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**WOLD NEWTON FAMILY
WORLD OF TIERS
PULP HEROES**

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Wold Newton Day 2022 Issue

Editorial: Happy Wold Newton Day!

Review: *Tarzan and the Golden Lion*: by William H. Emmons

William H. Emmons brings us a review through a Wold Newtonian lens.

Review: *Victory Harben: Fires of Halos* by Sean Lee Levin

Sean Lee Levin reviews the latest entry in the Edgar Rice Burroughs Universe.

Uncharted Wilderness by Atom Mudman Bezecny

Atom Mudman Bezecny traces the Wildman family lineage.

Review: *The Perfect Assassin* by Keith Howell

Keith Howell reviews the latest Doc Savage novel from a Farmerian perspective.

Tracking the Trackers by Jason Scott Aiken

Jason Scott Aiken hunts down the secret origin of the Shong.

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Cover image is from the 1936 Peoria High Yearbook.

Editorial: Happy Wold Newton Day!

Hello and happy Wold Newton Day, everyone. This special Wold Newton Day edition of FarmerFan brings Volume 1 to a close with a little something for everyone.

William H. Emmons gives us a Wold Newtonian look at Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Tarzan and the Golden Lion* with plenty of Farmerian analysis.

Sean Lee Levin reviews the latest publication in the Edgar Rice Burroughs Universe series *Victory Harben: Fires of Halos* by Christopher Paul Carey that has a connection with Farmer's *Tarzan and the Dark Heart of Time*.

Atom Mudman Bezecny leaves no tome unread as she takes a deep dive into the origins of the Wildman family. Fans of folklore and mythology are sure to enjoy this article.

Illustrator and Farmer fan, Keith Howell joins us with a Farmerian review of *The Perfect Assassin* by James Patterson and Brian Sitts, the latest Doc Savage novel. If you're a Farmer fan and curious about the new book, this review is for you.

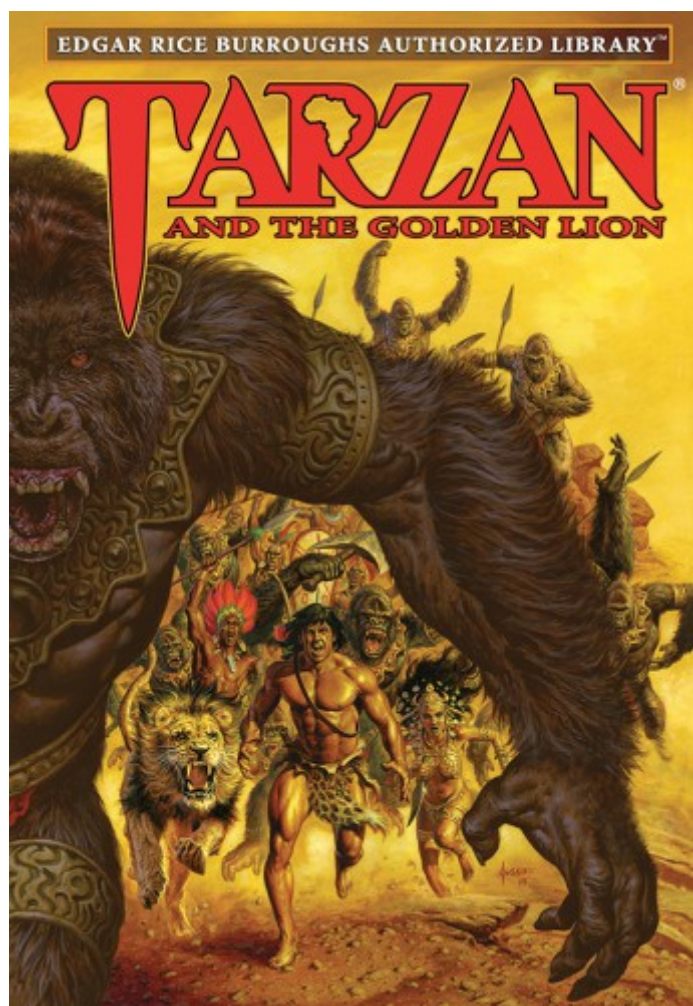
Your editor pulls up the rear with an article detailing the secret origin of the Shong from Farmer's *Tarzan and the Dark Heart of Time* and their connection to the World of Tiers.

No matter where this issue finds you, we are glad it has. We hope you enjoy the upcoming holiday season and have a splendid 2023.

And remember, you can find this issue, as well as all past issues, completely free of charge at farmerfan.com.

***Tarzan and the Golden Lion* by Edgar Rice Burroughs**

Reviewed by William H. Emmons



Cover artwork by Joe Jusko

The appeal of Tarzan is straightforward. He is an English peer raised by anthropoid apes to become an immortal jungle adventurer. Tarzan is super-strong and is curious about everything. He can talk to animals. He has access to fabulous wealth. According to Philip José Farmer, Tarzan is totally free of neurosis and eventually will travel back in time and on to Alpha Centauri. In short, he's someone you would love to be. Or at least someone I'd love to be.

