

Shooting the moon

The Urth list — 5 messages, 3 voices, 28 Jun 2005

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4467>

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Roy C. Lackey — 28 Jun 2005, 01:33

Crush wrote (of me):

Fine. Split away. But I don't need nearly as fine a microscope to split this one:

I didn't call you a liar. All I said was "that's not quite what is said". I stand by that.

I don't need to be a major league centerfielder to catch the gist of your remark that I was subverting the text in some undeclared subtle or not so subtle way. Take out "undeclared" and that's all fair game, but when doing that you could have posted the full relevant text rather than pull a sentence from it and then summarize what the Rajan's take on it was -- and then "leave it to the readers" to look it up. It wasn't a long reference and you had no problem quoting other references. A nasty shot from the bushes IMO, and I'll stand by that.

Do you also stand by this (to Chris)?

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....

[snip]

I ask, because you put that phrase in quotes, and went on to add:

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.

Neither Chris nor anyone else wrote it, at least not in this forum. I checked. Chris did, however, write "postulate clones beyond necessity". But that doesn't have quite the same connotation, does it? And "absurdity" doesn't even come close to "necessity".

Moving on. On the same page and in the same conversation as the passage we're disputing, Hoof asked (of Scylla), "Did she say Pas would kill her if he could?" Silkhorn answered, "That is indeed what she said, but I am not certain it's true and I'm not Pas."

This conversation takes place very near the end of Silkhorn's career on Blue. He denies being Pas, which is certainly literally true. Then how is it that this person "who arguably knows as much or more about Pas than anyone", doesn't know Pas' intentions toward his renegade daughter?

If, as you would seem to have it, Silkhorn is somehow (never mind how it came to be) the flesh-and-blood culmination of Pas' presumed plan to rule the colonies by proxy, when was that plan made and by whom? Typhon or Pas? None, I think, will argue that the two personalities are the same. Typhon, by all accounts, was a very bad man. His scanned self, Pas, became, at least for the _Whorl_, a more benign figure, a petty god. This evolution, from tyrant to local deity, a deity who was evidently regarded as something of a father figure by all except, perhaps, his rival deities in Mainframe, must have taken place over the course of three centuries. Regardless of just how the transformation came about, it happened.

If, per above, the person of Silkhorn was the fruition of Typhon's schemes, then his plans went miserably awry. Any plans made by Typhon were necessarily made on Urth before the departure of the _Whorl_. Neither Silkhorn nor any of his component selves (to say nothing of a hypothetical Neighbor component) are anything like the former Monarch of Urth. The Typhon Severian met (both times) was a monomaniac. Any theoretical clones, clones of sons, or enhanced embryos intended by Typhon to be host(s), eventually, for the download of the evil personality that had originally been uploaded to Mainframe, would have to have been provided for on Urth. Who (or what) was carrying out Typhon's scheme on the ship, three hundred years later? Who had charge of the embryos all that time? The black market??? Mainframe? And Pas the Benevolent, chief daddy of Mainframe, didn't know, or do, anything about it? Ah, you might say, of course Pas knew of Typhon's plans but had subverted them to his own designs. Very well.

But that brings up another question. You assert that "Silk is a clone of the son of Typhon and Kypri's original". Why on Urth would Typhon have had such a hypothetical son cloned? Did Echidna know about it? More importantly, why would Wolfe give such dubious gene donors to the star of his seven-volume opus?

We have established, at least to my satisfaction, that Pas is not Typhon. What particular need, therefore, did Pas have for a clone, much less the clone of a son, of Typhon? Well, the ship was nearing its destination, and Pas had duly prepared for the arrival. If Pas wanted to rule the colonies in the flesh, why not use what Typhon had given him? Mainframe, after all, could not leave the ship to follow the colonists (which is what subsequently caused his fellow Mainframe-bound deities to rebel in the first place; they would lose their worshipers). He arranged for the Tussah clone to be thawed out and born and raised to adulthood. Presumably he downloaded himself into Tussah, or only intended to. Then, inexplicably, instead of proclaiming, shipwide, that it was time for the Plan of Pas to be put in motion, Tussah decided to go into local politics. Well, maybe Pas was just a victim of bad timing and poor planning; he only had three centuries to get it right. Just when he had the Tussah clone where he wanted him and was about to launch the exodus, the rebellion blind-sided him. He only had time to stash bits of himself around the _Whorl_ before his "death", which consisted largely of being deleted from Mainframe.

