

First Exodus theory revised

The Urth list — 69 messages, 8 voices, 10 Feb 2011

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5962>

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Ashley Crill — 10 Feb 2011, 00:54

I'll try to write out my thoughts more coherently.

The plot starts during Tussah's reign as calde. He experiences a theophany and/or enlightenment from Pas, filling him in on the details of The Plan and encouraging him to carry it out. Pas also informs him about the existence of certain special embryos that Pas intends to use for The Plan. Tussah works from this point onward to carry out The Plan, and has allies among The Chapter, including a younger, human version of Patera Quetzal who may have been coadjutor at this time.

At the urging of Pas, Tussah sends out a scouting party (including Quetzal) who's secret mission is to repair a lander using a large sum of cards. Their leaked, public mission is to attain an embryo so that Tussah can have an heir.

The scouting party repair a lander and launch, landing on Green where they are killed/enslaved by inhumis instigated by the Neighbors. A chosen inhumis feeds on Quetzal's blood and becomes the new Patera Quetzal. He boards the lander and is returned to The Whorl as the only survivor of the original scouting party. I'm not sure what tale he tells to Tussah on his return, but we know he is skilled in deception. On his return, Inhumis-Quetzal brings embryos from the chambers located near the lander, including the specially requested embryo created from Typhon's sperm and one of Kypris's eggs.

Nobody is aware that Quetzal is actually an inhumis. He is a very careful man, after all.

In the meantime, Echidna and her brood revolt and murder Pas because they are alarmed by the launch of a lander. They are trying to prevent the Plan while Tussah and Quetzal are trying to carry it out. Before he dies, Pas informs Tussah about the fragments of Himself that he has hidden, and about his plan for resurrection in thirty years.

Tussah takes the special embryo and implants it in his trusted friend (Silk's mother) so that the embryo's adulthood will coincide with Pas's resurrection. This is when he writes his mysterious will, stating that the son not of his body will become the next Calde. The Calde also has an affair with his servant who marries the gardener and gives birth to a girl (Chenille).

When Tussah dies, his mistress goes into hiding as a beggar woman. The Ayuntamiento takes over in the power vacuum and searches everywhere for the embryo-child but cannot find him. Patera Quetzal becomes Prolocutor and tries to prevent theophanies because he is worried that Echidna will discover their collusion with Pas and seek to punish Viron. Fear of punishment is also why he de-emphasizes the worship of Pas.

Stuart Hamm — 10 Feb 2011, 03:14 · in reply to Ashley Crill

wow

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--- On Wed, 2/9/11, Ashley Crill <ash_crill at hotmail.com> wrote:

From: Ashley Crill <ash_crill at hotmail.com>

Subject: (urth) First Exodus theory revised
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Date: Wednesday, February 9, 2011, 4:54 PM

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-----Inline Attachment Follows-----

James Wynn — 10 Feb 2011, 03:28 · in reply to Ashley Crill

There's a lot to like about this. My biggest problem has to do with the expedition being captured and enslaved by the inhumis. Without a thriving Neighbor colony on Green, there would not be a thriving sentient inhumis civilization there. What made the inhumis on Green so virulent was the nature of the first colonists from the Whorl who went there: Auk's thieves and cut-throats. Then again, there must have been some inhumis because the Neighbors needed them. So, hmm. Maybe.

The other thing is that I believe Quetzal's soul was gained from Tussah. I don't think I can prove this. It's just a sense I have.

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On 2/9/2011 6:54 PM, Ashley Crill wrote:
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Ashley Crill — 10 Feb 2011, 04:05 · follows James Wynn

The other thing is that I believe Quetzal's soul was gained from Tussah. I don't think I can prove this. It's just a sense I have.

Well I can't prove that the real Quetzal was replaced by an Inhumani either, but it would explain his longevity and rise to power if his career began long before he was replaced. One thing to note, though. Tussah is described as a loud, brash, pushy sort of man while Quetzal character is yielding, deceptive and manipulative. They seem like very different personalities to me.

James Wynn — 10 Feb 2011, 04:17 · in reply to Ashley Crill

On 2/9/2011 10:05 PM, Ashley Crill wrote:

One thing to note, though. Tussah is described as a loud, brash, pushy sort of man while Quetzal character is yielding, deceptive and manipulative. They seem like very different personalities to me.

Point taken. But Sinew, who mutinied against his father on Green, would not be seen as the same personality as Krait either.

Ashley Crill — 10 Feb 2011, 05:39 · follows James Wynn

Why not another Piaton, if that's what he plans to do?

There is no reason to believe the children of Typhon were conceived of Piaton's body, since we don't have a good concept of how long after his ascension such a procedure became necessary, only that it predated the launch of the whorl. I can't imagine a megalomaniac not switching the testes as well if conception was not done prior to his little body theft.n)

I think that Silk is the child of Piaton because he is intended to be a new host for Typhon. Throughout the book people remark on Silk's strength, and he seems to have remarkable recuperative powers. Exactly the healthy sort of body that would make a good host. On the other hand, Silk is very intelligent and charismatic, qualities that Typhon possessed but that Piaton probably did not possess. He was chosen for his strength, not his intellect. If the Silk embryo was created from two-headed Typhon then he might possess Piaton's strength and Typhon's charisma.

Silk also has a remarkable capacity for love, which would be expected if Kypris is his genetic mother. Kypris also has a lot of self-love, though, which Silk seems to be lacking. His selflessness could be due more to his upbringing than to his nature I suppose.

If Kypris is Silk's mother, this is another reason for keeping his identity hidden apart from the Ayuntamiento. If Echidna knew that Kypris had children on board the Whorl she would surely try to destroy them. Perhaps this is what underlies the wanton destruction of embryos that Silk notices in the tunnels.

Marc Aramini — 10 Feb 2011, 05:45 · in reply to Ashley Crill

--- On Wed, 2/9/11, Ashley Crill <ash_crill at hotmail.com> wrote:

I think that Silk is the child of Piaton because he is intended to be a new host for Typhon. Throughout the book people remark on Silk's strength, and he seems to have remarkable recuperative powers. Exactly the healthy sort of body that would make a good host.

On the other hand, Silk is very intelligent and charismatic, qualities that Typhon possessed but that Piaton probably did not possess. He was chosen for his strength, not his intellect. This is the thing, Silk is strong, but he has the physique of a runner and is nowhere near as strong as Auk or even comparable really to Chenille (see Horn's description atop the airship towards the end of Exodus)? Piaton is a big strong guy, Silk is a lean one with decent strength. And I don't think Pas plans to possess Silk. It says over and over he wanted an heir to SUCCEED him (at least three times). His love has grown, and his love is the kind that sets free. I don't think you can make anything of the genetic personality of Silk, Wolfe is hinting, I think,

that no matter how evil our conception, a truly good individual is possible through free will, so in my mind Silk's particular nature has nothing to do with Pas except his leadership skills and the attraction people have for him and his precognitive jumps, and everything to do with the loving care of his mother, not his genetic one.

Ashley Crill — 10 Feb 2011, 05:52 · follows Marc Aramini

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Very good points! Perhaps he isn't intended to be a host for Typhon at all. I still think he is the genetic child of Typhon and Kypris, however. His attempts to produce an heir with Echidna just weren't working out so I think he went behind her back and created a child(or children) with his mistress. The destruction of the embryos makes sense in this context. Echidna has murdered Pas, then learned of the embryos and wants to destroy any of his non-Echidnic offspring.

Lee Berman — 10 Feb 2011, 13:15 · follows Ashley Crill

Marc Aramini: Piaton is a big strong guy, Silk is a lean one with decent strength

Hm. yep. But also Piaton is dark-haired (while Typhon is blonde). Isn't that some sort of clue to genealogy?

Ashley Crill: I still think he is the genetic child of Typhon and Kypris, however. His attempts to produce an heir with Echidna just weren't working out so I think he went behind her back and created a child(or children) with his mistress. The destruction of the embryos makes sense in this context. Echidna has murdered Pas, then learned of the embryos and wants to destroy any of his non-Echidnic offspring.

I think I detect some ring of truth to this idea. The Kypris relationship by itself might be enough to turn Echidna and most of her brood against Typhon/Pas. But if you are bringing outside offspring into the picture also, that would probably seal it.

His attempts to produce an heir with Echidna just weren't working out

I hadn't thought of it so directly. Echidna's kids are mostly female and the two males Tartaros and Hierax, are sub-standard in some way? (Tartaros' problem is obvious but I can't remember what Hierax's problem was...too violent or death loving? I forget).

Marc Aramini — 10 Feb 2011, 15:02 · in reply to Ashley Crill

Yeah, exactly, that is pretty much my argument, too, and Lemur says as much, Pas was not happy with his other heirs. I agree completely with this.

--- On Wed, 2/9/11, Ashley Crill <ash_crill at hotmail.com> wrote:

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Marc Aramini — 10 Feb 2011, 15:14 · in reply to Marc Aramini

A real quick point I wanted to make. Typhon is definitely, to Severian, a personal tempter, analagous to the devil. However, I think the ACT of creating a world so painstakingly gave Pas a real love for his creation, one similar to the Outsider's. So by pretending to be God, he came to care and love his creation. This is ultimately why, as far as the whorl is concerned, I think Pas' plan, "endorsed by the Outsider", is not one of violent take over (like, say producing an heir and then taking away his free-will) but one, like any parent, of benevolence and pride : "Look, at my great creation, my beautiful heir!" This is why I think Silk was meant to BE free, not a puppet of Typhon besides working in conjunction with his rather benevolent plan for his worshipers. Even sinners love those who love them, and this transformed Pas into something almost good.

Gerry Quinn — 10 Feb 2011, 17:06 · in reply to Ashley Crill

Okay, some reasons for choosing Silk there, but even better reasons for *not* choosing him! If he is Typhon's biological heir, and a great guy in every way, why spoil it by taking over his mind?

We also have the issue that Kypris's instincts regarding Silk seem other than parental. Now we can allow the Gods a certain license in such matters if we have to, but all the same it is an argument against the theory.

- Gerry Quinn

----- Original Message -----

From: Ashley Crill

To: urth at lists.urth.net

Sent: Thursday, February 10, 2011 5:39 AM

Subject: Re: (urth) First Exodus theory revised

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If Kypris is Silk's mother, this is another reason for keeping his identity hidden apart from the Ayuntamiento. If Echidna knew that Kypris had children on board the Whorl she would surely try to destroy them. Perhaps this is what underlies the wanton destruction of embryos that Silk notices in the tunnels.

Marc Aramini — 10 Feb 2011, 18:12 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Gerry, I have argued over and over that Pas wanted a worthy heir to succeed him. He doesn't want to take him over AT ALL. No where in the text is this idea presented, except some vague projection from him taking over Piaton, but that did not involve his CREATION, in which he was well pleased.

--- On Thu, 2/10/11, Gerry Quinn <gerryq at indigo.ie> wrote:

From: Gerry Quinn <gerryq at indigo.ie>
Subject: Re: (urth) First Exodus theory revised
To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>
Date: Thursday, February 10, 2011, 9:06 AM

```
#yiv192041477 .yiv192041477hmmessage P { PADDING-BOTTOM:0px;MARGIN:0px;PADDING-L  
EFT:0px;PADDING-RIGHT:0px;PADDING-TOP:0px;}  
#yiv192041477 .yiv192041477hmmessage {  
FONT-FAMILY:Tahoma;FONT-SIZE:10pt;}
```

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Gerry Quinn — 10 Feb 2011, 18:37 · in reply to Marc Aramini

From: Marc Aramini

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I agree - Pas (like Kypris) has become a somewhat legitimate god. [Whether we should make anything of his death and resurrection I don't know...]

