

Scanning Typhon

The Urth list — 4 messages, 4 voices, 11 Feb 2011

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5966>

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Nicholas Gevers — 11 Feb 2011, 07:53

It occurs to me that when Typhon's personality was scanned to create Pas, there could have been an accidental--or even deliberate--incorporation of elements of Piaton's mind too. Thus, perhaps, the unexpected (relative) benevolence of Pas and his Plan.

--Nick Gevers.

Lee Berman — 11 Feb 2011, 12:56 · follows Nicholas Gevers

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This is an interesting alternate explanation. I think most have been content with the idea that the benevolence is a result of the principle that we tend to become the role we play. I wonder if it will appeal to those readers who prefer nuts and bolts explanations over literary ones.

I was trying to think of text evidence of Pas having elements of being a slave. For some reason the phrase "god of gods, slave of slaves" popped into my head. But I don't even know if this phrase is in the Sun series. Is it biblical? Google and Urth Archives searches were no help. Anyone?

Gerry Quinn — 11 Feb 2011, 14:21 · in reply to Lee Berman

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

Nick Gevers: It occurs to me that when Typhon's personality was scanned to create Pas, there could have been an accidental--or even deliberate--incorporation of elements of Piaton's mind too. Thus, perhaps, the unexpected (relative) benevolence of Pas and his Plan.

I tend to doubt it, mainly because while surgical accidents do occur in which the wrong leg is amputated, such a scenario lacks plausibility when it comes to scanning the head of the Monarch.

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Why? Of course there should be valid explanations for everything, but Pas's motives are perfectly explicable without invoking any scanning errors. Typhon himself would plausibly have acted the same way. Indeed, although the exact nature of the brain operations is murky, Typhon appears to have deliberately tried to release the Whorl's inhabitants from his thrall right at the start of the journey, so no personality change is even required.

The mistake some people make is to believe that some mythological resonance they find in elements of the story can serve as an alternative to 'nuts and bolts' explanations.

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Doesn't ring a bell.

- Gerry Quinn

James Wynn — 11 Feb 2011, 17:12 · in reply to Lee Berman

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Lee-

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I think it is a little more complex or simpler than either either of these. The Whorl and it's purpose were on the whole wholesome because no one is Evil Person in the sense that he desires the opposite of Good. Typhon didn't eat feces and defecate six course meals. Neither did he build the Whorl to be a place of torment. He wanted the place to work and therefore became an agent of Good in the process of creation.

In "An Evil Guest", Gideon Chase tries to explain to this misapprehension when we usually call some PERSON evil: " 'Would you say that evil is synonymous with cruelty? With greed?' The president nodded. 'I sure would.' 'Then you cannot be correct. Cruelty and greed are very different things. Cruelty is delight in the pain of others. Greed is an insatiable desire to possess. You do not like the result of either one--unless the greed and cruelty are your own. You avenge yourself upon them by calling them evil. There is no difference in kind between your position and that of a woman who shouts 'bad dog' when the puppy soils the carpet. The difference is in degree. Only.' "

Typhon's goals ran contrary to those of the Conciliator and the New Sun. In that sense he was a villain. He was a tyrant and therefore an adversary to any who desired true Liberty.

However, just because Typhon was a tyrant and believed it was necessary that of humanity were under his thumb, doesn't mean that his empire was not better than all the governments it overwhelmed. It doesn't mean that his purposes in founding the empire were not laudable in either its particulars or in its broad sense. The same is true in his construction of the Whorl. On multiple occasions I have heard Wolfe say that "the best villain is one who falls just short of

being a hero."

I think this is what the Rajan was getting at when he was explaining why Typhon made the choices he did in planning the Whorl:

"It explains many things, once you understand that Pas himself was brought into being by the Outsider. [...] To colonize Blue and Green, Pas had to make certain that some human beings reached them alive." ~ RttW 131