That's part of why I'm into Edgar Rice Burroughs's novels about him as well as other authors' Tarzan novels. They can be strange and fun. The antiquated story-telling style can be charming. Recently I read *Tarzan and the Golden Lion*. Here, I will consider its merits in light of an important fact known to all Wold Newtonians: Tarzan is real.

PART I: TARZAN IS REAL.

In 1972, Farmer sought him out and interviewed Lord Greystoke for *Esquire*. Burroughs and Tarzan's other chroniclers have written fiction based on a real

man's life. In *Tarzan Alive* (1972), Farmer writes that ERB got a hold of Tarzan's father's diary from the colonial office in Nigeria and based the first work on this. Later Lord Greystoke himself contacted Burroughs with more accurate information about himself.

Robin Maxwell presents an alternative though perhaps complementary narrative in *Jane: the Woman Who Loved Tarzan* (2012). According to Maxwell, Burroughs met the real Lord and Lady Greystoke when they visited Chicago for Lady Greystoke to give a scientific lecture. Lady Greystoke's lecture fell flat with the scientific community, but she peaked Burroughs' interest. She stayed up all night recounting the legend to him.

I say these accounts are complementary because it's possible that Burroughs recorded Lady Greystoke's account that night in Chicago and then sought out Greystoke Sr.'s journal. In either event, Burroughs didn't invent Tarzan and Tarzan isn't wholly responsible for the content of the adventures in which he stars.

PART II: BURROUGHS AS A TALENTED BUT FLAWED BIOGRAPHER.

One would be remiss not to acknowledge Burroughs' talent. He earned the title "Master of Adventure" because he could spin a yarn. If it's true, as Maxwell posits, that Lady Greystoke placed faith in Burroughs' narrative abilities, then she certainly chose a talented scribe to tell the tales of her and her most exceptional husband.

The problem is that Burroughs knew very little about Africa, or its flora, fauna, geography and peoples. He was in the habit of making things up. As Farmer notes, the original magazine printing of *Tarzan of the Apes* referred to Sheeta the tiger. In the subsequent hardcover and in later editions, this was to be replaced with Sheeta the leopard as tigers do not live in Africa. Eight books later, Burroughs still has to retcon his zoology. In *Tarzan and the Golden Lion*, the ninth Tarzan novel, the narrator explains that references to Bara the deer in earlier novels were actually references to antelopes. Like tigers, deer are absent from Africa.

Worse than Burroughs' topical ignorance was that he had some racist ideas that were in tune with what a lot of white people believed back then. It's accurate to say that he was a white man of his time. But it's also accurate to say that a majority of his educated white contemporaries did not believe that African people had the capacity for self-government, whether they personally entertained race hatred or not. Burroughs spun Lord and Lady Greystoke's lives into fine adventures but in the process polluted the stories with racist ideas.

PART III: TARZAN AND THE GOLDEN LION.

The above background is the context for this review. My experience with *Tarzan and the Golden Lion* was that it was a kind of cool novel but Burroughs

got in the way of my full enjoyment of it. That's not to say it's all bad.

Tarzan and the Golden Lion has a lot of what's great about Tarzan in it. Burroughs' Tarzan is at his best when he's amusing himself by doing something uncanny involving animals. His hobbies are usually a little violent. The novel opens with Tarzan raising an orphaned lion cub, using a dog that lost her pups to suckle it. Tarzan is a delicious pervert: when he teaches the lion to eat meat, it is only off a manikin's neck and only when Tarzan instructs the lion to, "kill."

Tarzan makes a welcome return to the lost city of Opar and his relationship with its high priestess deepens. (He and Jane had recently expended their fortune in support the Entente in WW1 and Tarzan goes to seek out the Atlantean treasure vaults beneath the city). Lost cities and peoples are a major charm of Burroughs' Tarzan oeuvre and Opar is the original. That said, I wish there were more world-building about Opar in this book. By *Tarzan and the Golden Lion*, the Tarzan reader hasn't learned anything new about Opar in seven books. It's just a place Tarzan goes sometimes.

One neat addition to the world of Tarzan is a Spanish actor recruited to impersonate Tarzan by a crew of ne'er-do-wells. The ne'er-do-wells' goal is to use the fake Tarzan to get gold from Opar. I'm not sure how that was supposed to work, but that might not be important to the story. The fake Tarzan is used in a comedy of errors sort of way. These parts of the novel are generally pretty funny.

The aforementioned parts of the novel mostly work and are a good time. But the real reason I was excited to read the book was that I was aware that Tarzan encounters a race of war-like intelligent gorillas (in ape-speak "Bolgani," the same word used for normal gorillas) who have a civilization that is blocked off from the rest of the world by Opar. (Farmer theorized these Bolgani were actually a lost species of pithecanthropus). Talking apes and fresh lost worlds! This is the sort of thing one reads Tarzan for.