The Outsider's endorsement of the Plan of Pas need not make it wholly benevolent, of course. Like humanity on Urth, the inhabitants of the Whorl do not need peace and justice so much as they need a new sun.

But I don't think Pas intended ill for his children. Nor yet for any biological child of his (if Silk is that, a theory I do not find necessary).

- Gerry Quinn

Ashley Crill — 10 Feb 2011, 22:40 · follows Gerry Quinn

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You guys make some great points about Pas and the benevolence of his plan. Like any good parent, he is willing to use 'tough love' to benefit his children and drive them out of the Whorl. I still believe, however, that Pas didn't intend for the settlers on Blue and Green to live in anarchy without a monarch and without justice. I've been reading through Blue, and there are some striking passages written by the Rajan about the situation in Gaon where he talks about the need for justice in society so that love can flourish. He is afraid that if he leaves Gaon they will suffer from anarchy and immorality until a strong man arises and becomes the new Rajan. If Pas is truly concerned for his children then he would have planned for a benevolent monarch to rule them. This idea contains echoes of the discussion between Severian and Malrubius

where they discuss the forms of government. Monarchy is both the lowest form of government (when the ruler is selfish) and the highest form of government (when the ruler is selfless). My question then, is this: Who did Pas intend to be the Calde on Green, and who was intended to be the Calde on Blue? Did Pas want to continue with himself as the monarch, or did he designate heirs to rule those Whorls?

Where does Silk fit into this picture? Where do Auk and Chenille fit?

Were any embryos engineered to have a superior military intellect that were destined to conquer, Typhon-style?

As a side note: when Horn first views Seawrack's gold, he speculates that it may have originally come from the Whorl via a lander.

Gerry Quinn — 10 Feb 2011, 23:04 · in reply to Ashley Crill

From: Ashley Crill

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I have said in the past that I think Silkhorn's military accomplishments in Gaon and Blanco were similar to those of Typhon as described by Rigoglio. Like Typhon, he sided with the underdog in conflicts, and won.

But I don't think this is necessarily anything to do with genetics. Silk has merged with Pas in Mainframe, and Horn downloads the merged entity into himself (i.e. Silk's old body). So Typhon - as Pas - is present in the resulting, somewhat confused, personage.
- Gerry Quinn

António Pedro Marques — 11 Feb 2011, 01:09 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: Ashley Crill <mailto:ash_crill at hotmail.com>

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I think people grossly overestimate Typhon's powers and urtherly technology. I don't find a single example, in all the books, of a power to engineer minds. There's lots of technology around, from a photosynthesizing man to sentient robots, but even the latter seem to have personalities not designed by anyone. I see Typhon being able to produce beings of terrific physical and intellectual abilities, but not to decide their ways of thinking.

António Pedro Marques — 11 Feb 2011, 01:18 · in reply to Marc Aramini

Marc Aramini wrote:

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I should again point out that regardless of Pas having been scanned from Typhon, all he is is a computer program. Pas is Typhon's tool and in all likelihood Typhon doesn't care one bit about Pas as long as Pas fulfills his role. He should care more about his heir(s), who is/are (a) real person(s). So Pas is there to serve Silk, not the opposite, and Silk is either a true heir or a tenant (for Typhon, not Pas).

António Pedro Marques — 11 Feb 2011, 01:24 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn wrote:

We also have the issue that Kypris's instincts regarding Silk seem other than parental. Now we can allow the Gods a certain license in such matters if we have to, but all the same it is an argument against the theory.

I don't think it is an argument either for or against. The gods are strange enough that nothing can be concluded from it, and incest is not at all unexpected in this context, even historically among humans.

If Silk isn't Typhon and Kypris's son, then there are no candidates for his parents. (This has nothing to do with the question of Kypris being Mamelta or not.)

Gerry Quinn — 11 Feb 2011, 01:25 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

From: "Ant?nio Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>

Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: Ashley Crill <mailto:ash_crill at hotmail.com>

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There may not be a technology to engineer minds and personalities as such... but there is certainly a technology to engineer certain mental abilities. Mucor is proof of this. Her brain does not even resemble a normal human brain.

As for Silk, we are told he is a special snowflake, but it's not exactly clear where his powers lie. There seems to be general agreement that it is something to do with leadership, which makes sense in terms of Tussah wanting such an embryo. Of course, leadership was a characteristic of Typhon too, which makes it harder to answer questions about whether Silk is genetically related to Typhon. Really though, it's more the absence of something that might show a distinction between Silk and Typhon, rather than any sort of positive evidence either way.

- Gerry Quinn

António Pedro Marques — 11 Feb 2011, 01:27 · in reply to Marc Aramini

Marc Aramini wrote:

Gerry, I have argued over and over that Pas wanted a worthy heir to succeed him. He doesn't want to take him over AT ALL. No where in the text is this idea presented, except some vague projection from him taking over Piaton, but that did not involve his CREATION, in which he was well pleased.

There are many people throwing ideas around, Marc. Some think Silk is a clone of Typhon and some think Silk was meant to be taken over. It's not necessarily to you that Gerry is replying when he comments on that.

Gerry Quinn — 11 Feb 2011, 01:37 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

From: "Ant?nio Pedro Marques" <entonio at gmail.com>

Marc Aramini wrote:

A real quick point I wanted to make. Typhon is definitely, to Severian, a personal tempter, analagous to the devil. However, I think the ACT of creating a world so painstakingly gave Pas a real love for his creation, one similar to the Outsider's. So by pretending to be God, he came to care and love his creation. This is ultimately why, as far as the whorl is concerned, I think Pas' plan, "endorsed by the Outsider", is not one of violent take over (like, say producing an heir and then taking away his free-will) but one, like any parent, of benevolence and pride : "Look, at my great creation, my beautiful heir!" This is why I think Silk was meant to BE free, not a puppet of Typhon besides working in conjunction with his rather benevolent plan for his worshipers. Even sinners love those who love them, and this transformed Pas into something almost good.

I should again point out that regardless of Pas having been scanned from Typhon, all he is is a computer program. Pas is Typhon's tool and in all likelihood Typhon doesn't care one bit about Pas as long as Pas fulfills his role. He should care more about his heir(s), who is/are (a) real person(s). So Pas is there to serve Silk, not the opposite, and Silk is either a true heir or a tenant (for Typhon, not Pas).

Computer programs are real people in this story (and in most of Wolfe's work).

Also, surely if Silk is to be a tenant, it is Pas who will move in?

[Also, I think Wolfe is on record as saying Pas *is* Typhon.]

- Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn — 11 Feb 2011, 01:43 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

From: "Ant?nio Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>

Gerry Quinn wrote:

We also have the issue that Kypris's instincts regarding Silk seem other than parental. Now we can allow the Gods a certain license in such matters if we have to, but all the same it is an argument against the theory.

I don't think it is an argument either for or against. The gods are strange enough that nothing can be concluded from it, and incest is not at all unexpected in this context, even historically among humans.

If Silk isn't Typhon and Kypris's son, then there are no candidates for his parents. (This has nothing to do with the question of Kypris being Mamelta or not.)

Like Mucor's, they probably met in a Petri dish.

Now I think of it, Silk had a vision of his biological parents. Was it the Outsider that showed him this, or Mainframe? Because if it was Mainframe, you'd think they must have lived on the Whorl! I suppose Mainframe could have been provided with a database containing such information from Urth, though.

- Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn — 11 Feb 2011, 01:45 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

----- Original Message -----

From: "Ant?nio Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>

To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>

Sent: Friday, February 11, 2011 1:27 AM

Subject: Re: (urth) First Exodus theory revised

Marc Aramini wrote:

Gerry, I have argued over and over that Pas wanted a worthy heir to succeed him. He doesn't want to take him over AT ALL. No where in the text is this idea presented, except some vague projection from him taking over Piaton, but that did not involve his CREATION, in which he was well pleased.

There are many people throwing ideas around, Marc. Some think Silk is a clone of Typhon and some think Silk was meant to be taken over. It's not necessarily to you that Gerry is replying when he comments on that.

Indeed, it was someone else I was talking to. I know Marc thinks Silk is Typhon's son.

- Gerry Quinn

António Pedro Marques — 11 Feb 2011, 02:00 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: "Ant?nio Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>

Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: Ashley Crill <mailto:ash_crill at hotmail.com>

Were any embryos engineered to have a superior military intellect that were destined to conquer, Typhon-style?

I have said in the past that I think Silkhorn's military accomplishments in Gaon and Blanco were similar to those of Typhon as described by Rigoglio. Like Typhon, he sided with the underdog in conflicts, and won. But I don't think this is necessarily anything to do with genetics. Silk has merged with Pas in Mainframe, and Horn downloads the merged entity into himself (i.e. Silk's old body). So Typhon - as Pas - is present in the resulting, somewhat confused, personage.

I think people grossly overestimate Typhon's powers and uthly technology. I don't find a single example, in all the books, of a power to engineer minds. There's lots of technology around, from a photosynthesizing man to sentient robots, but even the latter seem to have personalities not designed by anyone. I see Typhon being able to produce beings of terrific physical and intellectual abilities, but not to decide their ways of thinking.

There may not be a technology to engineer minds and personalities as such... but there is certainly a technology to engineer certain mental abilities. Mucor is proof of this. Her brain does not even resemble a normal human brain.

Granted - but as you notice, personality is orthogonal to mental abilities.

As for Silk, we are told he is a special snowflake, but it's not exactly clear where his powers lie. There seems to be general agreement that it is something to do with leadership, which makes sense in terms of Tussah wanting such an embryo. Of course, leadership was a characteristic of Typhon too, which makes it harder to answer questions about whether Silk is genetically related to Typhon.

(How does it make it harder? It's an argument for kinship, a weak one but still one.)

Otoh, the only special things about Silk seem to be charisma - and that, unlike something so hard to pinpoint as leadership, can be put down to physical/mental abilities (a way with words, with body language, etc) - and universal benevolence. He certainly didn't get the latter from genetics or genetic engineering.

I'm surprised people don't challenge Silk's benevolence. Is he really that good? Does a good person do what he did on Blue (granting that part of him there is Horn)? I think the answers are fundamentally 'yes'.

And now I must ask.

What the hell is the purpose of Tussah.

I mean, would the story fall apart if that character didn't exist?

Would Gene Wolfe create such a character if there were no purpose for him?

I think the answers are 'yes' for the first and 'no' for the second. Ashley's theory points out a possible reason for Tussah's existence - his actions provided the means for Quetzal to get on

board the Whorl. I think further debate on just how much of the story really depends on this character we only hear about fragmentarily would be interesting.

Really though, it's more the absence of something that might show a distinction between Silk and Typhon, rather than any sort of positive evidence either way.

Silk is

someone-unknown-but-important-enough-to-have-their-offspring-preserved's son, Silk is blond, people follow Silk. If he's not Typhon's son, why have him be someone unknown's child? There comes a point when one must make a little leap to reach a conclusion - otherwise there's nothing in the text. The text will never explicitly unfold its secrets, or they wouldn't be secrets. And if not to unfold them - and for that, little leaps are needed - then what use is analyzing it?

Of course, there could be better answers to 'who are Silk's parents?' than Typhon and Kypris, whoever Kypris is. But where are they? Can one say 'the question of Silk's parenthood is unimportant'? (Maybe one can, I'm asking.)

