

Mucor and Oreb in the manse

The Urth list — 10 messages, 4 voices, 26 Nov 2011

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6126>

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Roy C. Lackey — 26 Nov 2011, 05:13

Before I get to the scene in question, I must first go forward in the story to a later scene, then back to another incident before the scene in question.

Silk had just returned from the lake, on the day of Rose's funeral. He went into his manse bedroom to clean up and change clothes. Mucor appeared in his shaving mirror. The first thing she said was, "This isn't the first time I've seen you with no clothes on." (CALDE, ch. 2, 71) That got me wondering when she might have ever seen him naked, so I started backtracking. The next time Silk saw her after Blood's villa was briefly in the face of Teasel's dad. From there he went straight home and took a bath and went to bed naked.

He had some weird dreams, then what seems to be a dream within a dream that incorporated real-world, real-time elements, such as hard dry rain coming in the window that was actually gravel tossed by Crane. Just before the "dry rain" it was: "A black-clad imp with a blood-red sword stood upon his chest to study him, its head cocked to one side. He stirred and it fled, fluttering like a little flag." (NIGHTSIDE, ch. 9, 220) That black-clad imp suggests Oreb with his red beak. Marble calling Silk's name finally woke him.

Silk didn't know he had injured the bird's wing with the walking stick before he went to see Teasel. While Marble was watching Crane treat Silk's injuries, she saw Oreb hopping in what Silk specified was the stairwell (223). The bird made its way from the stairwell into the kitchen (229), then managed to fly back up to the top of the larder (230), dislocated wing and all, and had to be coaxed down so Crane could treat his wing.

My thinking is that Mucor possessed Oreb, got him to hop up the stairs and onto Silk's chest while he slept, and that is when she saw him naked. This blend of dream and reality also prefigures the later scene in the manse with Oreb, Mucor and Pike. I suggest that Mucor might have possessed Oreb that night at the manse, damaged wing and all, and that Oreb did not remember the possession, just as Remora didn't remember when Mucor possessed him. That Oreb could fly to the top of the larder with a dislocated wing proves that he could fly well enough to get up the stairs with a splinted wing, even if only by hopping up them.

If you want to say that Mucor's "seen you with no clothes on" meant only that she had seen Silk when he was undressed but not totally naked, fine. Then you can dismiss the the black-clad imp Silk imagined while he was sleeping after getting back from Blood's villa and go straight to the next time Silk slept, which was the night of Oreb, Mucor and Pike, and chalk the black-clad imp up as just part of a crazy dream. It was just as hot that night and he had undressed for bed. This is known because he stopped to put his trousers on before he went downstairs to look for Oreb (LAKE, ch. 1, 32).

Either way, Mucor had seen him without his clothes on in the few days between Silk's first sight of her at Blood's villa and her appearance in his shaving mirror. She had been keeping tabs on

Silk the whole time, at Teasel's home, in the tunnels, at Orchid's and at the manse.

-Roy

Gerry Quinn — 26 Nov 2011, 16:56 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

From: Roy C. Lackey

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That makes a lot of sense. Silk's rationalisation of Oreb's actions is correct, then, but Oreb either forgot or didn't accept that his actions while possessed were things he did, so he did not admit to them. The imp is certainly Oreb, and Wolfe makes much of Silk's nudity in the scene. I'm inclined to believe it. And that means we can connect all three visitors that night — a possessed Oreb, fleeing after being abandoned by Mucor in favour of a ghostly appearance. And Pike's ghost appears because he is Mucor's grandfather.

- Gerry Quinn

James Wynn — 28 Nov 2011, 16:03 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

On 11/25/2011 11:13 PM, Roy C. Lackey wrote:

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I really like this because it attempts to answer Mucor's comment about seeing Silk naked. Now, I'll keep my eye out for other references to Silk being naked.

As I sense is the case with you, I'm bothered by Mucor not actually making an appearance, but it could be argued (if there are no other scenes where Silk is said to be naked) that THIS is the evidence of her presence there. I agree that the black clad imp refers indirectly to Oreb, but I interpret the "imp" as evidence that Oreb is possessed by a "daemon" -- an independently running background computer process (eg "Pas").

I don't know if this has been mentioned before but the black clad imp on Silk's chest is a reference to Henry Fuseli's painting, Nightmare:
[http://easthighschoolap.wikispaces.com/file/view/752px-John_Henry_Fuseli_-_The_Nightmare.JPG](http://easthighschoolap.wikispaces.com/file/view/752px-John_Henry_Fuseli_-_The_Nightmare.JPG/G/145907447/752px-John_Henry_Fuseli_-_The_Nightmare.JPG)
[G/145907447/752px-John_Henry_Fuseli_-_The_Nightmare.JPG](http://easthighschoolap.wikispaces.com/file/view/752px-John_Henry_Fuseli_-_The_Nightmare.JPG/G/145907447/752px-John_Henry_Fuseli_-_The_Nightmare.JPG)

However, I'm not convinced that this means Oreb was physically in his room at the time. It /could/. I'm not sure it offers us any narrative value in saying that, however.

