

"You didn't require this proof to believe the tombs were separate in the first place. It is unself-reflective to say this and not to consider that you find MSG's reference 'entirely convincing' only because it helps bring the narrative back to a normative keel for you."

Not quite correct. I do not require proof *in addition to the obviously divergent descriptions of the two tombs in the text itself*. Now, I am quite aware that there are always presuppositions in play when interpreting a text, but my presuppositions here are not spectacular or even

comment-worthy because they amount to the assumption that what is in the text is what is the case and not simply "badly written". Especially in light of your statement immediately preceding this that as far as you are concerned the description of the tombs is not the way it "should" be - that is, the way it would have to be in light of the theory you have settled on, which is precisely what was in dispute in the first place.

I am not going to knock you for using abductive reasoning, we are all engaged in it (including me), but on this particular item I do not at all think you are making a fair point.

[Also some points that I would love to take up on the Rajan's appetite, but unfortunately there is a reference I really need that I can't get until someone gives me my books back. The gist is that on at least one occasion he expresses fear/nervousness at the possible consequences of his having eaten too much that seem quite odd at face value.]

Bringing us back to the current thread:

I'm just supposing here, but if I were writing this story, having established Silk's remarkable perceptiveness, I would have had Tussah *deduce* his nature. That said, I could imagine lots of ways for Tussah to know up to and including be *told* by his guardians. Nevertheless, it is *almost* essential that he be aware of it (although subconscious knowledge cannot be ruled out since this a Wolfe story).

Fair enough, although I'd point out that for Tussah to make a deduction here he still has to have certain raw information at his disposal that would not have been available to anyone outside of Mainframe that I can think of. What are the premises on which he'd base his deduction, and how and more importantly *why* would he have that information?

[Snip summary of our exchange where I express some doubt over statements made over the course of a couple of threads that claim the involvement of Tussah and Silk in the Plan of Pas "essential", because it implies micro-managed planning, which leads to...]

JW responds:

Since it is an *inequivocal* fact that the embryos *were* on the ship to with added abilities to unite and direct the colonists, it seems obvious to me that they would start dropping those embryos a couple decades before the colonists' planned departure. Who did that? I would guess the technicians at either end of the Long Sun. Typhon did not have to *plan* that being done per se. It probably wasn't even his idea. The colonists on the Whorl came in three types: the Cargo who maintained varying cultures (presumably artificially created), the Sleepers (who also had their memories tinkered with to prevent them overawing the Cargo), and the Embryos, and the embryos with their pimped out genes.

This kind of planning doesn't bother me, if all you're saying is "yeah, he planned to dump out a bunch of embryos right about this time and hope for the best". If this is what you meant then this particular dispute may well be a verbal misunderstanding. But I thought you were saying that Tussah or Silk - in particular - being in charge of Viron was *essential* to the operation of his plan for that city. And this would be a silly way to plan anything.

Pas was murdered by the other Mainframe modules, Tussah--one of the hyped up embryos--was murdered, and some of the embryos were stolen and sold on the black market.

With what you just suggested above we need not even consider the embryos stolen and sold on the black market; perhaps they were made accessible to be "stolen" deliberately, by the technicians you mentioned above - it's as good a way as any to slip them into the population.

Buuuut, the father is NOT identified and Mamelta *is*. However, if Mamelta = Kypris then Silk's bio dad is Typhon (unless you think Ty was being cuckolded).

Not quite what I meant here, let me rephrase. On your picture the pairings are Typhon/Mamelta --> Pas/Kypris. *If* you are going to find it significant that he would see Mamelta as opposed to Kypris, then the father-figure you'd expect to see here would be mated to Mamelta, not Kypris - regardless, the pairing expected would *not* be Pas/Mamelta, because that pairing never existed. But on the other hand if Typhon is the father then there will be no figure analogous to Mamelta on the Whorl. The situation lacks the... symmetry... that you might desire.

Regarding why one would place an expensive embryo (the supposed clone-that-is-Horn) deliberately into the worst neighborhood one could find, I said:

To fly under the radar you have to place him in the worst place you can find? A nice middle-income neighborhood would have done just fine for concealment.

No it would not. The essence of middle class is social mobility.

And god forbid he be placed in a position with social mobility, we wouldn't want that would we?

But seriously, I suppose it depends on the size of the middle class but what are they going to do? Exterminate the middle class? Clearly they did no such thing. Watch for exceptionally promising young lads? That sounds like a good idea, and they probably did that, but here being in the middle class affords you no real disadvantage - if you stand out enough to be noticed, you're going to stand out no matter where you are. In a poor neighborhood you're also going to be closer to the underworld, which not-so-incidentally is also where a lot of the spies hang out.