António Pedro Marques — 11 Feb 2011, 02:07 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: "António Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>

Marc Aramini wrote:

A real quick point I wanted to make. Typhon is definitely, to Severian, a personal tempter, analagous to the devil. However, I think the ACT of creating a world so painstakingly gave Pas a real love for his creation, one similar to the Outsider's. So by pretending to be God, he came to care and love his creation. This is ultimately why, as far as the whorl is concerned, I think Pas' plan, "endorsed by the Outsider", is not one of violent take over (like, say producing an heir and then taking away his free-will) but one, like any parent, of benevolence and pride : "Look, at my great creation, my beautiful heir!" This is why I think Silk was meant to BE free, not a puppet of Typhon besides working in conjunction with his rather benevolent plan for his worshipers. Even sinners love those who love them, and this transformed Pas into something almost good.

I should again point out that regardless of Pas having been scanned from Typhon, all he is is a computer program. Pas is Typhon's tool and in all likelihood Typhon doesn't care one bit about Pas as long as Pas fulfills his role. He should care more about his heir(s), who is/are (a) real person(s). So Pas is there to serve Silk, not the opposite, and Silk is either a true heir or a tenant (for Typhon, not Pas).

Computer programs are real people in this story (and in most of Wolfe's work).

Not really. Robots are people, and you could *argue* that means the software running them is people. But all over, 'real people' don't consider robots 'real people'. Silk does because he's Silk. Typhon doesn't.

Also, surely if Silk is to be a tenant, it is Pas who will move in?

A viceroy for Typhon, who would one day come to (or pass by) Blue as a ruler. If he hadn't died in the meantime.

[Also, I think Wolfe is on record as saying Pas *is* Typhon.]

Pas is Typhon, Typhon isn't Pas.

António Pedro Marques — 11 Feb 2011, 02:10 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: "António Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>

If Silk isn't Typhon and Kypris's son, then there are no candidates for his parents. (This has nothing to do with the question of Kypris being Mamelta or not.)

Like Mucor's, they probably met in a Petri dish.

So you're indeed saying the question 'who are Silk's parent's' isn't of consequence.

So why all the embryo stuff? What does it do for the story?

Now I think of it, Silk had a vision of his biological parents. Was it the Outsider that showed him this, or Mainframe? Because if it was Mainframe, you'd think they must have lived on the Whorl! I suppose Mainframe could have been provided with a database containing such information from Urth, though.

One would have to ask what for.

Gerry Quinn — 11 Feb 2011, 03:04 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

From: "António Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>

Gerry Quinn wrote:

As for Silk, we are told he is a special snowflake, but it's not exactly clear where his powers lie. There seems to be general agreement that it is something to do with leadership, which makes sense in terms of Tussah wanting such an embryo. Of course, leadership was a characteristic of Typhon too, which makes it harder to answer questions about whether Silk is genetically related to Typhon.

(How does it make it harder? It's an argument for kinship, a weak one but still one.)

Yes, but if Tussah was motivated to get an embryo with leadership skills to drive out the corrupt Ayuntiamiento, then great leadership skills are not much of a pointer to Typhon, as they might be if they appeared in a random embryo.

And now I must ask.

What the hell is the purpose of Tussah.

I mean, would the story fall apart if that character didn't exist?

Would Gene Wolfe create such a character if there were no purpose for him?

I think the answers are 'yes' for the first and 'no' for the second.

Ashley's theory points out a possible reason for Tussah's existence - his actions provided the means for Quetzal to get on board the Whorl. I think further debate on just how much of the story really depends on this character we only hear about fragmentarily would be interesting.

He provides some of the backstory for the political situation in Viron, and he explains how a special embryo came to be implanted in an ordinary woman. He also provides Silk with a claim to the caldeship.

Silk is

someone-unknown-but-important-enough-to-have-their-offspring-preserved's son,

Not really - Mucor's parents are unknown, and I don't think anyone believes there are clues to their identity in the text.

As for Typhon, if he wanted a child with Kypris he could have had him born on Urth, and it seems the most obvious thing for him to do!

Silk is blond, people follow Silk. If he's not Typhon's son, why have him be someone unknown's child? There comes a point when one must make a little leap to reach a conclusion - otherwise there's nothing in the text. The text will never explicitly unfold its secrets, or they wouldn't be secrets. And if not to unfold them - and for that, little leaps are needed - then what use is analyzing it?

I can see your point, certainly. If he had some unique superpower like Mucor, there would be no reason to ask the question - the superpower would be enough to justify him being an engineered embryo. The problem is that Silk's powers are seemingly not special enough that he needs to be engineered, so we ask why couldn't he simply have been the biological offspring of his mother.

We would lose Tussah's naming of him as calde - but presumably Wolfe could have changed the charter of Viron to make this unnecessary for the storyline.

Now I agree there is a shortage of candidates for his biological parents - but that is to be expected, really, of a frozen engineered embryo.

But are Typhon and Kypris good candidates, really? Typhon's sons and daughters by Echidna didn't have superpowers, and Echidna presumably came of good stock. Kypris was Typhon's favourite concubine - a worthy achievement, certainly, but it hardly suggests that her children would be especially genetically equipped to rule whorls. Tussah was apparently looking for an embryo with special powers, probably of leadership, and he paid a lot for Silk. Would he really consider Typhon's son the ideal candidate?

Of course there is the possibility that the story of Tussah buying the embryo was a cover-up and the plan of Typhon was for his son to be born to lead the people onto the new whorl(s), with Tussah acting as his agent in this scheme. However, this seems to perish on the rock of timing. Pas was alive and in charge when the Whorl entered the Blue/Green system. He was killed shortly afterwards, thirty years before the events of BotLS. Silk was born about a decade later. But if Pas wanted Silk to lead the colonists, he'd have arranged for Silk to have been born around twenty years before arrival. An adult Silk (or Silks) would have been around before Pas's death. So it doesn't really seem to make sense for Silk to be somebody special to Typhon, whether his son, his clone, or his favourite slave!

I don't think the above argument has been posted before - it seems quite strong to me. It could be argued, I suppose, that Echidna had all the adult Silks killed when Pas was killed, and none of them were in or near Viron. But then there is the problem that Echidna wasn't bothered at all when she met Silk while she was possessing Marble.

Of course, there could be better answers to 'who are Silk's parents?' than Typhon and Kypris, whoever Kypris is. But where are they? Can one say 'the question of Silk's parenthood is unimportant'? (Maybe one can, I'm asking.)

For the moment I see no very good alternative to the theory that he was an engineered embryo whose parentage is both unknown and irrelevant.

- Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn — 11 Feb 2011, 03:18 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

From: "Ant?nio Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>

Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: "Ant?nio Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>

I should again point out that regardless of Pas having been scanned from Typhon, all he is is a computer program. Pas is Typhon's tool and in all likelihood Typhon doesn't care one bit about Pas as long as Pas fulfills his role. He should care more about his heir(s), who is/are (a) real person(s). So Pas is there to serve Silk, not the opposite, and Silk is either a true heir or a tenant (for Typhon, not Pas).

Computer programs are real people in this story (and in most of Wolfe's work).

Not really. Robots are people, and you could *argue* that means the software running them is people. But all over, 'real people' don't consider robots 'real people'. Silk does because he's Silk. Typhon doesn't.

I don't agree with you there. Most people in Viron seem to consider both the gods and the chems real people. Taluses probably less so, I suppose. Black mechanics may disagree, but they are few and are breaking the law.

Pas is the god of the chems.

I don't recall Typhon himself expressing any views on robots. In fact he treated some people (such as Piaton) as robots. Maybe he treated almost everyone as robots, in fact - consider the whole possession technology for controlling them! Mamelta tells us how everyone was wired up in a sort of always-on internet, with Typhon's family wandering through their heads. That is before some of them were forced about the Whorl and given brain operations.

- Gerry Quinn

Ashley Crill — 11 Feb 2011, 04:07 · follows Gerry Quinn

I don't recall Typhon himself expressing any views on robots. Pas is very specifically the god, patron and 'father' of all atomic-powered people. Remember the theophany when Hammerstone is sacrificed. Pas appears in response to the sacrifice of a chem whereas other deities only seem to appear when animals (or people) are sacrificed. he then refers to Hammerstone as "my brave soldier". I think that Pas does consider chems to be real people. Silk certainly does. As far as Silk's parents are concerned, we know the identity of his foster parents, Calde Tussah and his friend. There are two possible reasons why Horn and Nettle don't state the identity of Silk's two biological parents. Either they don't know their identity or it should be obvious based upon the text. I'll try to look for more quotes and clues this weekend. As far as the timing of Pas's plan and the birth of Silk, it's quite possible that the Plan was an extended process of scouting and colonizing that was intended to take decades. Silk was intended to lead the city of Viron on an exodus which may have been scheduled to coincide with Silk's adulthood. There could easily have been other 'Silks' for other cities, with original exoduses scheduled at different times.

Marc Aramini — 11 Feb 2011, 07:51 · follows Ashley Crill

I've posted the evidence that Kypris and Pas are his mother and father multiple times, the evidence, both back in like 2003 or so and in the past month again recently, don't expect to convince those who do not already believe it.

A lot of it is in visions, which some deem inadmissible.

--- On Thu, 2/10/11, Ashley Crill <ash_crill at hotmail.com> wrote:

From: Ashley Crill <ash_crill at hotmail.com>
Subject: Re: (urth) First Exodus theory revised
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Date: Thursday, February 10, 2011, 8:07 PM

I don't recall Typhon himself expressing any views on robots. Pas is very specifically the god, patron and 'father' of all atomic-powered people. Remember the theophany when Hammerstone is sacrificed. Pas appears in response to the sacrifice of a chem whereas other deities only seem to appear when animals (or people) are sacrificed. he then refers to Hammerstone as "my brave soldier". I think that Pas does consider chems to be real people. Silk certainly does. As far as Silk's parents are concerned, we know the identity of his foster parents, Calde Tussah and his friend. There are two possible reasons why Horn

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-----Inline Attachment Follows-----

Marc Aramini — 11 Feb 2011, 07:53 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

--- On Thu, 2/10/11, Gerry Quinn <gerryq at indigo.ie> wrote:
For the moment I see no very good alternative to the theory that he was an engineered embryo whose parentage is both unknown and irrelevant.

- Gerry

But it SHOWS four parents to us, and Silk recognizes them to some degree, and says he found out the truth of how he came to be in the tunnels, and it outright says in his visions his mother is Kypris. It's just ignoring a whole lot of stuff to say it's unknown. :(Why show us four parents? Sorry, did not want to respond to this but I just had to.

António Pedro Marques — 11 Feb 2011, 11:21 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn wrote (11-02-2011 03:18):

From: "António Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>
Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: "António Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>

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Not really. Robots are people, and you could *argue* that means the software running them is people. But all over, 'real people' don't consider robots 'real people'. Silk does because he's Silk. Typhon doesn't.

I don't agree with you there. Most people in Viron seem to consider both the gods and the chems real people. Taluses probably less so, I suppose. Black mechanics may disagree, but they are few and are breaking the law.

The need for Silk to explicitly say that chems are people (iinnm when he's arguing that taluses are people also) suggests to me that that's not a deeply held view. You know how even in our own whorl some folks historically

- and some even today! - haven't considered certain of their fellow human beings as real people. The Ayuntamiento had no qualms about taking over a few. Nor could Maytera Rose certainly be isolated in her view of chems - if anything it seems that as technology and thw whorl broke down their social standing improved.

Pas is the god of the chems.

But then again Psyche is the goddess of butterflies.

But then again Typhon isn't Pas. Pas is a much nicer fellow.

I don't recall Typhon himself expressing any views on robots.

I knew that when I wrote what I wrote. But given that Typhon doesn't seem to care about anyone but himself, is it a stretch to think he doesn't care about a computer program? (Given, it's a program that mirrors his own mind, and in that sense it could be argued that he should care about something that came from him - but does he care about his sperm?)