The economy of Bolgani's kingdom was based on the slavery of race of stoop-shouldered and dark-skinned apish people with great prognathous faces. They are stupid, cowardly, and servile. They refuse to fight for their freedom when Tarzan seeks to organize them.

I'm not sure if a slave race of ape-people who are mentally inferior is bad form in and of itself, but in the context of this novel, it definitely is. The narrative didn't make much of a cognitive distinction between these ape-people and black Africans. The characters refer to these folks as "gomangani," which is the ape-speak word for black Africans. This feature of the plot borders on racist propaganda.

Of course, Tarzan liberates these people because he's Tarzan and he (selectively) hates slavery. (See for counterexample *Tarzan and the Ant Men*). But he leaves behind a formerly enslaved British man as the new king of the

ape-people. Tarzan's reasoning is that the ape-people have no capacity for self-government. His solution is to saddle this old dude with the proverbial white man's burden.

PART IV: WOULD NEWTONIAN EXEGESIS

Getting back to Tarzan being real: in chapter 13 of *Tarzan Alive*, Farmer toys with a few different theories of who these ape-people could be. One theory he puts forward was that they might be hybrids between modern humans and the pithecanthropoid Bolgani. To me, it looks like Farmer was trying to walk a tightrope here between Burroughs' straightforwardly racist plot element and developing a non-racist, scientifically-plausible exegesis of the text. Farmer devotes a few pages to historical and physical reasons these hybrids could not be derived from Khoisan- or Bantu-speaking peoples. He goes as far as to say that any mental disabilities these folks have are the result of oppressive social conditions rather than biological inferiority.

Farmer's exegesis is fascinating but I think he knew in his heart of hearts that the existence of these "gomangani," at least as described by Burroughs, was a racist fantasy. Farmer begins his exegesis by noting these folks might just be an "exotic element" added by Burroughs. Plus he spent space addressing their alleged "mental deficiency" and went to lengths to disconnect these "gomangani" from the modern humans living in Africa today.

The hypothesis I would add to this discussion is the idea that if the Bolgani-pithecanthropi practice slavery, that the slaves are likely the same species of pithecanthropus as Bolgani. The physical difference between slave and master can be explained, at least in part, by generations of selective breeding combined with pervasive malnutrition among the slaves.

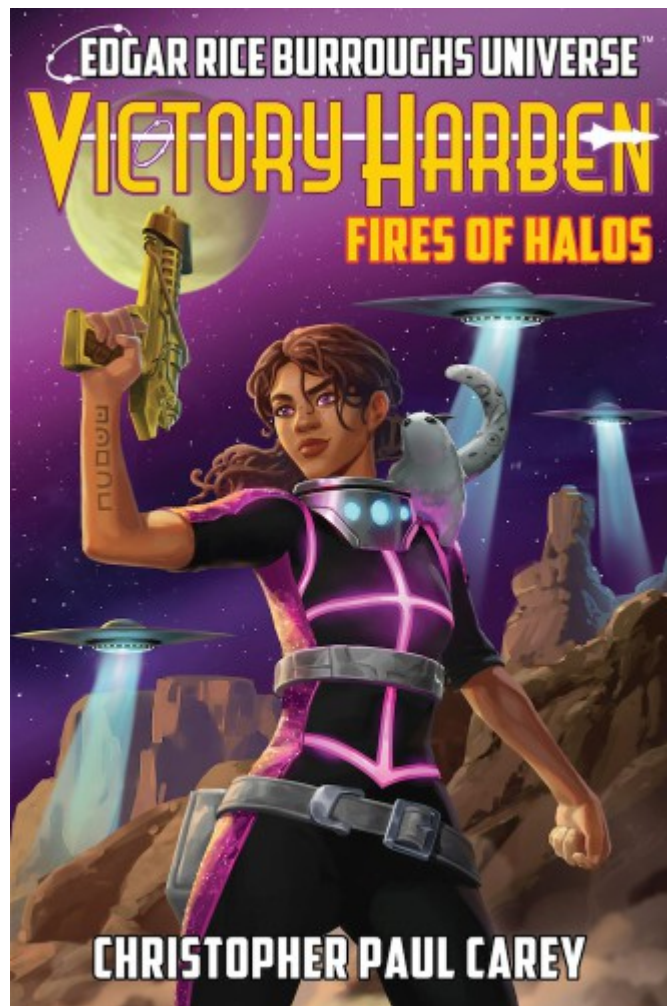
If Farmer was correct about Bolgani-pithecanthropus and there is merit to my hypothesis, this raises a further question: are these pithecanthropi related to the Woz-Don and Ho-Don of Pal-ul-Don?

CONCLUSION

I got really hung up on the racist depiction of Bolgani's slaves in *Tarzan and the Golden Lion* and it kept me from fully enjoying the novel. I think it could have been 100% fun if Burroughs didn't see a need to draw similarities between the servile ape slaves and black Africans. But because of this flaw, the book left me fixated on this point rather than what was otherwise a cool adventure. I enjoyed Farmer's exegesis about these slaves, but I think they are likely made up or embellished. I would really only recommend this book to other Tarzan, pulp fiction or Lost World fiction fanatics.