Silk didn't know he had injured the bird's wing with the walking stick before he went to see Teasel. While Marble was watching Crane treat Silk's injuries, she saw Oreb hopping in what Silk specified was the stairwell (223). The bird made its way from the stairwell into the kitchen (229), then managed to fly back up to the top of the larder (230), dislocated wing and all, and had to be coaxed down so Crane could treat his wing.

Okay. This brings us to the PROBLEM with your theory that I hinted at in my last comment. There has never been any doubt that Oreb *could* make it into Silk's room. And Silk is able to rationalize that Oreb *could* fly a bit out of the window. Based on his reaction, it seems that he saw Oreb do more than flutter away. I'll follow this up in my next comment...

My thinking is that Mucor possessed Oreb, got him to hop up the stairs and onto Silk's chest while he slept, and that is when she saw him naked. This blend of dream and reality also prefigures the later scene in the manse with Oreb, Mucor and Pike. I suggest that Mucor might have possessed Oreb that night at the manse, damaged wing and all, and that Oreb did not remember the possession, just as Remora didn't remember when Mucor possessed him. That Oreb could fly to the top of the larder with a dislocated wing proves that he could fly well enough to get up the stairs with a splinted wing, even if only by hopping up them.

You are right that Mucor **could** have possessed Oreb, but then

The tricky part has always been two-fold:

1) Silk's rationalization about how Oreb could have flown out the window is a classic Wolfean signal that that is NOT what happened.

2) This leaves open the big questions:

- a) What was Oreb doing there in the first place?
- b) Why did he lie?

The second question is a biggie. Silk made it clear that he wouldn't punish Oreb for being up there. An explanation that leaves that dangling is barely an explanation for me. In tying Mucor's comment (although, not your favorite theory) to the night of Pike's appearance, You've made a gallant attempt explain the first question; however:

a) Why would Mucor NEED to possess Oreb to keep tabs on Silk? We KNOW that she can astral travel. This seems to be a needless, unestablished complication just to tie up a loose end.

b) Also unestablished is that Mucor can possess beings and then chain into astral presence. Why would she do that?

c) Your assertion that the difference between Mucor's two astral disapperations at the Trivigaunte floater/in the tunnels and the one in Silk's room is...well...it is quite obviously untrue. It does match up almost perfectly with the disapperation of Pike's ghost.

If you want to say that Mucor's "seen you with no clothes on" meant only that she had seen Silk when he was undressed but not totally naked, fine. Then you can dismiss the the black-clad imp Silk imagined while he was sleeping after getting back from Blood's villa and go straight to the next time Silk slept, which was the night of Oreb, Mucor and Pike, and chalk the black-clad imp up as just part of a crazy dream. It was just as hot that night and he had undressed for bed. This is known because he stopped to put his trousers on before he went downstairs to look for Oreb (LAKE, ch. 1, 32).

As I said before, the above isn't even YOUR favorite theory of when Mucor saw Silk naked. So--for you--it doesn't really tie Mucor to the night in question. To your reading, it means that Mucor should always be thought of as possibly there at any time, so why not then as well? Okay. That's tenuous, but defensible.

But if Wolfe had Mucor, Oreb, and Pike's ghost appear to Silk on the same night (like Dickensian ghosts of Christmas) --two at the same time--and each having little or nothing to do with each other, it would be the greatest red herring Wolfe has ever laid on his readers to my memory.

Either way, Mucor had seen him without his clothes on in the few days between Silk's first sight of her at Blood's villa and her appearance in his shaving mirror. She had been keeping tabs on Silk the whole time, at Teasel's home, in the tunnels, at Orchid's and at the manse.

However, one reason I REALLY like this construct is because it openly in enrolls in you in the club of readers who weave background narrative out-of-page in order to tie events and statements together. And I'm standing at the door with open arms because your weavings are likely to be useful to me.

Next I'll address your timeline and your comment about the Rajan claiming to insert himself in

Fava's tale.

Roy C. Lackey — 29 Nov 2011, 05:07 · in reply to James Wynn

James Wynn quoted and wrote:

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Then you can dismiss the the black-clad imp Silk imagined while he was sleeping after getting back from Blood's villa and go straight to the next time Silk slept, which was the night of Oreb, Mucor and Pike, and chalk the black-clad imp up as just part of a crazy dream. It was just as hot that night and he had undressed for bed. This is known because he stopped to put his trousers on before he went downstairs to look for Oreb (LAKE, ch. 1, 32).

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But the fact remains that Pike's ghost wasn't seen at the same time or place as Oreb and Mucor. Pike's ghost came minutes later, on the landing, and neither Oreb nor Mucor were with him.

As Silk told Mamelta, Pike was dead. Neither Oreb nor Mucor were dead on the night in question in the manse. The sounds of floorboards and Pike's bed creaking and a closing door are the sorts of things associated with ghosts.