Also notice that the chems were put aboard the whorl as slaves - destined to work for the humans without compensation or to die in battle. They weren't even given individuality - all were packed with the same clothing.

In fact he treated some people (such as Piaton) as robots. Maybe he treated almost everyone as robots, in fact - consider the whole possession technology for controlling them! Mamelta tells us how everyone was wired up in a sort of always-on internet, with Typhon's family wandering through their heads. That is before some of them were forced aboard the Whorl and given brain operations.

Yep. It all sounds like blatant disregard for anyone else's feelings. Why should he be concerned with the well-being of a computer program?

António Pedro Marques — 11 Feb 2011, 11:28 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn wrote (11-02-2011 03:04):

From: "Ant?nio Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>
Gerry Quinn wrote:

As for Silk, we are told he is a special snowflake, but it's not exactly clear where his powers lie. There seems to be general agreement that it is something to do with leadership, which makes sense in terms of Tussah wanting such an embryo. Of course, leadership was a characteristic of Typhon too, which makes it harder to answer questions about whether Silk is genetically related to Typhon.

(How does it make it harder? It's an argument for kinship, a weak one but still one.)

Yes, but if Tussah was motivated to get an embryo with leadership skills to drive out the corrupt Ayuntamiento, then great leadership skills are not much of a pointer to Typhon, as they might be if they appeared in a random embryo.

But then again corruptness is a personality matter, which hasn't been shown to be determined/determinable by biological parentage. How do we know Tussah's goal was to drive out the corrupt Ayuntamiento? How do we know the Ayuntamiento was considered corrupt by that time? How could Tussah know about Typhon's personality?

And now I must ask.

What the hell is the purpose of Tussah.

I mean, would the story fall apart if that character didn't exist?

Would Gene Wolfe create such a character if there were no purpose for him?

I think the answers are 'yes' for the first and 'no' for the second.

Ashley's theory points out a possible reason for Tussah's existence - his actions provided the means for Quetzal to get on board the Whorl. I think further debate on just how much of the story really depends on this character we only hear about fragmentarily would be interesting.

He provides some of the backstory for the political situation in Viron, and he explains how a special embryo came to be implanted in an ordinary woman. He also provides Silk with a claim to the caldeship.

...all of which aren't really necessary. Enabling Quetzal aboard is necessary.

Silk is

someone-unknown-but-important-enough-to-have-their-offspring-preserved's son,

Not really - Mucor's parents are unknown, and I don't think anyone believes there are clues to their identity in the text.

Then maybe the next question is who are Mucor's parents.

But as you point out, Mucor stands by herself as engineered - she's got 'special abilities' - while Silk doesn't - at most he's got large quantities of normal abilities.

As for Typhon, if he wanted a child with Kypris he could have had him born on Urth, and it seems the most obvious thing for him to do!

That would be a competitor. We're told he wanted an heir, it doesn't follow that he wanted the heir around.

Silk is blond, people follow Silk. If he's not Typhon's son, why have him be someone unknown's child? There comes a point when one must make a little leap to reach a conclusion - otherwise there's nothing in the text. The text will never explicitly unfold its secrets, or they wouldn't be secrets. And if not to unfold them - and for that, little leaps are needed - then what use is analyzing it?

I can see your point, certainly. If he had some unique superpower like Mucor, there would be no reason to ask the question - the superpower would be enough to justify him being an engineered embryo. The problem is that Silk's powers are seemingly not special enough that he needs to be engineered, so we ask why couldn't he simply have been the biological offspring of his mother.

We would lose Tussah's naming of him as calde - but presumably Wolfe could have changed the charter of Viron to make this unnecessary for the

storyline.

Now I agree there is a shortage of candidates for his biological parents - but that is to be expected, really, of a frozen engineered embryo.

But are Typhon and Kypris good candidates, really? Typhon's sons and daughters by Echidna didn't have superpowers, and Echidna presumably came of good stock. Kypris was Typhon's favourite concubine - a worthy achievement, certainly, but it hardly suggests that her children would be especially genetically equipped to rule whorls.

Maybe one of the competencies of the favourite concubine is to be able to produce a son that is more like the father than those by his lawful wife - the concubine erasing herself - her only claim to existence being being a lover/producer of heirs for someone - may even be the most important role, but is always in referral to the person the concubine is a concubine to, not autonomous. There are concubines who become autonomous and even rulers, but Kypris never does - granted, her only chances for survival don't seem to have lain down that route.

Tussah was apparently looking for an embryo with special powers, probably of leadership, and he paid a lot for Silk. Would he really consider Typhon's son the ideal candidate?

Of course there is the possibility that the story of Tussah buying the embryo was a cover-up and the plan of Typhon was for his son to be born to lead the people onto the new whorl(s), with Tussah acting as his agent in this scheme. However, this seems to perish on the rock of timing. Pas was alive and in charge when the Whorl entered the Blue/Green system. He was killed shortly afterwards, thirty years before the events of BotLS. Silk was born about a decade later. But if Pas wanted Silk to lead the colonists, he'd have arranged for Silk to have been born around twenty years before arrival. An adult Silk (or Silks) would have been around before Pas's death. So it doesn't really seem to make sense for Silk to be somebody special to Typhon, whether his son, his clone, or his favourite slave!

I'm not sure Typhon could have predicted with absolute accuracy the timing of arrival on Blue/Green. One might also argue that the reason the Plan of Pas wasn't put in march before Pas was taken out was that Pas didn't have Silk available yet. But this makes the Plan of Pas contingent on Silk, which I don't like.

I don't think the above argument has been posted before - it seems quite strong to me. It could be argued, I suppose, that Echidna had all the adult Silks killed when Pas was killed, and none of them were in or near Viron. But then there is the problem that Echidna wasn't bothered at all when she met Silk while she was possessing Marble.

I also don't like the idea of multiple Silks or Silk-like figures. For one thing, Horn travels a lot through Blue and always has to explain why Silk is important to him, and nobody says 'yeah, we had someone like that also'. Of course, that lack of mention could be down to Silk/Horn. But like with the Silk-as-clone theory, it's not only that nobody mentions it, it's that nobody behaves accordingly.

Gerry Quinn — 11 Feb 2011, 12:38 · in reply to Ashley Crill

[Timing of Pas's plan]

The problem is the plan couldn't really have involved a long scouting period, because of the

disintegrating state of the Whorl. The Whorl seems to be at or close to the end of its design life as it approaches the Blue/Green system. Certainly we know that just a few decades later it will be in a dangerously dilapidated state. Even if Pas had originally intended an extended scouting phase, he would certainly have switched to an accelerated program in view of the state of the Whorl. That means any embryos intended to be colonisation leaders would have been implanted a decade or so before the Whorl reached the system, at the very latest. [Even if the disembarkation plans were not set in stone, embryos would have been implanted, it's not like there weren't spares available.]

In BotSS, it's pretty clear that there are no other Silks on Blue. So if they were implanted, something must have happened to them. The obvious thing is that Echidna had them killed. But this doesn't make sense, because Echidna met Silk and conversed reasonably amiably with him (at least compared to the guy she was simultaneously burning alive and the child she was summoning snakes to kill).

Conclusion: Silk's embryo cannot be a specific and central part of Pas's plan. Engineered embryos with generalised leadership abilities are not a problem, because their abilities would work just as well on the Whorl. Indeed, as things have gone, such abilities are sadly lacking on Blue. It's very plausible that such engineered embryos were put on board

[Note: an extended scouting phase also doesn't really fit with Pas's rather Darwinian 'throw them on the planets and see what sticks' approach, as exemplified in BotSS.]

[Status of chems]

I don't mean to say that everyone thought of chems as equivalent to people. Maytera Rose admits she didn't really believe it despite all the propaganda until she found herself in one. Black mechanics are illegal, but they do exist. So there is certainly a good deal of anti-chem prejudice on the Whorl. But Silk, as you say, clearly accepts them as people - and Pas, as Antonio points out, is their god.

- Gerry Quinn

----- Original Message -----

From: Ashley Crill

To: urth at lists.urth.net

Sent: Friday, February 11, 2011 4:07 AM

Subject: Re: (urth) First Exodus theory revised

I think that Pas does consider chems to be real people. Silk certainly does. As far as the timing of Pas's plan and the birth of Silk, it's quite possible that the Plan was an extended process of scouting and colonizing that was intended to take decades. Silk was intended to lead the city of Viron on an exodus which may have been scheduled to coincide with Silk's adulthood. There could easily have been other 'Silks' for other cities, with original exoduses scheduled at different times.

Gerry Quinn — 11 Feb 2011, 13:12 · in reply to Marc Aramini

From: "Marc Aramini" <marcaramini at yahoo.com>

--- On Thu, 2/10/11, Gerry Quinn <gerryq at indigo.ie> wrote:

For the moment I see no very good alternative to the theory that he was an engineered embryo whose parentage is both unknown and irrelevant.

But it SHOWS four parents to us, and Silk recognizes them to some degree,

In Silk's vision of his parents, his biological father is described as tall and blue-eyed (i think Wolfe tells us this to indicate the biological relationship). Conspicuous by its absence is any mention of a multiplicity of heads!

The only ones he seems to recognise are his adoptive mother and Tussah.

and says he found out the truth of how he came to be in the tunnels,

"or underground, anyway". He may mean the vision of his parents, which he saw when undergoing a near-death (or death?) experience while buried by a bomb. Or he may mean the frozen embryos he saw with Mamelta, also arguable in the tunnels, or underground. Or both.

and it outright says in his visions his mother is Kypris.

I really don't agree with this. He has a dream or waking dream in which images of various women run together (I think women he associates with sex or sexuality). In this dream he also sees the Outsider as a wooden toy, and a polished tabletop as the sea. I don't think there's any reason to take it literally that all the women in his dream are the same woman, any more than that the Outsider is a wooden toy.

He **never** says anything to Kypris to indicate he thinks she is his mother. And Kypris never says anything to him, either.

Its just ignoring a whole lot of stuff to say its unkown. :(Why show us four parents?

I don't think I'm ignoring anything! I think you are interpreting various things in a very strange way.

Why show us four parents? Two adoptive, two biological = total four.

- Gerry Quinn

Andrew Mason — 11 Feb 2011, 13:15 · follows Gerry Quinn

Antronio Pedro Marquez wrote:

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If Silk isn't Typhon and Kypris's son, then there are no candidates for his parents. (This has nothing to do with the question of Kypris being Mamelta or not.)

Mamelta may be his mother without being Kypris.

This is consistent with Typhon being his father, if he is the result of in vitro fertilisation (which is what the only actual statement we have about the origin of the embryos implies).

Lee Berman — 11 Feb 2011, 13:18 · follows Andrew Mason

Antonio Pedro Marques: I also don't like the idea of multiple Silks or Silk-like figures. For one thing, Horn travels a lot through Blue and always has to explain why Silk is important to him, and nobody says 'yeah, we had someone like that also'.

I think this is good reasoning. By it, we must conclude that Pas' Plan was meant to use Viron as a central focus point for the whole Whorl. Why Viron? I'm thinking that of all his family kids, Scylla was the most likely candidate as an heir and Viron is her city. Maybe there is something to pursue along these lines.

But like with the Silk-as-clone theory, it's not only that nobody mentions it, it's that nobody behaves accordingly.

I find grounds to disagree. Especially if we consider James' theory of Spring Wind=Typhon, using Alexander as a model. Alexander/Spring Wind is a gentle, intellectual mama's boy who rises to become a clever, charismatic military general. Silk also. Alexander/Typhon loses it when he sits on a throne and becomes a jaded, besotted megalomaniac.

Could that have happened to Silk if he had lived and become a political ruler? (is Rajan a hybrid example of Silk in this role?)