***Victory Harben: Fires of Halos* by Christopher Paul Carey**

Reviewed by Sean Lee Levin



Cover artwork by Thabiso Mhlaba

Farmer fans ought to know that *Tarzan and The Dark Heart Of Time* has been declared canonical for the Edgar Rice Burroughs Universe. Win Scott Eckert's *Tarzan: Battle for Pellucidar* has an appearance by the Shong, while Christopher Paul Carey's more recent *Victory Harben: Fires Of Halos* incorporates the Crystal Tree of Time into the ERB Universe.

I have been a fan of Christopher Paul Carey's work for many years now, and especially of his works building on Edgar Rice Burroughs, from his authorized works building on Philip Jose Farmer's novels set in ancient Opar to his novel *Swords Against The Moon Men*. Carey's love for Burroughs is obvious in his work, and therefore it was no surprise when Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc. appointed him Director of Publishing. Carey has spearheaded a new Edgar Rice Burroughs Universe imprint of novels, which includes new novels featuring Burroughs' characters, as well as canonizing certain pastiches from years past, such as Farmer's *Tarzan and the Dark Heart of Time* (a personal favorite of mine) and Fritz Leiber's excellent novelization of the film *Tarzan and the Valley*

of Gold, which went to great lengths to fit into the continuity of the original Burroughs novels.

Running through many of the new books has been the so-called "Swords of Eternity Super-Arc," featuring Victory Harben, an original character but the daughter of Gretchen von Harben from Burroughs' *Tarzan and the Tarzan Twins* and a Pellucidar native, and her godfather Jason Gridley, a character who appears in pretty much all of Burroughs' continuing series, as they are bounced across time and space. I have had a great time following this storyline, which reaches its culmination here.

Victory is a great character, and it's extremely cool to see a well-written woman of color as the protagonist of an official novel in ERB's universe. As much as I love the man's writing, I do feel some of his views on gender and race as expressed in his work have not aged well. As someone who is obsessed with the idea of crossovers between fictional characters, I have always appreciated the shared universe Burroughs created for his work, and the ERB Universe novels have really run with it, with this book in particular featuring appearances by or references to characters and places from everything from *Beyond the Farthest Star* to *The Girl from Hollywood*.

These Easter Eggs are not essential to recognize to enjoy the book, but certainly add to your appreciation if you're Burroughs-savvy. I also greatly enjoyed the backup story by Mike Wolfer, "Beyond the Farthest Star: Rescue on Zandar," which leads into the comic book miniseries *Beyond the Farthest Star: Warriors of Zandar*, also written by Wolfer in which the protagonist meets Victory. I have not yet read this comic, but I will as soon as possible, as seeing these two cool ladies team up sounds too good to resist. I'm also looking forward to the graphic novel promised at the end of the book. If you consider yourself a Farmer and Burroughs fan, you need this book!

Uncharted Wilderness

Tracing the Wildman Family Tree

By Atom Mudman Bezecny



Shield with Greyhound Held by Wild Man, By Martin Schongauer, ca. 1480

In *Tarzan Alive and Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life*, Philip José Farmer delves deep into the ancestry of Dr. James Clarke Wildman Jr., the man fictionalized in the pulps as Doc Savage. Over the course of his biographies, Farmer explores the lives of Doc's father James Clarke Wildman Sr., his grandmother Patricia Clarke Wildman, his great-grandfather Sir Patrick Clarke Wildman, and his great-great-grandfather Sir John Clarke Wildman. Sir John Wildman is the earliest Wildman who Farmer identifies, though he mentions in *Tarzan Alive* that Sir John was descended from the Viscounts Barrington of Ardglass. The 2nd and 3rd Viscounts Barrington bore the name of Wildman in honor of John Wildman (1656-1710), a landed gentleman who left his estates to the 1st Viscount Barrington, John Barrington (né Shute, 1678-1734). Farmer's implication seems to be that the 3rd Viscount, William Wildman Barrington (d. 1801), was the father or grandfather of Sir John Clarke Wildman.

This assertion runs into a snag when one considers that the 3rd Viscount, according to all genealogical records, died without issue. He did marry a woman named Anne Murrell (d. 1816), but they did not have children together. At least, that is what most historians believe—in reality, they had two sons. Their births, however, were excluded from the family records of the Barringtons, and so were lost to history.

I have uncovered evidence that Anne Murrell was a servant at the home of the 3rd Viscount at the end of the 18th Century, when the Viscount was getting on in years. Anne began an affair with her employer and had a son with him out of wedlock. The child, William Wildman, was deemed unworthy of the Barrington name, and after a life of being relentlessly mocked by the Barringtons, he ran away from home at a young age, eventually marrying Tabitha Clarke. He and Tabitha would be the parents of Sir John Clarke Wildman.

