

Quetzal, Typhon, and cross-links

The Whorl list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 20 Jan 1997

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/33>

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David_Lebling — 20 Jan 1997, 09:47

From: Jeff Meyers <jeffmeyers at earthlink.net>
Second, Quetzal does seem to be battling with his own nature. At least that's how Horne seems to see it.
... The narrative continues with Quetzal's reply: "'I want you to sleep, my son.' He seemed to suck his gums and reconsidered. 'No, to keep watch. Can you stay awake.'" (p. 374).

I think this is exactly correct. Quetzal has been among humans for so long that he has begun to care for them. Many of his actions would be the same whether he saw himself as a shepherd in the animal husbandry sense or the religious one.

Maybe I'm missing something here, but this is not a large group of people that escape. What? At the most maybe a hundred (including the Sleepers)?

Why

would Quetzal have an interest in taking such a small number of people to his own planet?

Keep in mind that Pas's plan is that the whole population of the Whorl will ultimately debark at the destination, and he won't take no for an answer. Auk's group and Horn's are only the first (enough to mollify Pas) of many. In fact, what is the population of the Whorl? A million? Ten million? Viron seems to be a fair-sized city; it can support an army of tens of thousands. So can Trivigaunte; their horde is seventy(?) thousand. That would argue for each city being minimally one or two hundred thousand, and there are lots of cities. If Quetzal's goal is fresh blood (debatable, for certain) there's plenty aboard the Whorl.

Third, are we ever really told that Quetzal attacked anyone? ... Does anyone else in the story qualify as an evil inhum? Everything that Quetzal does and says suggests benevolent purposes.

It's certainly plausible, but check Mattak's reaction to Quetzal at the Calde's dinner party. He reacts as you would expect a victim to react. I've seen no evidence of other inhum aboard the Whorl.

I have a question: how is it that the departing landers displayed only two options to the crew: Blue and Green? Did Pas program the landers?

My guess is that it's the usual SF trope where you scan the destination for habitable planets. Blue and Green are both habitable. Also, one would assume that Typhon/Pas picked that star because it had habitable planets. Perhaps a probe checked it out. I don't disagree that there is a mystery here in regard to the choices. Certainly we are told very little about even Blue by Horn. The inhum attack when the planets are close, there are inhum on Blue (his fear for his son is

clearly of attack by an inhumani), etc. It seems that Blue was the correct choice, but with Wolfe, who can tell?

From: revjack at radix.net (revjack at radix.net)
Did I read this correctly? Pas is none other than that two-headed
body-stealing
world-conquering pan-egotist Typhon from the Books of the New Sun? The
starcrosser "Whorl" was launched in Severian's era? I'm amazed that I
didn't see

that before.

I think we first learn this in Nightside. There is a reference to "two-headed Pas," and then later when we get a description of the "blasphemous" backdrop in the disused manteion in Orchid's, we get a description of Pas that is exactly that of Typhon. Finally, in the Dramatis Personae in Exodus, Pas's entry says "the stored personality of a tyrant." There are, of course, many other clues between. Kypris's theophany in (I think) Exodus is particularly revealing.

From: CoxRathvon at aol.com
Like RevJack, I had taken note of the name "Typhon," the tyrant who
called
himself Pas. For what it's worth--and I anticipate a divergence of
opinion
on this point--I think it's a bad idea, generally, for authors to
create
links between their own novels when those books could exist wholly
independently.

I have to say that I agree with you. As much as I respect both works and Wolfe as an author, it tends to bring you up short. There are even some inconsistencies, or at least annoyances when you compare the New Sun Typhon to the Long Sun Typhon. For example, in New Sun, Typhon states that he rules many worlds, Urth being only one, and that he'd be happy to see Severian as his viceroy on Urth. The implication is that there is a many-planet Empire going here, and that Typhon doesn't even spend most of his time on Urth. A further implication is that there is some form of fast travel between worlds, possibly different from the one described in The Urth of the New Sun; how else does one rule a galactic empire?

We can fudge this if we wish; perhaps the Whorl was the first colony ship launched, and so on. (Or perhaps Typhon is lying! No surprise there.) The time scales don't even work out too well. According to the Lexicon Urthus (which I highly recommend), there really isn't that much time between Typhon's original reign and Severian's; perhaps a thousand years or so. I wanted twenty thousand at least! There aren't enough autarchs in a thousand years to carve the Andes, and yet Typhon is the first to do so.

But enough about the New Sun, back to the Long one...

Dave Lebling
(david_lebling at avid.com)

Questions or problems to whorl-owner at lists.best.com

Doug Eigsti — 20 Jan 1997, 10:43 · follows David_Lebling

From: revjack at radix.net (revjack at radix.net)
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Dave Lebling and RevJack;

I would like to add that Scyla, in possession of Chenile, spills it in LAKE, page 275.3. In the passage she is updating Silk on the origins on the gods, mentioning that Daddy was Typhon.

=Doug Eigsti=
dounge at nti.com

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