Andrew Mason — 11 Feb 2011, 13:22 · follows Lee Berman

Antonio Pedro Marquez wrote:

Also notice that the chems were put aboard the whorl as slaves - destined to work for the humans without compensation or to die in battle.

I don't think this is so. Marl, the servant of a black mechanic, is not paid, but this is clearly seen as improper, and it's only because his employer has interfered with his mind that he's able to get away with it. Even taluses are paid; although they are effectively slaves, people have to go through some hoops to make the arrangement legal. No doubt it's different in other cities, but in other cities bios can be slaves as well.

Lee Berman — 11 Feb 2011, 13:40 · follows Andrew Mason

Gerry Quinn: I really don't agree with this. He has a dream or waking dream in which images of various women run together (I think women he associates with sex or sexuality). In this dream he also sees the Outsider as a wooden toy, and a polished tabletop as the sea. I don't think there's any reason to take it literally that all the women in his dream are the same woman, any more than that the Outsider is a wooden toy.

I can see why Marc has trouble with your theory Gerry. As a self-acknowledged mystery writer, Gene Wolfe has a special place in his work for dream sequences and stories/myths/legends. I can't see him using a dream sequence to reveal something as banal as the fact that Silk is a man and has had sexual thoughts about various women. We already knew that. The dream must be there to tell us things we don't know.

I find pointed significance in the metaphors of the wooden toy Outsider and the tabletop sea which presage revelations in Short Sun and hearken back to mysteries in BotNS. I would expect revelations of similar importance with regard to the women in the dream. I think similar importance can be found in all Wolfean dreams, legends and stories.

Gerry Quinn — 11 Feb 2011, 13:43 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

From: "Ant?nio Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>

In fact he

treated some people (such as Piaton) as robots. Maybe he treated almost everyone as robots, in fact - consider the whole possession technology for controlling them! Mamelta tells us how everyone was wired up in a sort of always-on internet, with Typhon's family wandering through their

heads. That is before some of them were forced aboard the Whorl and given brain operations.

Yep. It all sounds like blatant disregard for anyone else's feelings. Why should he be concerned with the well-being of a computer program?

Suppose we accept your argument that Typhon had a particular disdain for computer programs (though it makes it very odd that he had digitised versions of his family made to accompany Pas). What difference does it make to anything? Pas rules the Whorl, not Typhon.

- Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn — 11 Feb 2011, 14:08 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

From: "António Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>

Yes, but if Tussah was motivated to get an embryo with leadership skills to drive out the corrupt Ayuntamiento, then great leadership skills are not much of a pointer to Typhon, as they might be if they appeared in a random embryo.

But then again corruptness is a personality matter, which hasn't been shown to be determined/determinable by biological parentage.

How do we know Tussah's goal was to drive out the corrupt Ayuntamiento?

How do we know the Ayuntamiento was considered corrupt by that time? How could Tussah know about Typhon's personality?

All we know is that Tussah spent a lot on a special embryo. Everything else is inference. Leadership (and perhaps a propensity to hate corruption), with the intention to defeat the Ayuntamiento seem the most plausible objectives, if indeed Tussah was acting for the benefit of Viron (if he was acting for Pas, Viron has no future anyway). Tussah's knowledge of Typhon's personality is neither here nor there. Either he wants an embryo with certain qualities, or he is acting for Typhon.

And now I must ask.

What the hell is the purpose of Tussah.

I mean, would the story fall apart if that character didn't exist?

Would Gene Wolfe create such a character if there were no purpose for him?

I think the answers are 'yes' for the first and 'no' for the second.

Ashley's theory points out a possible reason for Tussah's existence - his actions provided the means for Quetzal to get on board the Whorl.

I think further debate on just how much of the story really depends on this character we only hear about fragmentarily would be interesting.

He provides some of the backstory for the political situation in Viron, and he explains how a special embryo came to be implanted in an ordinary woman. He also provides Silk with a claim to the caldeship.

...all of which aren't really necessary. Enabling Quetzal aboard is necessary.

We are told how Quetzal got aboard (an experiment by the Neighbours). So Tussah certainly isn't needed for that.

As for Typhon, if he wanted a child with Kypris he could have had him born on Urth, and it seems the most obvious thing for him to do!

That would be a competitor. We're told he wanted an heir, it doesn't follow that he wanted the heir around.

Tartarus and Hierax were born on Urth. Clearly he wanted an heir there.

Now I agree there is a shortage of candidates for his biological parents - but that is to be expected, really, of a frozen engineered embryo.

But are Typhon and Kypris good candidates, really? Typhon's sons and daughters by Echidna didn't have superpowers, and Echidna presumably came of good stock. Kypris was Typhon's favourite concubine - a worthy achievement, certainly, but it hardly suggests that her children would be especially genetically equipped to rule whorls.

Maybe one of the competencies of the favourite concubine is to be able to produce a son that is more like the father than those by his lawful wife - the concubine erasing herself - her only claim to existence being being a lover/producer of heirs for someone - may even be the most important role, but is always in referral to the person the concubine is a concubine to, not autonomous.

Kypris seems to have been chosen for her beauty. If anyone was chosen for the qualities of her reproductive system it was Echidna - and if so, it didn't work.

Tussah was apparently looking for an embryo with special powers, probably of leadership, and he paid a lot for Silk. Would he really consider Typhon's son the ideal candidate?

Of course there is the possibility that the story of Tussah buying the embryo was a cover-up and the plan of Typhon was for his son to be born to lead the people onto the new whorl(s), with Tussah acting as his agent in this scheme. However, this seems to perish on the rock of timing. Pas was alive and in charge when the Whorl entered the Blue/Green system. He was killed shortly afterwards, thirty years before the events of BotLS. Silk was born about a decade later. But if Pas wanted Silk to lead the colonists, he'd have arranged for Silk to have been born around twenty years before arrival. An adult Silk (or Silks) would have been around before Pas's death. So it doesn't really seem to make sense for Silk to be somebody special to Typhon, whether his son, his clone, or his favourite slave!

I'm not sure Typhon could have predicted with absolute accuracy the timing of arrival on Blue/Green.

But Pas could, and Pas was in charge on the Whorl.

- Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn — 11 Feb 2011, 14:26 · in reply to Andrew Mason

From: "Andrew Mason" <andrew.mason53 at gmail.com>
Antronio Pedro Marquez wrote:

If Silk isn't Typhon and Kypris's son, then there are no candidates for his parents. (This has nothing to do with the question of Kypris being Mamelta or not.)

Mamelta may be his mother without being Kypris.

This is consistent with Typhon being his father, if he is the result of in vitro fertilisation (which is what the only actual statement we have about the origin of the embryos implies).

Why not Olive? Or the dead woman in the tube across the way?

- Gerry Quinn

António Pedro Marques — 11 Feb 2011, 14:34 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn wrote (11-02-2011 13:43):

From: "Ant?nio Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>

In fact he

treated some people (such as Piaton) as robots. Maybe he treated almost everyone as robots, in fact - consider the whole possession technology for controlling them! Mamelta tells us how everyone was wired up in a sort of always-on internet, with Typhon's family wandering through their heads. That is before some of them were forced about the Whorl and given brain operations.

Yep. It all sounds like blatant disregard for anyone else's feelings.

Why should he be concerned with the well-being of a computer program?

Suppose we accept your argument that Typhon had a particular disdain for computer programs

? That's emphatically **not** what I said.

(though it makes it very odd that he had digitised versions of his family made to accompany Pas). What difference does it make to anything? Pas rules the Whorl, not Typhon.

You're the one talking about Pas's intentions. I said that there is no reason why **Typhon** should want Pas to possess a hypothetical heir of Typhon.

António Pedro Marques — 11 Feb 2011, 14:36 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn wrote (11-02-2011 12:38):

But Silk, as you say, clearly accepts them as people - and Pas, as Antonio points out, is their god.

(I mentioned that Silk considered them people, not that Pas was their god.)

Gerry Quinn — 11 Feb 2011, 14:36 · in reply to Lee Berman

From: "Lee Berman" <severiansola at hotmail.com>

Antonio Pedro Marques:

I also don't like the idea of multiple Silks or Silk-like figures. For one thing, Horn travels a lot through Blue and always has to explain why Silk is important to him, and nobody says 'yeah, we had someone like that also'.

I think this is good reasoning. By it, we must conclude that Pas' Plan was meant to use Viron as a central focus point for the whole Whorl.

This does not follow at all from the absence of multiple Silks. (At least not without the addition of various other postulates.)

But like with the Silk-as-clone theory, it's not only that nobody mentions it, it's that nobody behaves accordingly.

I find grounds to disagree. Especially if we consider James' theory of Spring Wind=Typhon, using Alexander as a model. Alexander/Spring Wind is a gentle, intellectual mama's boy who rises to become a clever, charismatic military general. Silk also. Alexander/Typhon loses it when he sits on a throne and becomes a jaded, besotted megalomaniac.

The above is no more than an assertion that people can change (especially if they probably aren't the same person to begin with). It doesn't speak to Antonio's point that nobody in the story - not Silk, not other people, not the gods - act like Silk is Typhon's clone. Silk's personality isn't a particularly important issue.

- Gerry Quinn

António Pedro Marques — 11 Feb 2011, 15:21 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn wrote (11-02-2011 14:08):

From: "António Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>

Yes, but if Tussah was motivated to get an embryo with leadership skills to drive out the corrupt Ayuntiamiento, then great leadership skills are not much of a pointer to Typhon, as they might be if they appeared in a random embryo.

But then again corruptness is a personality matter, which hasn't been shown to be determined/determinable by biological parentage. How do we know Tussah's goal was to drive out the corrupt Ayuntiamiento? How do we know the Ayuntiamiento was considered corrupt by that time? How could Tussah know about Typhon's personality?

All we know is that Tussah spent a lot on a special embryo. Everything else is inference. Leadership (and perhaps a propensity to hate corruption), with the intention to defeat the Ayuntiamiento seem the most plausible objectives, if indeed Tussah was acting for the benefit of Viron (if he was acting for Pas, Viron has no future anyway). Tussah's knowledge of Typhon's personality is neither here nor there. Either he wants an embryo with certain qualities, or he is acting for Typhon.

? What then did you mean by '*then* great leadership skills are not much of a pointer to Typhon, as they might be if they appeared in a random embryo'? I thought you were saying Tussah reasoned a random embryo would have leadership without corruption, whereas a Typhon-related one would only have the former. If that's not it, I can't make sense of your paragraph.

And now I must ask.

What the hell is the purpose of Tussah.

I mean, would the story fall apart if that character didn't exist?

Would Gene Wolfe create such a character if there were no purpose for him?

I think the answers are 'yes' for the first and 'no' for the second. Ashley's theory points out a possible reason for Tussah's existence - his actions provided the means for Quetzal to get on board the Whorl. I think further debate on just how much of the story really depends on this character we only hear about fragmentarily would be interesting.

He provides some of the backstory for the political situation in Viron, and he explains how a special embryo came to be implanted in an ordinary woman. He also provides Silk with a claim to the caldeship.

...all of which aren't really necessary. Enabling Quetzal aboard is necessary.

We are told how Quetzal got aboard (an experiment by the Neighbours).

And what's the reliability of that?

As for Typhon, if he wanted a child with Kypris he could have had him born on Urth, and it seems the most obvious thing for him to do!

That would be a competitor. We're told he wanted an heir, it doesn't follow that he wanted the heir around.

Tartarus and Hierax were born on Urth. Clearly he wanted an heir there.

It's not clear, if anything it's 'He didn't seem to mind having them there'. But that was at an earlier time.