William and Anne's second son was born after his parents were wed, though not before his father's death. John Wildman Barrington's fate was the same as his brother—he too was excluded from the Barrington genealogy because of the family's low opinion of Anne. Anne would remarry in 1812 to a man named Edward Thorneycroft, who adopted young John and gave him his surname. John Wildman Thorneycroft would marry one Wilhelmina Randall and have children of his own. Either the name Thorneycroft was distorted over the generations, or it was altered to the fictional Thorndyke when author R. Austin Freeman chronicled the adventures of John's detective descendant, Dr. John Evelyn Thorndyke.(1)

William Wildman Barrington, the 3rd Viscount Barrington, was the grandson of the 1st Viscount through his second son, Major-General John Barrington (1722-1764). The 2nd Viscount had been the Major-General's childless older brother, William Wildman Shute Barrington (1717-1793). The name Wildman apparently commences with the 2nd Viscount, so far as Doc Savage's bloodline is concerned. Logic would suggest we should next examine the Shute and Daines families, as these were the ancestors of the 1st Viscount and his wife Anne. The 1st Viscount's great-grandfather was Robert Shute (d. 1590), a noted judge who sat on the English House of Commons. Unfortunately, tracing beyond Robert's father Christopher Shute is impossible, at least with the resources available to me. Tracing the Daines, the family of Anne Barrington, proved just as difficult. But I don't think the trail ends here.

I believe that the 1st Viscount Barrington was not in fact a Shute, and that our research should instead continue with John Wildman, who, as mentioned above, provided his name to the Barrington family by way of leaving his estates to the 1st Viscount. I speculate that he gave much more than just his name and property to the Barrington family; in fact, I have found some evidence that John Barrington and John Wildman had a secret blood connection. John Wildman is recorded to have married a woman named Eleanor Chute (d. 1677), daughter of Edward Chute of Kent (d. 1658).(2) It seems that Edward Chute was a cousin of the Shute family, being the son of a brother of Robert Shute. After marrying Eleanor, John Wildman made the acquaintance of his wife's cousin Benjamin Shute (d. 1683) and Benjamin's wife Elizabeth Caryl (d. 1717). Upon befriending the couple, John would discover that Benjamin was unable to provide his wife with children. Benjamin requested, most unusually, that John assist them in this matter. John's wife Eleanor was in a similar position, being unable to get pregnant, so John was sympathetic. On top of that, John and Elizabeth found themselves attracted to each other, and so John did as Benjamin requested. Elizabeth's three children,

Samuel, John, and Anne Shute, were fathered not by a member of the Shute family, but by John Wildman. And so the 2nd and 3rd Viscounts Barrington were not just Wildmans in name, but Wildmans in blood, being the grandson and great-grandson respectively of Benjamin Shute's benefactor.(3) Naturally, these facts were obscured from most accounts, as they would amount to a great scandal in those days.

John Wildman was the son of Sir John Wildman (1621-1693), a politician and soldier who fought the Royalists during the Civil War. Sir John's motto was *Nil admirari*, Latin for "Astonished by nothing," an appropriate slogan for an ancestor of such an unflappable adventurer as Doc Savage. It seems Sir John was the son of a yeoman farmer named Jeffrey or Geoffrey Wildman, whose birth records are obscure. I believed I was at another dead end until I uncovered fragments of a 1596 book titled *The Hermetic Secrets of the Alchemist Sir Jonathan Wildman; Being an Account, Told in His Own Words, of Deeds Both Mystical and Infernal, with Guides Practical for Defense Against Evil Beings*. The fragments had been retrieved through automatic writing by the seer Bayrolles. This book, as the title implies, gives us a good look at the life of Jeffrey Wildman's father, Sir Jonathan Wildman. Sir Jonathan was an alchemist adventurer who guarded the world against many extra-normal perils, much like his famous descendant. I included Bayrolles' transcriptions of Sir Jonathan's book in my Doc-themed novella *Whispers at the Threshold*, which is free to read at the website of Odd Tales Productions (<https://www.oddtalesofwonder.com/whispers-at-the-threshold>).

With Sir Jonathan, however, we do hit a real dead end, and thus my speculations from here on out spring entirely from the realm of creative impulse. There *are* a few earlier men of the medieval period bearing the name Wildman, Wyldman, or Wyldeman, mostly in the military rolls of the Crusades, but definitively connecting them to the Wildmans described thus far is impossible. Instead, we will look for more Wildman ancestors through the origins of the name Wildman—which are quite simple enough, given that its meaning in English has really only changed in certain mythological contexts.