Tussah, presumably possessed in whole or part (Tussah's motive has to come from somewhere) by Pas, and cut off from contact with "dead" Pas in Mainframe, scrambles first to save his own ass then to further Pas' plans. Instead of sensibly lying low or even moving to another city, he becomes the conspicuous, contentious leader of a city whose patron is his daemon daughter. Brilliant! Now what?

After screwing around for a number of years (about seven?), Tussah decided to have the clone of Typhon's love child (Why that choice? A shortage of Typhon clones?) implanted in one of his mistresses, Silk's birth-mother. I don't know where he got that particular clone or why he decided he needed another one grown, but never mind; only Pas knows. Then he promptly got

himself killed. Then, years after he died, Tussah _somehow_ connived to have a proper clone of Typhon implanted in yet another woman. That child turned out to be Horn, eight years Silk's junior. My imagination fails me at this point; I can't begin to account for these actions.

Wait! Maybe it was Quetzal who was behind all this cloning around. But, no, where would he have obtained all the inside knowledge needed to have pulled it off? And why would he have wanted to? He was a scout for the blood-thirsty inhum. Wolfe has denied that Typhon had foreknowledge of the inhum, and Pas had no reason to feed his colonists to them.

Where was I? Oh, yes. Pas eventually decided to pull himself together after being "dead" for some thirty years. He started hunting down and "killing" his rival familial gods and told the colonists to get off the ship. Exodus Horn but not Silk. And we all know why Silk didn't leave. I don't see how it can have been part of Pas' plan, but Silk got sidetracked with lust for that whore, Hyacinth, who had been possessed at the time he fell in "love" by his genetic mother, Kypris. Maybe that's why Pas put up with it for twenty years; he and Kypris got their vicarious jollies that way. Anyway, Horn went to Blue where he lived a fairly nondescript life for twenty years, then got killed on Green. I, for one, never detected the least hint of Pas, much less Typhon, in Horn. If he had been intended as a vessel for a god, he must surely have been a disappointment.

Does that about cover it?

-Roy

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 28 Jun 2005, 08:41 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

Nicely done, Roy. Just one point I would add...

On 6/28/05, Roy C. Lackey <rclackey at stic.net> wrote:

[Typhon's] evolution, from

tyrant to local deity, a deity who was evidently regarded as something of a father figure by all except, perhaps, his rival deities in Mainframe, must have taken place over the course of three centuries. Regardless of just how the transformation came about, it happened.

Very true, and this also provides aid and comfort to my point that Scylla is not "the same" as Cilinia - that she most likely has grown, or at least changed, over the three centuries of the _Whorl_'s voyage.

--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 — 28 Jun 2005, 16:36 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

I said:

A nasty shot from the bushes IMO, and I'll stand by that.

Roy said:

Do you also stand by this (to Chris)?

If you're offering a defense, it's a lame one. If it is an apology, it's worse. Take your best shot, but stand in the open as you do.

I agree moving on is the best recourse, considering all. The quicker the better.

On the same page and in the same conversation as the passage we're disputing, Hoof asked (of Scylla), "Did she say Pas would kill her if he could?" Silkhorn answered, "That is indeed what she said, but I am not certain it's true and I'm not Pas."

This conversation takes place very near the end of Silkhorn's career on Blue. He denies being Pas, which is certainly literally true. Then how is it that this person "who arguably knows as much or more about Pas than anyone", doesn't know Pas' intentions toward his renegade daughter?

a) I don't argue that Silk was intended to rule the colonies as an emperor. The story takes place in Viron. The Vironese colonists are at issue. The Rajan is not Silk. He more and he's less.

b) I don't think one needs to be intimately knowledgeable about Pas to argue that Scylla's fear that He intends to erase her were legitimate. He's been chasing her, her sister, and her mother for 20 years. And Hieros is reportedly "dead". I think the Rajan's lack of conviction concerning Pas's lethal intentions toward Scylla suggests more about HIS knowledge of Pas than Scylla's fear suggests HERS. I suggests that Pas final action about Scylla is simply not knowable by anyone.

c) It is hardly necessary, even if I held that extreme view (see a) of Pas's intentions toward Silk, for Silk to know everything about Pas's intentions or potential intentions toward Scylla.

d) I agree that the Rajan is not Pas, although he and Pas contain much that is the same. Silk was grafted to Pas so He could live, and Horn was grafted to Silk afterward for the same reason.