Now I agree there is a shortage of candidates for his biological parents - but that is to be expected, really, of a frozen engineered embryo.

But are Typhon and Kypris good candidates, really? Typhon's sons and daughters by Echidna didn't have superpowers, and Echidna presumably came of good stock. Kypris was Typhon's favourite concubine - a worthy achievement, certainly, but it hardly suggests that her children would be especially genetically equipped to rule whorls.

Maybe one of the competencies of the favourite concubine is to be able to produce a son that is more like the father than those by his lawful wife - the concubine erasing herself - her only claim to existence being being a lover/producer of heirs for someone - may even be the most important role, but is always in referral to the person the concubine is a concubine to, not autonomous.

Kypris seems to have been chosen for her beauty. If anyone was chosen for the qualities of her reproductive system it was Echidna - and if so, it didn't work.

? Qualities of her reproductive system?

If you're a tyrant and want an heir that identifies with you more than anything else, what do you choose? The son of a wife whom you married for some reason, bringing along her family tree and an independent personality inflated by her original and acquired status, or the son of an unknown whose reason to be is beauty? And speaking of beauty, if you like your appearance, as Typhon likes his, beauty is like a high-pass filter - you're transmitting your essence ok, not mixing it with lesser stuff.

Tussah was apparently looking for an embryo with special powers, probably of leadership, and he paid a lot for Silk. Would he really consider Typhon's son the ideal candidate?

Of course there is the possibility that the story of Tussah buying the embryo was a cover-up and the plan of Typhon was for his son to be born to lead the people onto the new whorl(s), with Tussah acting as his agent in this scheme. However, this seems to perish on the rock of timing. Pas was alive and in charge when the Whorl entered the Blue/Green system. He was killed shortly afterwards, thirty years before the events of BotLS. Silk was born about a decade later. But if Pas wanted Silk to lead the colonists, he'd have arranged for Silk to have been born around twenty years before arrival. An adult Silk (or Silks) would have been around before Pas's death. So it doesn't really seem to make sense for Silk to be somebody special to Typhon, whether his son,

his clone, or his favourite slave!

I'm not sure Typhon could have predicted with absolute accuracy the timing of arrival on Blue/Green.

But Pas could, and Pas was in charge on the Whorl.

That's fair. Not that it can't be challenged, but the challenge would have to be good.

António Pedro Marques — 11 Feb 2011, 15:25 · in reply to Andrew Mason

Andrew Mason wrote (11-02-2011 13:22):

Antonio Pedro Marquez wrote:

Also notice that the chems were put aboard the whorl as slaves - destined to work for the humans without compensation or to die in battle.

I don't think this is so. Marl, the servant of a black mechanic, is not paid, but this is clearly seen as improper, and its only because his employer has interfered with his mind that he's able to get away with it. Even taluses are paid; although they are effectively slaves, people have to go through some hoops to make the arrangement legal. No doubt it's different in other cities, but in other cities bios can be slaves as well.

But do we have evidence of how it was when the Whorl set sail, and if so, what does it point to?

Gerry Quinn — 11 Feb 2011, 15:46 · in reply to Lee Berman

From: "Lee Berman" <severiansola at hotmail.com>

Gerry Quinn: I really don't agree with this. He has a dream or waking dream in which images of various women run together (I think women he associates with sex or sexuality). In this dream he also sees the Outsider as a wooden toy, and a polished tabletop as the sea. I don't think there's any reason to take it literally that all the women in his dream are the same woman, any more than that the Outsider is a wooden toy.

I can see why Marc has trouble with your theory Gerry. As a self-acknowledged mystery writer, Gene Wolfe has a special place in his work for dream sequences and stories/myths/legends. I can't see him using a dream sequence to reveal something as banal as the fact that Silk is a man and has had sexual thoughts about various women. We already knew that. The dream must be there to tell us things we don't know.

So you are saying the Outsider really is a wooden toy? After all, that's what the dream tells us and we certainly didn't know it.

I've re-read the passage containing the dream, and in fact it has a very clear and obvious interpretation, which isn't really about sex and sexuality although I was heading in the right direction. All you have to is read the context. Read just before the dream. The Outsider is speaking to Silk about what would happen if Kypris were killed and Thelxeipeia became the goddess of love:

[using quotation marks for italics]

"I would claim her in that case, long before the end. As I have so many others. As I am claiming Kypris even now because love always proceeds from me, real love, true love. First romance."

The Outsider was the dancing man on a toy, and the water the polished toy-top on which he danced with Kypris, who was Hyacinth and Mother, too. "First romance", sang the Outsider with the music box. "First romance". It was why he was called the Outsider. He was outside - [Remora wakes him up]

Isn't it totally obvious what is being said here? Kypris is the goddess of LOVE. His love for Hyacinth and his love for his mother. Kypris, Hyacinth, Mother - they are all aspects of love, which proceeds from the Outsider.

There is absolutely no implication that they are the same human personality. In fact the idea is absurd, because we know who Silk means by Mother [capitalised] - he means his adoptive parent.

This is confirmed 46 pages later when Silk is buried and has a vision of both sets of parents. Again, his adoptive, non-biological mother is called Mother. The other woman does not speak and there is no indication whatsoever of any relationship to any other character in the story.

You and Marc have both used the word 'banal' now in connection with my interpretations. What I consider banal is cockeyed extrapolation based on random mythological or other allusions. Yes, dreams are important, but not to the exclusion of all else, and not to be taken literally. That's the whole *point* of dreams - they don't have to be literal!

I find pointed significance in the metaphors of the wooden toy Outsider and the tabletop sea which presage revelations in Short Sun and hearken back to mysteries in BotNS. I would expect revelations of similar importance with regard to the women in the dream. I think similar importance can be found in all Wolfean dreams, legends and stories.

Yes, there are important revelations. The Outsider is the God of Love. That's about as important a revelation as you might hope for.

- Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn — 11 Feb 2011, 16:20 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

From: "Ant?nio Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>
Gerry Quinn wrote (11-02-2011 13:43):

From: "Ant?nio Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>

In fact he

treated some people (such as Piaton) as robots. Maybe he treated almost everyone as robots, in fact - consider the whole possession technology for controlling them! Mamelta tells us how everyone was wired up in a sort of always-on internet, with Typhon's family wandering through their heads. That is before some of them were forced aboard the Whorl and

given brain operations.

Yep. It all sounds like blatant disregard for anyone else's feelings.

Why should he be concerned with the well-being of a computer program?

Suppose we accept your argument that Typhon had a particular disdain for computer programs

? That's emphatically **not** what I said.

Well, you started off by saying that computer programs are not people, and went on to say Typhon wouldn't have cared about Pas.

[By the way, I wasn't going to bring it up as I don't see the importance of the status of software to the issues under debate, but surely Scylla's appearance as a girl on the Red Sun Whorl indicates that computer programs can have souls? If so, I think it rather settles the issue of whether they are people (in the most general sense).

(though it makes it very odd that he had digitised versions of his family made to accompany Pas). What difference does it make to anything? Pas rules the Whorl, not Typhon.

You're the one talking about Pas's intentions. I said that there is no reason why **Typhon** should want Pas to possess a hypothetical heir of Typhon.

Well, I agree that Typhon probably wouldn't have been bothered to put embryonic heirs on the Whorl - but if he had done so, I am sure he would have left them in the charge of Pas (and Kypris if she were the mother). Who better to look after them? So if we want to know what Typhon wanted to happen with any such embryos, we should look at what Pas is doing.

- Gerry Quinn

António Pedro Marques — 11 Feb 2011, 16:41 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn wrote (11-02-2011 16:20):

From: "António Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>

Gerry Quinn wrote (11-02-2011 13:43):

From: "António Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>

In fact he

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Well, you started off by saying that computer programs are not people, and went on to say Typhon wouldn't have cared about Pas.

More or less, and how do you get from that to your 'had a particular disdain for' above?

[By the way, I wasn't going to bring it up as I don't see the importance of the status of software to the issues under debate, but surely Scylla's appearance a girl on the Red Sun Whorl indicates that computer programs can have souls? If so, I think it rather settles the issue of whether they are people (in the most general sense).

The only sense I raised it was in regard to Typhon's perspective.

(though it makes it very odd that he had digitised versions of his family made to accompany Pas). What difference does it make to anything? Pas rules the Whorl, not Typhon.

You're the one talking about Pas's intentions. I said that there is no reason why *Typhon* should want Pas to possess a hypothetical heir of Typhon.

Well, I agree that Typhon probably wouldn't have been bothered to put embryonic heirs on the Whorl - but if he had done so, I am sure he would have left them in the charge of Pas (and Kypris if she were the mother). Who better to look after them? So if we want to know what Typhon wanted to happen with any such embryos, we should look at what Pas is doing.

Good point. 'Look after', though, isn't in any way similar to 'possess'.

(I wouldn't insist on Kypris being the mother, though I find it nice; but I do think Typhon is the father - besides telling us who Silk's father was, it also tells us who Typhon's heir was.)

Marc Aramini — 11 Feb 2011, 17:29 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

This is the thing, if you can make every event in the dream literally true, it fits. From dream logic, Kypris-mother-hy-chenille-mamelta.

hy and chenille possessed by kypris CHECK
idea of an heir between pas and kypris to succeed Pas - see silks head on pas at end (idea repeated three times in text) CHECK for kypris as mother
kypris blue eyed, mamelta blue eyed CHECK
kypris likes Hy because she is described as similar in appearance, mamelta described as Hyacinth like CHECK
weird powers of silk that seem geared for leadership CHECK

If Mamelta did NOT resemble Hy, or did not have blue eyes, it wouldn't fit

(also, a bunch of mother feeling near her body)

Pros: explains who every parent is in the vision Tussah, Silk's adopted mother, Pas, Mamelta-Kypris, explains why Silk is important to Kypris, why his face is on Pas, why he is chosen to replace Pas.

Cons:

Why the hell is Mamelta down there if she is kypris? Well, Echidna is hunting for her jilted revenge, maybe Typhon had to get her out of there in a hurry ... but why mindwipe her? It does say she was not supposed to be awoken at that point, and the seal supposed to be undisturbed for the plan of Pas. Maybe Kypris WAS supposed to reload into Mamelta's body or something, I don't know.

Your objection is always the same to the idea of Silk as an heir, people would recognize Pas clone, and why would Pas want leadership qualities to take Silk over? BUT those have NOTHING to do with this idea, I maintain, Silk is JUST a son, not a clone, not meant to be taken over, and

this is not from myth, this is purely from the text.

But nothing can convince you, so we should just leave it be.

It does explain why Silk is special, though.

--- On Fri, 2/11/11, Gerry Quinn <gerryq at indigo.ie> wrote:
From: Gerry Quinn <gerryq at indigo.ie>
Subject: Re: (urth) First Exodus theory revised
To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>
Date: Friday, February 11, 2011, 7:46 AM

From: "Lee Berman" <severiansola at hotmail.com>

Gerry Quinn: I really don't agree with this.

He has a dream or waking dream in which images of various women run together (I think women he associates with sex or sexuality). In this dream he also sees the Outsider as a wooden toy, and a polished tabletop as the sea. I don't think there's any reason to take it literally that all the women in his dream are the same woman, any more than that the Outsider is a wooden toy.

I can see why Marc has trouble with your theory Gerry.

As a self-acknowledged mystery writer, Gene Wolfe has a special place in his work for dream sequences and stories/myths/legends. I can't see him using a dream sequence to reveal something as banal as the fact that Silk is a man and has had sexual thoughts about various women.

We already knew that. The dream must be there to tell us things we don't know.

So you are saying the Outsider really is a wooden toy? After all, that's what the dream tells us and we certainly didn't know it.