The name *Wildman*, in its original medieval sense, was connected to common global myths of furred forest-dwelling folk or crazed, exiled hermits who had attained a certain natural wisdom in their primal isolation. In its more unfortunate aspects this archetype has connections to the Noble Savage stereotype, or the racist conflation of people of color with animals, but it is also related to the old tales of witches in the woods who have become masters of herbs and beasts. Consider that there is little separating Doc Savage mixing new compounds in his secret laboratory from the Three Weird Sisters crafting potions in their bubbling, fire-brewing cauldron—besides the fact that Doc, of course, would never double anyone's toil or trouble, unless they were evil. Thematically we can consider Doc, with his isolated northern fortress, a modern version of the English *wodewose* (wild-woodsman), possessing an unusual, distant lifestyle that could be called crazy by the civilized standards of his time. This same lifestyle has nonetheless gifted him powers and perspectives more enlightened than those of many around him, which he has

thankfully chosen to use for good. It is for this reason that I believe that Doc may be descended from various mythological *wodewoses* through the Wildmans.

Besides Tarzan, the most famous *wodewose* of mythology is the wizard Merlin. "Merlin," as we know him, is a mythographic fusion of several folkloric figures, some of whom differ significantly from the modern pop culture concept of King Arthur's companion. Geoffrey of Monmouth (1095-1150), one of the first authors to write about the Arthurian legend, drew from Welsh tales of the demented hermit-bard Myrddin Wyllt and the mystical warrior Ambrosius Aurelianus to present his story of Merlin. Myrddin Wyllt was said to live in the woods and talk to animals, while Ambrosius Aurelianus was a great and feared leader who possessed the gift of prophecy. Both of these men, these "real Merlins," were wild-men and heroic figures in the classical mold, and for this, they are both likely ancestors of the Wildman family.

The 6th Century poet monk St. Gildas claimed that Ambrosius Aurelianus' parents "wore the purple," an expression which may mean they were the descendants of martyrs or great leaders. We do not know who these honored ancients may have been, but they could have included Christian Saints and Roman Emperors. (Notably, St. Agatha of Sicily is the Patron Saint of Bronze, among many other things.) Geoffrey of Monmouth separately suggested that Ambrosius Aurelianus was King Arthur's uncle, the brother of Arthur's father, Uther Pendragon. Of course, because he was the leader of a circle of brave soldiers and specialists, and because he is often depicted with red or bronze-colored hair, we can easily assume that Arthur himself was one of Doc's ancestors. We can presume the same of other Knights of the Round Table, and perhaps also the *wodewose* known as the Green Knight.

Geoffrey's writings tell of another wild-man from English mythology: the giant Gogmagog, leader of a race of fierce giants who ruled the British Isles before their defeat by the forces of the Trojan hero Brutus (who Geoffrey names as the founder and namesake of Britain). Gogmagog was, like many other giants of myth, probably an abnormal-sized but genetically normal human; his size was also likely a matter of allegory, a reference to the strength of his tribe or army. Geoffrey records that Gogmagog was cast into the sea by Brutus' super-strong lieutenant Corineus, who founded Cornwall.

Gogmagog, Brutus, and Corineus are all candidates for ancestors of the Wildmans. If Doc Savage is a descendant of Brutus, then he is also descended from Brutus' grandfather or great-grandfather, the Trojan hero Aeneas. Through Aeneas, Doc could claim descent from Tros, the founder of Troy, and Aphrodite, the Goddess of Love; though through both of these, Doc would be related to all the Gods of Olympus.

As Gogmagog demonstrates, not all *wodewoses* were purely good. Many *wodewoses* were trickster figures, beings of chaos. The 16th Century Scottish legend of Alexander "Sawney" Bean embodies the trickster archetype most disturbingly. The story goes that Bean lived deep in the Scottish wilderness

with his many children and grandchildren, surviving off the goods and flesh of the unlucky travelers they lured into the woods. They went insane as they succumbed to incest and other depredations. This example of a *wodewose* was not a wise man, but he was still a wild-man. One of Sawney Bean's descendants could have been the namesake of the Wildman family; every family has some bad apples in their upper branches.(4)

An unusual instance of a *wodewose* can be found in certain depictions of the Biblical figure Mary Magdalene. Some medieval Christian traditions state that Mary became an exile in the desert after the Crucifixion, eschewing all possessions in the process, including clothing. To preserve her modesty, depictions of Mary under this interpretation show her covered with beast-like fur, making her some kind of wild-woman. Perhaps Mary Magdalene did become a wild-woman, and that brings to mind the fact that Jesus spent some time as a wild-man of the desert. And Jesus was, after all, a goodhearted, charitable leader of a small band of brave, dedicated men (with an informal female member) who battled against monsters and cruel people. Lester Dent himself said that Doc Savage manifested "Christliness." The belief that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married and had children is not accepted by mainstream Christianity—and I don't expect anyone of any belief to accept the possibility that Jesus of Nazareth and Mary Magdalene were ancestors of Doc Savage. But in the long and complicated of human history, anything is possible...