If, as you would seem to have it, Silkhorn is somehow (never mind how it came to be) the flesh-and-blood culmination of Pas' presumed plan to rule the colonies by proxy, when was that plan made and by whom?
Typhon or Pas?

None, I think, will argue that the two personalities are the same.

a) Oh waitaminute. I see part of the confusion here.

I don't say "Silkhorn", the Rajan, was "the flesh-and-blood culmination" of any plan of Pas. There's no way Pas could have planned on the Rajan for many many reasons...some of which you will not even agree with. 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.

b) I agree that Pas and Tussah are not the same personality.

c) Pas's plan was to have the colonists disembark the Whorl.
Quetzal's Plan, for different reasons, was the same.

Tussah, I argue, was part of both plans (unknowingly in Quetzal's case) and, it seems to me, he personally cared enough about Pas's plan to install Silk as a back-up in case he was murdered (as, the text suggests to me, he anticipated).

I don't know his reasons, they would probably have been multiple. But he considered it vital that he be succeeded by a souped-up embryo...if he himself were such an embryo, that certainly explains that decision.

But he didn't have to have "a son". He could have identified Silk in any way. Why this fatherly affection for a boy he never seems to have met? Did calling Silk his "son" help establish his right to the Caldeship? Nope. Maybe Tussah had Silk's career mapped out and that gave him a sense of investment in Silk? Uh uh. There's NO reason to believe Tussah anticipated that Silk would

join the Chapter. It obviously didn't matter a whit as far as his plan for the "son not of his body". (But it worked for Quetzal in that he could manipulate his career.)

So why call Silk his "son". Because it was a simple fact. That is all.

[At this point, Roy really warms to his task. He describes his understanding of my theory which is, unfortunately, wrong for the most part.]

You've blown my assertion that Tussah was a clone of Typhon way beyond any speculation I've made. Part of it is due to your misunderstanding about what I'm saying about the Rajan, and the rest is...just not what I'm saying. Certainly not what I've intended to convey. *I* have never intentionally claimed that it is MY belief that Typhon or Pas intended to have a personality downloaded into a clone. Maybe he did. The text doesn't say so AFAIK. But the Rajan says that Pas would not have found that necessary.

And I have another reason to doubt it:

If Scylla is any guide, no god-entity WOULD EVER WANT TO PERMANENTLY LEAVE THE MAINFRAME. Any sub-deity that possessed a mortal being would die when that being died. That's why the gods never possessed a being permanently. Even Kypris left Chenille when she was still needed to search for Silk. The prospect of possessing a human and going to Blue would be UNTHINKABLE. Scylla only did it because she thought Pas must have created connections to the Mainframe on Blue. She didn't find any, that was a big mistake on her part and she knew it.

You assert that "Silk is a clone of the son of Typhon and Kypris' original".

Ah! Good! Finally. Yes, that is what I assert.

Why on Urth would Typhon have had such a hypothetical son cloned?
Did Echidna know about it?

I don't know. Did she know about Kypris? Could she do anything about it if she did know? (Maybe she tried...)

More importantly, why would Wolfe give such dubious gene donors to the star of his seven-volume opus?

Why not? Dubious in what way?

a) Do you mean they aren't "worthy" of being Silk's parents? I'm not sure what sort of parents he ought to have had instead. I'd say centering on a character who is, in a sense, an illegitimate son of Typhon and has a backstory that without his knowledge *destines* him to be a savior is a pretty interesting start for this story, is quite Wolfean, and fits in the mood created by "The Book of the New Sun".

b) Do you mean that their parentage is not self-evident?

Do you think Wolfe imagined, while writing "The Book of the New Sun", that anyone would read the story close enough to figure out that Dorcas was Severian's grandmother? By the time he started "The Long Sun", he knew the story would be sifted with fine combs. So he hid the clues with more determination. Too much determination IMO. So much so that while, I believe that Tussah is a clone of Typhon, I don't think it can be deduced from the text to the exclusion of all other theories. But once you make that intuitive leap, a whole heck of a lot falls into place.

We have established, at least to my satisfaction, that Pas is not Typhon.