I've re-read the passage containing the dream, and in fact it has a very clear and obvious interpretation, which isn't really about sex and sexuality although I was heading in the right direction. All you have to is read the context. Read just before the dream. The Outsider is speaking to Silk about what would happen if Kypris were killed and Thelxeipeia became the goddess of love:

[using quotation marks for italics]

"I would claim her in that case, long before the end.
As I have so many others. As I am claiming Kypris even now because love always proceeds from me, real love, true love. First romance."

The Outsider was the dancing man on a toy, and the water the polished toy-top on which he danced with Kypris, who was

Hyacinth and Mother, too. "First romance", sang the Outsider with the music box. "First romance". It was why he was called the Outsider. He was outside - [Remora wakes him up]

Isn't it totally obvious what is being said here? Kypris is the goddess of LOVE. His love for Hyacinth and his love for his mother. Kypris, Hyacinth, Mother - they are all aspects of love, which proceeds from the Outsider.

There is absolutely no implication that they are the same human personality. In fact the idea is absurd, because we know who Silk means by Mother [capitalised] - he means his adoptive parent.

This is confirmed 46 pages later when Silk is buried and has a vision of both sets of parents. Again, his adoptive, non-biological mother is called Mother. The other woman does not speak and there is no indication whatsoever of any relationship to any other character in the story.

You and Marc have both used the word 'banal' now in connection with my interpretations. What I consider banal is cockeyed extrapolation based on random mythological or other allusions. Yes, dreams are important, but not to the exclusion of all else, and not to be taken literally. That's the whole *point* of dreams - they don't have to be literal!

I find pointed significance in the metaphors of the wooden toy Outsider and the tabletop sea which presage revelations in Short Sun and hearken back to mysteries in BotNS. I would expect revelations of similar importance with regard to the women in the dream. I think similar importance can be found in all Wolfean dreams, legends and stories.

Yes, there are important revelations. The Outsider is the God of Love. That's about as important a revelation as you might hope for.

- Gerry Quinn

Marc Aramini — 11 Feb 2011, 17:35 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Another thing that frustrates me about the book itself is that Olive scene.

He doubts her name is Mamelta, looks at Olive's name on the tube (remember Aunt Olivia?), then THINKS about going back to check Mamelta's name on the tube, but just decides not to, since they passed it. I wonder what it would have said. Son of a ...

Marc Aramini — 11 Feb 2011, 17:38 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

Oh yeah, and the timing of everything got all screwed up, the seal of Pas was disturbed, those sleepers and embryos were not yet supposed to be grown, and Pas got deleted prematurely. When Mamelta gets woken, Silk says, "I don't think that was supposed to happen." It's not part of Pas' plan.

Lee Berman — 11 Feb 2011, 17:39 · follows Marc Aramini

Gerry Quinn: So you are saying the Outsider really is a wooden toy? After all, that's what the dream tells us and we certainly didn't know it.

Ah, Gerry, your pugnacious, argumentative side is on full display in this post. Still, is probably better to not let that side get the best of you. For brevity, I'll just say that for me this view of the Outsider hearkens back to the wooden marionette we see early in BotNS in Severian's dream and forward to the mythic references to the Outsider that we encounter later.

I've re-read the passage containing the dream, and in fact it has a very clear and obvious interpretation, which isn't really about sex and sexuality although I was heading in the right direction.

If it was clear and obvious, why didn't you get it the first time? Am I really to believe the Gerry of now is clear-sighted to the obvious but the Gerry of a couple hours ago was muddle-sighted and confused? Perhaps the label "obvious" shouldn't be so hastily conferred, especially if the conclusion is not obvious to everyone, even you.

[using quotation marks for italics]

"I would claim her in that case, long before the end. As I have so many others. As I am claiming Kypris even now because love always proceeds from me, real love, true love. First romance."

The Outsider was the dancing man on a toy, and the water the polished toy-top on which he danced with Kypris, who was Hyacinth and Mother, too.

"First romance", sang the Outsider with the music box. "First romance". It was why he was called the Outsider. He was outside -

[Remora wakes him up]

Isn't it totally obvious what is being said here? Kypris is the goddess of LOVE. His love for Hyacinth and his love for his mother. Kypris, Hyacinth, Mother - they are all aspects of love, which proceeds from the Outsider. There is absolutely no implication that they are the same human personality. In fact the idea is absurd, because we know who Silk means by Mother [capitalised] - he means his adoptive parent....

Yes, there are important revelations. The Outsider is the God of Love.
that's about as important a revelation as you might hope for.

Again, no it isn't obvious or everyone reading it would have gotten that interpretation years ago on first reading, and you would have gotten it on your first reading.

I think "The Outsider is the God of Love" is an interesting interpretation worth considering. It could be condensed to a common modern Christian aphorism, "God is Love" and perhaps that's what Gene Wolfe intended to convey here. I don't see how that jibes with the wooden puppet or the later "God of Wine" association we get for The Outsider but I wouldn't dismiss your idea out of hand.

My own interpretation would focus on the idea that The Outsider has directly interacted with each of the women mentioned in a way which is significant to Silk. I would not dismiss Marc's consideration that the dream shows a thread of identity connection between these women as "absurd". "A who was B who was C" implies an ABC connection to me.

Gerry Quinn — 11 Feb 2011, 18:26 · in reply to Lee Berman

From: "Lee Berman" <severiansola at hotmail.com>
Gerry Quinn:

So you are saying the Outsider really is a wooden toy? After all, that's what the dream tells us and we certainly didn't know it.

Ah, Gerry, your pugnacious, argumentative side is on full display in this post. Still, is probably better to not let that side get the best of you. For brevity, I'll just say that for me this view of the Outsider hearkens back to the wooden marionette we see early in BotNS in Severian's dream and forward to the mythic references to the Outsider that we encounter later.

You think the Outsider is Baldanders? Because that's who the marionette represents in Severian's dream.

I've re-read the passage containing the dream, and in fact it has a very clear and obvious interpretation, which isn't really about sex and sexuality although I was heading in the right direction.

If it was clear and obvious, why didn't you get it the first time?

Fair enough, though I was on the way there. Let's say it becomes obvious when one sees it. I believe most people will see it now that I've pointed it out.

[using quotation marks for italics]

"I would claim her in that case, long before the end. As I have so many others. As I am claiming Kypris even now because love always proceeds from

me, real love, true love. First romance."

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I think "The Outsider is the God of Love" is an interesting interpretation
worth considering.
It could be condensed to a common modern Christian aphorism, "God is Love"
and perhaps that's
what Gene Wolfe intended to convey here.

No 'perhaps' about it, IMO.

I don't see how that jibes with the wooden puppet or
the later "God of Wine" association we get for The Outsider but I wouldn't
dismiss your idea
out of hand.

The puppet is just a transition in Silk's dream. The Dionysus reference is a pretty unimportant
aside showing that the Outsider has been known by many names - several others are given
throughout the Solar Cycle. I don't know why some folks are trying to build it up - it has no
apparent explanatory power since the Outsider displays very little in the way of specifically
Dionysian associations.

My own interpretation would focus on the idea that The Outsider has
directly interacted with each
of the women mentioned in a way which is significant to Silk.

Well, yes... the interaction is precisely that they represent to Silk the Outsider in his aspect as
Love.

I would not dismiss Marc's consideration
that the dream shows a thread of identity connection between these women
as "absurd". "A who
was B who was C" implies an ABC connection to me.

It's absurd to say that Silk's adoptive mother is Hyacinth. And when Silk capitalises Mother, he
means his adoptive mother.

- Gerry Quinn

Marc Aramini — 11 Feb 2011, 19:05 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Sigh, no one is saying Hyacinth is his adoptive mother, Jerry. Just that the term mother is
ambiguous even if capitalized (he, like Baby Huey, is the luckiest duck in the world, he has TWO
mommies!), and that Kypris definitely possessed everyone else mentioned except Mother and
Mamelta, its an easy thing to make all of the equation true if you accept that the portion of
Hyacinth or Chenille that is Mother is the Kypris inside her. I don't see what is so controversial

about this, or why an explicit reference to "Mother" would lead you to believe there is no evidence whatsoever to the identity of ALL Silk's parents, because yeah, we know he's an embryo, we know he sees four, and that Mother can apply to either one of those ladies he sees in the sky, not necessarily that adopted one.

Marc Aramini — 11 Feb 2011, 19:07 · in reply to Marc Aramini

sorry for misspelling your name, Gerry. Must have been the cartoon influencing me.

Gerry Quinn — 12 Feb 2011, 14:23 · in reply to António Pedro Marques

From: "Ant?nio Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>

Gerry Quinn wrote (11-02-2011 14:08):

All we know is that Tussah spent a lot on a special embryo. Everything else is inference. Leadership (and perhaps a propensity to hate corruption), with the intention to defeat the Ayuntamiento seem the most plausible objectives, if indeed Tussah was acting for the benefit of Viron (if he was acting for Pas, Viron has no future anyway). Tussah's knowledge of Typhon's personality is neither here nor there. Either he wants an embryo with certain qualities, or he is acting for Typhon.

? What then did you mean by '*then* great leadership skills are not much of a pointer to Typhon, as they might be if they appeared in a random embryo'? I thought you were saying Tussah reasoned a random embryo would have leadership without corruption, whereas a Typhon-related one would only have the former. If that's not it, I can't make sense of your paragraph.

I am talking about the application of Bayesian-type arguments to adjust our prior assessment of the probability that Silk is genetically related to Typhon, based on our observation that he displays great leadership traits.

Great leadership traits would be rare and surprising in a random embryo, but not in an embryo selected for engineered leadership traits, and not in an embryo genetically related to Typhon.

So if we know that the embryo was engineered to have such traits, then the fact that Silk has such traits tells us nothing about his parentage.

But if we know the embryo was not selected for that reason, then the appearance of these traits is surprising, and increases our belief in the possibility that Silk is related to Typhon. (For some of us it may increase it from 0.000000001 to 0.0000001, but nevertheless it increases it.)

[Tussah] provides some of the backstory for the political situation in Viron,

and he explains how a special embryo came to be implanted in an ordinary

woman. He also provides Silk with a claim to the caldeship.

...all of which aren't really necessary. Enabling Quetzal aboard is necessary.

We are told how Quetzal got aboard (an experiment by the Neighbours).

And what's the reliability of that?

Pretty high IMO, unless the Neighbours' sense of humour extends to falsely admitting to activities some might construe as tantamount to genocide.

Besides, there's no evidence for any alternate explanation of how he got on board.

As for Typhon, if he wanted a child with Kypris he could have had him born on Urth, and it seems the most obvious thing for him to do!

That would be a competitor. We're told he wanted an heir, it doesn't follow that he wanted the heir around.

Tartarus and Hierax were born on Urth. Clearly he wanted an heir there.

It's not clear, if anything it's 'He didn't seem to mind having them there'. But that was at an earlier time.

You're stretching.

- Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn — 12 Feb 2011, 15:34 · in reply to Marc Aramini

From: "Marc Aramini" <marcaramini at yahoo.com>

Your objection is always the same to the idea of Silk as an heir, people would recognize Pas clone, and why would Pas want leadership qualities to take Silk over? BUT those have NOTHING to do with this idea, I maintain, Silk is JUST a son, not a clone, not meant to be taken over, and this is not from myth, this is purely from the text.

My objection is simply that I think the things you see as evidence have other, better explanations. Silk's dreams, the vision sent him by Kypris, the words spoken by Mamelta - I find good clear reasons and explanations for all of them right there in the text.