For the Romans, the archetypical wild-man was Silvanus, the god of the forests. Silvanus was often worshipped as a guardian-spirit for those who tended to animals or lived near woods. While he is sometimes identified with other primal wild-men, the goat-like fauns and satyrs, Silvanus is often depicted as a strong and handsome figure of heroic stature. As a nature god, he is similar in certain ways to the Green Man of various world myths and the Celtic deity Cernunnos. With his protective qualities, one has to wonder if stories of Silvanus were based on accounts of Sakhindar, the Gray-Eyed God. It's almost a certain thing that Sakhindar supplied genes to the Wildman lineage, one way or another. This makes Doc Savage a descendant of Tarzan, who, as I said above, is the most famous *wodewose* of them all. He himself carries the blood of many wild-men in his veins, as Farmer attests.

At last, there is the most famous *wodewose* trickster of Greco-Roman myth—the forest-god Pan, who was often conflated with Silvanus. Like Silvanus, and many other nature deities around the world, Pan was considered a fertility god. But unlike many fertility deities, including Silvanus, Pan's fertility was often expressed in an erotic sense—commonly a profane one. Indeed, in many of his myths Pan performs grotesque sex acts with humans and animals alike. Arthur Machen suggested that Pan was an ancient and unknowable evil, capable of interbreeding with humans and producing sinister entities as a result. H.P. Lovecraft called the same evil source of half-human spawn Yog-Sothoth.

The Wildman family may well be descended from the Primordial Chaos itself. But, if the Greeks and Romans and many others were right, that's true for all

of us. We are all born of Primal Wilderness.

Other *wodewoses* and wild-men may be the forebears of the family fictionalized as Savage. These are only a few examples from Western myths. Connecting these figures to the Wildman clan as we know it at the end of 16th Century is an exercise in futility, but perhaps someday the secret of Jonathan Wildman's ancestry will be exposed. I'm certain there are still many strange adventurers yet undiscovered in Doc's bloodline—that, I'm sure any Doc Savage fan can believe.

- (1) In uncovering this information about Anne Murrell, I found some questionable sources indicating that Anne had a brother, named James for their father. I believe this James Murrell married an Irish-born descendant of London crime-lord Jonathan Wild (1682-1725), a distant relation of the Wildmans. James, a passionate man, eventually modified his surname to its Irish form, "Moriarty," in honor of his wife's Irish heritage. His descendant was Morcar Moriarty, mother of the infamous Professor James Moriarty and his equally-sinister brothers.
- (2) Eleanor Chute had a sister, Elizabeth, who married James Oxenden, 2nd Baronet of Dene. It seems that some of James and Elizabeth's descendants intermarried with those of James Murrell (see Note 1), and became the ancestors of the criminal Dr. Ox, whose life was chronicled in a novel by Jules Verne.
- (3) Some of my sources indicated that the Shutes and the Wildmans were distant cousins, and so Doc is still related to the Barringtons and Shutes, as Farmer postulated.
- (4) Either Sawney Bean or his 15th Century ancestor Christie-Cleek were the genetic origin of the degenerative congenital disease known as Merrye Syndrome. This Syndrome, marked by gradual physical decay and the development of violent psychoses, appears in many infamous families throughout the world, including the Sawyers of Texas, the Femms of Wales, and the Pratts of Florida, who have all produced unusual numbers of mass murderers or serial killers. Thankfully, the Wildmans do not appear to have the Merrye Syndrome gene, recessive or otherwise.

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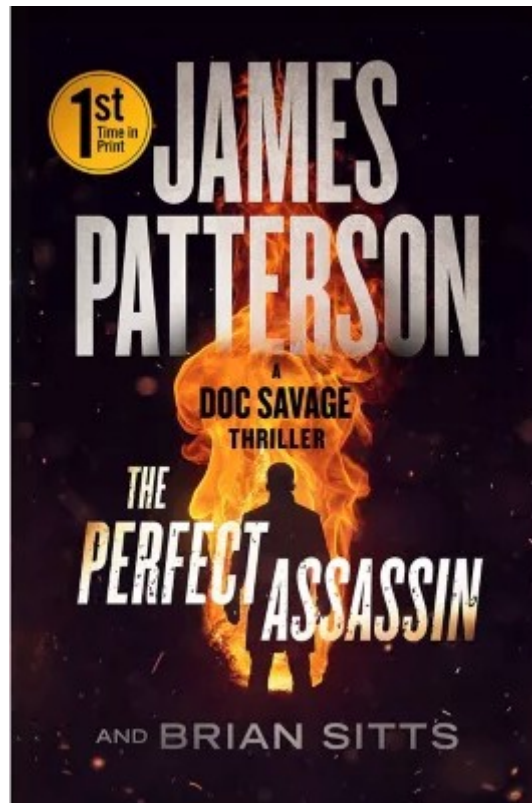
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**The Perfect Assassin
(A Doc Savage Thriller)
By James Patterson and Brian Sitts**

Reviewed by Keith Howell



I opened the door. An automatic sensor turned on a bank of industrial lights overhead. As my eyes adjusted, I suddenly felt totally sober again. I couldn't believe what I was looking at.

We were in a huge room with a high ceiling and no windows. It was filled with metal shelves in long, neat rows. It looked like a natural history archive. It had the smell of old paper, old chemicals, old leather.