Okay. I agree. He's a facsimile, like "Silver Silk" is to Silk I suppose. Like Mr Million was to his original. Maybe less than that even: Maybe more like Krait was to Sinew. Who knows?

[Here Roy makes an argument based on a belief that I'm arguing Pas wanted to rule the colonies as a clone. But, of course, I've only said that Pas intended the colonies to be supplimented, united, and aided by the embryos...Tussah among them. But the overarching theme is embodied in "What particular need, therefore, did Pas have for a clone, much less the clone of a son, of Typhon?"]

I agree with everything you say regarding the fact that Pas did not need a clone of Typhon to rule the colonies and I go further in that I seriously doubt he wanted to rule the colonies personally at all.

I'm going to address your questions at this point only to show that the Tussah=Typhon theory works for the sort of postulating you've done. I'm only going to make the sort of ruminations you are making. I'm not claiming they are individually supported in the text:

1) Why did Tussah wait 7 years to implant an embryo? Perhaps he thought he could bring Pas back himself and found it wasn't so easy. The only knowledge required for Tussah to have is that HE himself was a clone and that he know what what relation Silk's embryo had to himself. This implies that the clones Tussah had access to had not yet been stolen from those refrigerators. I'm imagining little labels on each embryo unless the gods were telling him. [You asked why Tussah didn't use a Typhon clone? Perhaps the Typhon embryo in that refrigerator had already been used to make Tussah.]

I am surprised that while it is perfectly clear to you that Typhon and Pas were different personalities, it is so befuddling to you that Tussah, even as a clone of Typhon, would act independently even if he was in concurrence with Pas's overall plan. I'm surprised it isn't obvious to you that Tussah would have experienced the same sort of holy manipulation that Silk experienced from Kypris. Tussah was implanted as the Whorl approached -- maybe it was at Pas's instigation (things do not seem to have yet gone completely out of hand) or maybe it was just, "well, here's one of those clones, so he's the best candidate to use." But it is not beyond reason that Tussah knew that Pas had a plan to disembark, *or* EVEN that after Pas's murder, Kypris didn't tell him...yet even if he didn't know what the plan was, he MIGHT have known that Pas HAD a plan, and felt a religious devotion to see it come off. None of that undermines the reasonableness of Tussah being a clone of Typhon.

But a preset plan designed by Typhon on Urth to have this particular guy to do such and such is simply not necessary.

2) Why would Pas (and the rest of the pantheon) prefer to use those embryos (who happen to be clones) to announce their plans as opposed to anybody else? Well, the pantheon ARE NOT people. They are avatars representing computer modules of the Mainframe. This is stated, I forget where. They actually have functions within the Mainframe...which might explain why the Rajan had some doubt that Pas would completely eliminate Scylla. Since they are computer modules they are governed by certain rules that do not require them to _think_ "I must do this because my plan will work best if I do." They lead the Cargo and announce their plans to the Cargo through those embryos because they are programmed to do so...and they are programed to do so because, with the hyped-up genes, they were considered by the planners to be the best suited to lead and the best able to convince the Cargo to do as the Mainframe tells them.

Tussah *may* have been possessed in part, but no possessing deity would think of going to Blue in a person and staying there permanently, as I said above.

After screwing around for a number of years (about seven?), Tussah decided to have the clone of Typhon's love child (Why that choice? A shortage of Typhon clones?)

Perhaps. We aren't told. We're only told that it would be a "the son not of his body". Why do you suppose only a clone of Typhon would do? Why do you suppose I think Tussah thought only the a clone of the *son* of Typhon and Kypris would do? I don't. He said "the son not of my body will be Calde after me" because it WAS such a person that he had implanted and hidden away...I presume it was done in conjunction with Kypris.

Then, years after he died, Tussah _somehow_ connived to have a proper clone of Typhon implanted in yet another woman.

Hmmm...On being asked to suppose who implanted Horn, I fingered Quetzal as a likely candidate. I don't think I ever supposed it was Tussah.

Wait! Maybe it was Quetzal who was behind all this cloning around.

Ah! Your imagination seems to have led you in the same direction as me.

But, no, where would [Quetzal] have obtained all the inside knowledge needed to have pulled it off?

Quetzal? Are you serious? Much of it, no doubt from Tussah himself. But probably not exclusively.

And why would he have wanted to? He was a scout for the blood-thirsty inhum.