- Gerry Quinn

António Marques — 12 Feb 2011, 19:00 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

On 12 February 2011 14:23, Gerry Quinn <gerryq at indigo.ie> wrote:

From: "António Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>

Gerry Quinn wrote (11-02-2011 14:08):

All we know is that Tussah spent a lot on a special embryo. Everything else is inference. Leadership (and perhaps a propensity to hate corruption), with the intention to defeat the Ayuntamiento seem the most plausible objectives, if indeed Tussah was acting for the benefit of Viron (if he was acting for Pas, Viron has no future anyway). Tussah's knowledge of Typhon's personality is neither here nor there. Either he wants an embryo with certain qualities, or he is acting for Typhon.

? What then did you mean by '*then* great leadership skills are not much of a pointer to Typhon, as they might be if they appeared in a random embryo'? I thought you were saying Tussah reasoned a random embryo would have leadership without corruption, whereas a Typhon-related one would only have the former. If that's not it, I can't make sense of your paragraph.

I am talking about the application of Bayesian-type arguments to adjust our prior assessment of the probability that Silk is genetically related to Typhon, based on our observation that he displays great leadership traits.

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But if we know the embryo was not selected for that reason, then the appearance of these traits is surprising, and increases our belief in the possibility that Silk is related to Typhon. (For some of us it may increase it from 0.000000001 to 0.0000001, but nevertheless it increases it.)

Unlike Mucor's well-defined abilities, 'leadership' is a vague, if not mystical, concept, and somewhat unworldly on that account. But you say 'selected for leadership traits', which is imo the reasonable way to put it, since it doesn't mention engineering per se nor reifies 'leadership'. One can argue that 'selected for leadership traits' has a high probability of coinciding with 'genetically related to Typhon':

1) Typhon's scientists aren't magicians, there is no evidence and it would be unworldly to have them manipulate embryos at will, it's more likely that they would work with material selected from people they had access to, 2) would it not make sense for Typhon to want the people with leadership traits, who would be destined to rule over others, to be related to him?

I didn't say it was a strong argument; I just said that *if* it were an argument, it would be in favour of Silk-related-to-Typhon, not against.

[Tussah] provides some of the backstory for the political situation in Viron, and he explains how a special embryo came to be implanted in an ordinary woman. He also provides Silk with a claim to the caldeship.

...all of which aren't really necessary. Enabling Quetzal aboard is necessary.

We are told how Quetzal got aboard (an experiment by the Neighbours).

And what's the reliability of that?

Pretty high IMO, unless the Neighbours' sense of humour extends to falsely admitting to activities some might construe as tantamount to genocide.

In all we have are Silk/Horn's conjectures.

Besides, there's no evidence for any alternate explanation of how he got on board.

As for Typhon, if he wanted a child with Kypris he could have had him born on Urth, and it seems the most obvious thing for him to do!

That would be a competitor. We're told he wanted an heir, it doesn't follow that he wanted the heir around.

Tartarus and Hierax were born on Urth. Clearly he wanted an heir there.

It's not clear, if anything it's 'He didn't seem to mind having them there'. But that was at an earlier time.

You're stretching.

Not really - I don't see how we can compare Tartaros and Hierax to whatever other heir Typhon may have had not by Echidna.

António Marques — 12 Feb 2011, 19:36 · in reply to António Marques

2011/2/12 Ant?nio Marques <antonio at gmail.com>:

On 12 February 2011 14:23, Gerry Quinn <gerryq at indigo.ie> wrote:

From: "Ant?nio Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>

Gerry Quinn wrote (11-02-2011 14:08):

From: "Ant?nio Pedro Marques" <antonio at gmail.com>

Gerry Quinn wrote (11-02-2011 14:08):

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You're stretching.

Not really - I don't see how we can compare Tartaros and Hierax to whatever other heir Typhon may have had not by Echidna.

From another angle: we're told Typhon wanted an heir. We're not told in what sense he wanted an heir - to be around on Urth or to rule on Blue/Green.

One might argue that if any of his children by Echidna were fit, they could have been sent in the Whorl. Since none were fit, we can't say anything.

Andrew Mason — 12 Feb 2011, 22:20 · follows António Marques

Antonio Pedor Marquez wrote:

From another angle: we're told Typhon wanted an heir. We're not told in what sense he wanted an heir - to be around on Urth or to rule on Blue/Green.

I think the natural sense of 'heir' (and, even more so, 'son to succeed him', which is what Lemur actually says) is one who would rule after him in the empire he currently ruled. A ruler on Blue/Green, where he had never been, would only be an heir in a rather stretched sense.

Both Scylla and Lemur link his wanting an heir with his having so many children (by Echidna). Moreover, Lemur says 'he _had_ wanted a son to succeed him', which suggests this desire was a thing of the past by the time the Whorl was launched.

It's true that Scylla, after listing his children, goes on to say 'and after that - ' before interrupting herself. This could mean that he had a child with someone else. (But would Scylla know about that?) But equally it could mean 'After that he gave up on having an heir, and decided to become immortal by having his head grafted'. (It's not till after this that she reveals his name was Typhon.)

One might argue that if any of his children by Echidna were fit, they could have been sent in the Whorl.

As sleepers? But if he had had a child with Kypris (or Thyone, I suppose) who was fit, he could have sent them as sleepers too. Silk was sent as an embryo, too early to judge his fitness.

Now, there is a question why Typhon's desire for an heir is referred to repeatedly. My guess is this: at the end, Silk does in fact become his heir, though in a way he could not have anticipated, since I don't think he was planning to be killed on the Whorl. Silk may be Typhon's son, though I can see some problems with it. If so, I don't think it's because he is a destined heir, but because Typhon thought that having sons (with suitably selected mothers, and the

possibility of genetic modification) was a good way of producing people of special ability. In that case Silk becoming Typhon's heir does, after all, fulfil his desire, though in an unexpected way.

Andrew Mason — 12 Feb 2011, 23:00 · follows Andrew Mason

Antonio Pedro Marquez wrote: >

Unlike Mucor's well-defined abilities, 'leadership' is a vague, if not mystical, concept, and somewhat unworldly on that account. But you say 'selected for leadership traits', which is imo the reasonable way to put it, since it doesn't mention engineering per se nor reifies 'leadership'.

Here is the word of God on Silk's abilities.

(Kieran Mullen) It's pretty broadly indicated that Silk was gestated from a frozen embryo as Mucor was. This has some nice symbolic effects ('virgin birth', the hero as having unusual origins, etc.). Does Silk have any human engineered, extraordinary abilities? ...

(GW) ... To quibble, it depends on what you mean by extraordinary. He has none comparable to Mucor's, although his are much more valuable. He is a born leader, with great energy and intelligence, and superior motor skills.

(Elsewhere in the same interview he says Silk is slightly psychic, but the way he says it suggests he thinks that's really quite unexceptional.)

Gerry Quinn — 13 Feb 2011, 14:44 · in reply to Andrew Mason

From: "Andrew Mason" <andrew.mason53 at gmail.com>
Now, there is a question why Typhon's desire for an heir is referred to repeatedly. My guess is this: at the end, Silk does in fact become his heir, though in a way he could not have anticipated, since I don't think he was planning to be killed on the Whorl. Silk may be Typhon's son, though I can see some problems with it. If so, I don't think it's because he is a destined heir, but because Typhon thought that having sons (with suitably selected mothers, and the possibility of genetic modification) was a good way of producing people of special ability. In that case Silk becoming Typhon's heir does, after all, fulfil his desire, though in an unexpected way.

I don't think it goes on about Typhon wanting an heir more than you would expect of something that is significant in setting up the backstory - i.e. a big family of gods with no anointed heir. Also, one expects Monarchs to be concerned with heirs, so not bringing it up would in fact be pretty odd.

- Gerry Quinn

Andrew Mason — 13 Feb 2011, 18:59 · follows Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn wrote:

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You may be right. I don't think it's at all odd that both Scylla and Lemur mention the point. I do think it's a bit odd that Silk later repeats Lemur's entire speech, when the only point he seems to be making is 'the gods aren't all they're cracked up to be'. But I suppose the thought that the

gods wouldn't even exist were it not for Typhon's frustrated desire for an heir is relevant there.

Marc Aramini — 13 Feb 2011, 19:13 · in reply to Andrew Mason

I don't want to comment too much, because it looks like we all have vastly divergent views of Long Sun, even though the first time through it didn't seem very ambiguous.

The Silk as actual heir theory coincides with identifying Kypris as mother, ids the blue eyed man in the vision in addition to the bust in his mother's window, explains WHY Kypris wants to invite him to succeed Pas, and explains why right away "Silk for Calde" is in the air almost IMMEDIATELY, as well as why his face is on Pas at the end. It also explains why the speech is repeated several times, its literally very important.

To me, saying he is just an heir in theory or symbolically and that it isn't quite applicable to the situation at large in the whorl is a stretch, but I don't want to force my alignment of the text on others. I just feel like Gene certainly intended for Silk to be the actual heir of Typhon, and when he answers questions like, "Of course Pig is a godling, look at the description of his fingers on this page", this Silk as biological son of Kypris to me way more concrete, way more supportable, way more textually supported.

I don't want to argue with you guys, though. We've already seen all the evidence and judged it as convincing or not.

--- On Sun, 2/13/11, Andrew Mason <andrew.mason53 at gmail.com> wrote:

From: Andrew Mason <andrew.mason53 at gmail.com>

Subject: (urth) First Exodus theory revised

To: urth at lists.urth.net

Date: Sunday, February 13, 2011, 10:59 AM

Gerry Quinn wrote:

I don't think it goes on about Typhon wanting an heir more than you would expect of something that is significant in setting up the backstory - i.e. a big family of gods with no anointed heir. ?Also, one expects Monarchs to be concerned with heirs, so not bringing it up would in fact be pretty odd.

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Andrew Mason — 14 Feb 2011, 16:41 · follows Marc Aramini

Antonio Pedro Marquez wrote:

I don't think this is so. Marl, the servant of a black mechanic, is not paid, but this is clearly seen as improper, and its only because his employer has interfered with his mind that he's able to get away with it. Even taluses are paid; although they are effectively slaves, people have to go through some hoops to make the arrangement legal. No

doubt it's different in other cities, but in other cities bios can be slaves as well.

But do we have evidence of how it was when the Whorl set sail, and if so, what does it point to?

I don't think we do - but is there a reason to think it was different from Silk's time? If Pas had meant the chems to be slaves, why would that have changed?

By the way, what do people make of Sard, the pawnbroker? I believe 'sard' can mean a fish, but the most common meaning, which Wolfe must have been aware of, is a gem. Is this a chem running his own business? I don't think anything that's said actually rules this out - we are only told that most civilian chems are servants.

James Wynn — 14 Feb 2011, 16:50 · in reply to Andrew Mason

On 2/14/2011 10:41 AM, Andrew Mason wrote:

I don't think we do - but is there a reason to think it was different from Silk's time? If Pas had meant the chems to be slaves, why would that have changed?

The increasing scarcity of chems would conceivably cause this. Just as, when the Black Death depleted the population of Europe, it doomed feudalism since the serfs (slaves) gained the upper hand. It does not appear that chems were recognized as People during Typhon's time, based on statements by Kypris.

By the way, what do people make of Sard, the pawnbroker? I believe 'sard' can mean a fish, but the most common meaning, which Wolfe must have been aware of, is a gem. Is this a chem running his own business? I don't think anything that's said actually rules this out - we are only told that most civilian chems are servants.

Most chems work in manual labor because that is what they were designed to do. Bios take advantage of that. But, among male chems who do not serve a soldiers, they are not apparently employed primarily as domestic servants--as female chems seem to have. Some work in fields. It is possible that Sard was programmed for some sort of clerical use that mapped to being a pawnbroker.

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