JW said:

possible...such as a neglected neighborhood. What difference would it make?
With the leadership clones' innate skills they could overcome any social obstacles to rise like a cork from the bottom of the Mariana Trench.
Doesn't
Sik's ascension prove that?

And Silk's ascension most certainly was noticed. If it hadn't been so downright providentially timed, he probably would have been killed in his sleep before rousing any kind of successful revolution. As it was he lived quietly and unassumingly and was brought out of his shell into circumstances that were more or less immediately ready for him.

But aside from this a comparison of Silk's position in that neighborhood with Horn's is not valid. Silk *walked into* that community to a position of modest religious and civic leadership. And in his case, if he had been in a more wealthy district he would not have been given charge of the manteion when Pike died - a more senior augur would have been rewarded with the position. Horn's being "leader of the boys" is just not the same thing.

The first question is, did Typhon possess special genetic powers of leadership, or not?
If no, then Silk/Tussah (who *do* possess such special genetic abilities) are not of Typhon's line. So your answer here has to be "yes".

I disagree. Are you saying that if you had a grandchild with a genetic disorder who benefited from gene therapy, that he would not be of your line anymore?

This is something of an unexpected shift. But working with your analogy, the difference is that in your example we are tracing lineage through natural descent/childbirth. No such relationship exists with our supposed clones. Something is or is not a clone of something else based on its genes. So in other words, no - if the embryo doesn't have the same genes [see note below for concerns on what counts as the "same genes"] as Typhon then:

(1) it's not a "clone of Typhon" in a strict sense, it's just a genetically engineered embryo. And further than that, even if *most* of their genes were the same, what you'd be saying is that most of the good parts (with the uber-leadership skills) are precisely the parts which *don't* come from Typhon.

(2) it disrupts this relation of thematic equivalence you're trying to establish, which we haven't debated so much (probably because it is a bit more personal and more difficult to critique).

I don't know whether this weaker pseudo-relationship suits your purposes or not. I didn't think you'd like this as an alternative. If that's what you're really suggesting, though, I stand corrected.

JW, with foresight, mentions a variation of the objection:

Or are you saying that a clone who has had his genes tinkered with to some degree is by definition no longer a clone? Well then what of the multi-armed twin Number Five found?

I assume that we are both self-conscious of the grammatical nature of the argument we could have here. What makes all the difference is what you take to be the relevant criteria for identity in the context at hand; otherwise you have a sort of sorites problem of "how many grains of sand can you take away from the heap for it to still be a 'heap', how many genes can you take away from a clone for it to still be a 'clone'". So with that in mind:

A relation of thematic equivalence suggests very strong criteria for identity here. And in this case you'd be suggesting that the most *relevant* genes we could consider are precisely *not* the ones he got from Typhon.

Put another way, what thematic difference could it possibly make for me to suggest that a character, say Remora, got the particular genes for his hair color from Typhon?

This is an interesting case for Sci-Fi family court, but it doesn't matter in this case, because I assert:

- 1) Tussah considered himself to be a clone of Typhon.
- 2) Tussah knew Silk's genetic relation to Typhon.
- 3) Tussah, therefore, called Silk "the son not of my body", NOT in order to differentiate his unnamed successor from all other claimants (since knowledge of that was clearly and ultimately not necessary), BUT because he considered it a fact. A simple fact.

You've asserted all of this before. At the beginning, basically. But this doesn't help to show that it actually works as a theory/interpretation. And I don't see how it bears at all on what I was saying here, because all that question was meant to do was lay out a disjunction of possibilities, p or not-p. I didn't think you'd find the "not-p" horn of the dilemma appealing, but if you want to take it up that's fine, and see above. The below was meant for the "p" horn. [I really ought to rephrase that, but let the terrible jokes fly as they may.]

The second question is, if Typhon did possess special genetic powers of leadership, then why did he have to worry so much about his face?

Well, I hope I shown that it is not necessary for Ty to have such special manufactured powers. And the text shows that that was not the reason for his concern over his face.

I as much admitted all this in my original. We are not having a textual dispute over that here, although I deliberately did not emphasize it as you have because I can see at least one interpretation which can make a case for denying that this is all there is to it. The idea was that either way you cut it there are problems. *If* you assume that Typhon did have genetic leadership powers (which is the horn of the dilemma this portion was addressed to), the pluses and minuses concerning his face are dwarfed in comparison. But this part of the discussion can be discarded entirely because, as you point out, you have embraced the line that Typhon did *not* have such genetic abilities.