Why would Silkhorn, astrally traveling in time, bother to do those things? It was Pike's bed in Pike's room, not Silk's. Silk had no personal emotional ties to Pike's bedroom, but Pike's ghost might.

Pike's hat ties Silk to Hy at Blood's villa, where she had a shrine to Kypris. Silk didn't like thinking about what uses the hat might be put to by a whore and her clients, and the goddess was in her that night at the villa. Kypris may also have been in Rose at the time of her dalliance with young Pike, which resulted in Blood. The dropped hat and old man's smile may have been his way of saying that he understood Silk's attraction to Hy because much the same thing had happened to him decades ago.

-Roy

Gerry Quinn — 29 Nov 2011, 14:24 · in reply to James Wynn

From: James Wynn

[to Roy] You are right that Mucor **could** have possessed Oreb, but then

The tricky part has always been two-fold:

1) Silk's rationalization about how Oreb could have flown out the window is a classic Wolfean signal that that is NOT what happened.

2) This leaves open the big questions:

- a) What was Oreb doing there in the first place?
- b) Why did he lie?

The second question is a biggie. Silk made it clear that he wouldn't punish Oreb for being up there. An explanation that leaves that dangling is barely an explanation for me.

But if Mucor possessed Oreb, then you do have an error in Silk's rationalisation as required — and you also have an explanation for why Oreb lied (or forgot).

- Gerry Quinn

James Wynn — 29 Nov 2011, 15:54 · in reply to Roy C. Lackey

On 11/28/2011 11:07 PM, Roy C. Lackey wrote:

But the fact remains that Pike's ghost wasn't seen at the same time or place as Oreb and Mucor. Pike's ghost came minutes later, on the landing, and neither Oreb nor Mucor were with him.

Define "the same time or place". It is quite reasonable that they were under the same roof of a small residence at the same time. It's just that Silk didn't hear him until "minutes later".

Additionally, /Silk himself/ believed the appearances were connected. He postulated that Mucor had somehow /summoned/ Pike's ghost. This is a Wolfe novel; we should expect that supposition to be /ironically/ true.

As Silk told Mamelta, Pike was dead. Neither Oreb nor Mucor were dead on the night in question in the manse. The sounds of floorboards and Pike's bed creaking and a closing door are the sorts of things associated with ghosts.

Those are things associated with ghosts. But the only time a ghost's appearance is connected with cheerfully waving while wearing an old hat which falls to the ground as he disappears in a silvery mist....the only time /that/ is associated with ghosts is when Eric Von Zipper and the Malibu Rat Pack is involved in the story.

Why would Silkhorn, astrally traveling in time, bother to do those things?

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Because /Silk/ was in his room. The question is not why was the Rajan was hiding there, but what he was at the manse in the first place. I've taken a shot at answering that. However, most importantly, it's not actually Silk who is astrally traveling. Silk's memories are there and the memory of Horn's memories. But he is also a Neighbor. You might as well ask why Rose-in-Marble would be interested in marrying a chem soldier.

James Wynn — 29 Nov 2011, 21:34 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

On 11/29/2011 8:24 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: James Wynn <mailto:crushtv at gmail.com>

[to Roy] You are right that Mucor *could* have possessed Oreb, but then

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No you don't. Silk saw Oreb fly out the window and immediately saw Mucor standing over him. Oreb might not remember entering the room, but he would remember leaving it. And there is simply no reason for Mucor to possess a wounded bird to keep "tabs on Silk". She can astral travel.

Gerry Quinn — 29 Nov 2011, 22:24 · in reply to James Wynn

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Oreb might have had no idea how to make sense of events, let alone how to explain it in two-syllable statements.

As for Mucor, if she once possessed Oreb and brought him to Silk's bedroom once [and Roy's argument that she did is convincing], she may have done it again.

Why she did it I don't know, but she seems to have a wide range of capabilities, and a willingness to employ any or all of them in any given situation.

- Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn — 30 Nov 2011, 12:15 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

From: Gerry Quinn

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By the way, I accept that none of the explanations proposed for Silk seeing, or thinking he sees, Oreb are very good. I just don't think the situation warrants the postulation of a time travelling Oreb.

- Gerry Quinn

António Pedro Marques — 30 Nov 2011, 12:31 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn wrote (30-11-2011 12:15):

From: Gerry Quinn <mailto:gerry at bindweed.com>

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situation. By the way, I accept that none of the explanations proposed for Silk seeing, or thinking he sees, Oreb are very good. I just don't think the situation warrants the postulation of a time travelling Oreb.

I'd put it otherwise. It's not that time travel is unwarranted, it's that 'dream travel involves time travel' and 'Pike's ghost is the Rajan' is not necessarily more convincing than the alternatives. (Does anyone fancy time travel *not in relation to* dream travel?)

But there is a problem here to solve. Not with Pike's ghost, but with the second Oreb. Of course Roy's interpretation works, but personally it convinces me no more than James's, though for a different reason. Namely, that if Roy's is the right explanation, then the whole episode is padding.

If only we wouldn't get distracted by all the blue herrings!