A scout? I don't see any reason to suppose that. But he wanted what all the inhum wanted: a thriving colony on Green. For his own reasons, he wanted the Plan of Pas to succeed.

There is no need for Tussah or Kypris or Pas or anyone else to know about the inhum for them all to share the same desire.

Do any of my answers incline you to retell the story differently?

~ James Wynn

Roy C. Lackey — 29 Jun 2005, 00:33 · follows James Wynn

Crush wrote:

I said:

A nasty shot from the bushes IMO, and I'll stand by that.

Roy said:

Do you also stand by this (to Chris)?

If you're offering a defense, it's a lame one. If it is an apology, it's worse. Take your best shot, but stand in the open as you do.

No, it wasn't a defense; I don't need one. I was demonstrating your propensity for reading things into the written word that simply aren't there. I in no way misrepresented the text I quoted, neither did I subvert its meaning. I gave the correct references to the text and invited readers to read it all for themselves, that they might judge. I didn't type out two pages of text because I didn't feel the need to and I'm not a typist. I guess it's easy to copy and paste text from Amazon as you seem to be doing, but I don't do that.

And it certainly wasn't an apology; I had nothing to apologize for. You misquoted Chris, and that's a fact. Since you weren't quoting what he actually wrote, the words you misquoted had to have come from the memory of your perception of what he did write. That demonstrates, I

think, the

assertion I made above. Just seven days ago you wrote:
If Roy Lackey and Blattid are correct in their posts that Silk is a clone
of Typhon [...]

I only started posting again to correct that misreading of my posts; I had made no such claim.
This is becoming tedious.

-Roy

James Wynn — 29 Jun 2005, 06:54 · follows Roy C. Lackey

I said:
A nasty shot from the bushes IMO, and I'll stand by
that.

Roy said:
Do you also stand by this (to Chris)?

I said:
If you're offering a defense, it's a lame one. If it is an apology, it's
worse. Take your best shot, but stand in the open as you do.

Roy said:
No, it wasn't a defense; I don't need one. I was demonstrating your
propensity for reading things into the written word that simply aren't
there.

Ooooooooooh! Now I **understand**. I went back and read your post and
I must admit I wonder why I didn't see it before:
<http://listserver.dreamhost.com/pipermail/urth-urth.net/2005-June/001206.html>

You had an unstated agenda to forward -- a **bias** to confirm!
That's why you chose to make a delineation regarding
page 361 of RTTW when there was **barely** any discernable difference...
and that's is why (I couldn't figure this out but it is all too clear now) although you typed out
other references verbatim to attempt to prove your point, you didn't post the reference AT
ISSUE. You did that because then it would have been patently clear that your differences were
slight at best...trivial at worst. You wanted to leave the impression that you were building a
federal case!

Of course you **could** have posted the text said "No, that is not the only reading. The Rajan
does not absolutely DENY that Pas EVER had ANY intention of ruling the Whorl in person." But
merely disagreeing and proving an alternate reading would not forward your
actual agenda of proving that I have **propensity** of
"reading things...that simply aren't there".

And simply SAYING that that was your intent in the original post was too up front. You wanted to
say it and not say it.

Got it. Well, I repeat, "Take your best shot but stand in the open as you do it." I'm not hiding.
I've made myself available for potshots. I don't think you should avail yourself of the privilege
and hide at the same time.

Just seven days ago you wrote:
"If Roy Lackey and Blattid are correct in their posts that Silk is a clone
of Typhon [...]"
I only started posting again to correct that misreading of my posts; I had

made no such claim.

Oh gosh! I'm terribly sorry about that, Roy. The post Chris referenced *seemed* to suggest you and Dan'I were discussing in earnest the merits of the Silk=Typhon's Clone theory. I hadn't read your Creed on Wolfe's works so I didn't know where you stood. How terrible for you to see your name bandied about in passing like that. I hope my post didn't force you to get out your sphygmomanometer. I hope the family didn't gather 'round to see you one last time. Please accept my apology for that.

~ James Wynn

"She possessed Oreb, as I told you, because she knew he would soon be brought [to Blue]. She felt sure--she told me this one night--that Pas would would not have peopled Blue unless he had some way to go there himself to rule them. 'Lord it' was the phrase she used. She was wrong, as I could have told her." [361 RTTW]