

The Quetzal Question; Names?

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 31 Jan 1997

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/55>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

David_Lebling — 31 Jan 1997, 09:41

From: m.driussi at genie.com

Great to see you here. _Lexicon_ is my favorite meta-book.

?Is Silk even =human=?

Now, there's a provocative question! I'm pretty sure he's human, not a hierogrammate larva, for example. It _is_ interesting that the sleepers (like Mamelta) don't talk, though for different reasons than Apheta. During his near-death experience, Silk's mother doesn't talk.

Q is anti-landfall

I hadn't thought of him that way, but it's a good idea. Quetzal nominally discourages theophanies to prevent the populace learning that Pas is dead. That is also why he suppresses child sacrifice (note that when Scylla instructs the tunnel trio in how to get in touch with her, she says "Offer fifty or so children, that ought to get my attention").

Digression here. What is it about sacrifice that attracts the attention of the gods? One imagines a little routine running in Mainframe that counts and evaluates the victims: "Ooo, a black ram, better email Tartaros!" End digression.

We've been arguing a lot about Quetzal's motives and true attitude. I had thought that he was basically trying to be good (though his choice of Green in the lander was troubling). I get the impression that he has been in power for over thirty years. I wonder if the Whorl has been at its destination for that long as well? We are never told explicitly how long it takes Pas to get angry that his plan isn't being fulfilled, though we are told that even one lander leaving will give a long breathing space. I propose that Quetzal did not enter the Whorl until it arrived at the Blue/Green system, and it's been there for more than thirty years. But why is Quetzal anti-landfall? As I said in my first post to this newsletter, Quetzal is a key (perhaps the key) to understanding the story. Is Quetzal the sympathetic Satan of _Paradise Lost_? (As an old story goes, a child comes home upset about the Sunday school play. "What's the matter, dear?" "I'm going to be Adam in the play." "Why are you unhappy? Adam's the _lead_!" "But the snake has all the lines!")

[Other vampire legends]

I haven't seen anything to indicate that any of Quetzal's proposed victims (or patients) is either in his thrall or immune to inhum. Of course we don't know much about Blue/Green yet. We have two victims, Teasel and Mattak, and two "patients", Silk and Villus. None seem better or worse off in the long term for Quetzal's ministrations.

To my mind Quetzal is more to be identified with Quetzalcoatl. Wolfe has been mining Central and South American culture and mythology since the _New Sun_ books. Note that Viron is very Latin American. The language is influenced by Spanish, they drink mate, blue-eyed people are rare ("one in a hundred"), Tussah's appearance is (to my mind) very Mayan ("broad flat cheeks, high forehead"), and so on.

A question I've been meaning to investigate is the origins of the names of the gods. They all

seem faintly Greek, and some are obvious (Pas, Echidna, Tartaros, Scylla). Are the rest other ancient Greek monsters?

There are also a few names that don't seem to fit the standard Viron naming scheme. The only one I can recall at this moment (should take notes!) is Feist. What's a Feist? (I knew "Incus," particularly when he mentioned a brother named, uh, Patella).

Dave
(david_lebling at avid.com)

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