"Welcome home, Doctor." said Kira.

Anyone who has ever engaged with me in a discussion about books and writing should already have a sense that I have a real problem with ghost-written books—that is, I do not like writers who take credit for someone else's work even though I know it is a long-standing practice in the industry. I still don't like it. Under that umbrella, I also do not like it when certain authors—in this case James Patterson—turn their names into a book factory in which other writers actually write the books but Patterson gets his name in 4-inch letters plastered across the cover of the books while the actual author's name appears as an after-thought. In this case, Brian Sitts, the author (as in, the one who actually wrote the words that are published and not the outline on which the story is based), has his name buried at the bottom of the cover and at such a low-level transparency that it effectively disappears.

And considering that this is a "Doc Savage" novel, I am sure that someone reading this is wondering whether I have the same problem with other Doc Savage novels given that no matter who wrote them they all were, with one notable exception, credited to the house-name "Kenneth Robeson." My answer would be no. I do not have the same problem with house-names because that particular industry tradition is one where the named author is something of a character himself (or herself in the case of female house names such as "Carolyn Keene" from the Nancy Drew series). Lester Dent was the most prolific "Kenneth Robeson" in the heyday of Doc Savage pulp adventures and Will Murray the most recent. The notable exception that I mention above in which Doc Savage was published previously with an author credit to someone other than Kenneth Robeson was the classic *Escape from Loki* by Philip José Farmer which detailed the story of how Doc and his five colleagues first got together. And now fast forward to the year 2022 and *The Perfect Assassin*, credited to "James Patterson" as primary author and Brian Sitts as secondary, with the series tag "A Doc Savage Thriller."

Even given my general misgivings about how the James Patterson machine works, I approached this book with an open mind. I was curious how it would tie into the original Doc Savage books (if at all) and whether it would outright betray the core principles in terms of character and morality that those pot-boiler pulp action stories trafficked in. Would Sitts try to duplicate the Robeson entertaining action prose style or would it embrace the choppy simplistic Patterson style? Would I be engaged with the new characters or long for the originals? Would it be interesting? Would it be entertaining? Would it be infuriating?

Well, it's not infuriating. It's somewhat interesting. I was moderately entertained. The characters were not as engaging as they could potentially become.

As I said, I had an open mind but I still had some hesitancy given that the previous Patterson/Sitts effort to do this with Doc Savage's sister property, *The Shadow*, had by all accounts gone off into crazy-land and taken The Shadow character and pulled a "Jonah Hex" on him by abruptly transplanting him into the future which placed the original character in a setting that did not work at all for him. However, I felt a bit more positive about this one because rather than using Doc Savage (Clark Savage Jr.) himself, this story is set in the modern day and centers around Doc's great-grandson, Doctor Brandt Savage. This is easier for me to walk into with a readiness to accept given that he is, for all intents and purposes, an all-new character. The idea opens itself up with potential to do something new and moving the concept forward rather than trapped forever in the pre-World War II era. As I am fond of pointing out, if you aren't moving then you're stagnating. And it is the same with fictional characters. There's a risk of stagnation if your characters stay stuck in the past, never-changing, never-growing, forever. If the concept and characters are strong enough, they should be adaptable to a diverse range of changes and growth and sometimes you don't know until you try and either fail or succeed.

Oddly, there is little in terms of discernible style to the Sitts prose. I think the longest chapter is four pages. Some chapters are as small as half a page. It's an odd style of writing. I know it's common with these modern popular thrillers but it feels choppy and awkward to me. There's so little opportunity for the reader to engage with the characters and be in the moment; to enjoy the prose. It feels like it could almost be written by an A.I. as there is an utter loss of an author's perspective or voice in the writing. The original pulp adventures were churned out every month and yet they somehow had a style to them that makes them still enjoyable to read even today, if not for the stories, then for the enjoyment of the prose itself. The robotic construction in the writing for *The Perfect Assassin* is such that it almost feels like an extended outline of a story rather than a complete novel. In fact, I suspect that if it had been formatted more traditionally, those 108 chapters and 316 pages, would have come in closer to around 200 pages and about half that number of chapters.

All that being said, I stuck with the plot, such as it is, which is pretty standard Patterson fare about a regular someone getting pulled into danger and intrigue by a mysterious someone else. The authors introduce the reader to 2 main characters, Brandt Savage (of course) and his co-star, and catalyst for this story, is a bronze-haired female calling herself "Meed." Her story covers similar ground as what Marvel has done with their Black Widow character in the films. But that's not something to be too critical about as the idea of a female character raised to be an assassin in a training school for assassins is not unique to Marvel either. Unfortunately, Meed is consistently the more interesting character than Brandt, which is unfortunate for a book that is supposed to be jump-starting a new series of "thrillers" starring this new Doc Savage. He seemed weak, as a person (not his body) and I was trying to figure out why I had this impression. I finally realized the reason—and in a way I think this may be the key to how this version of the character could potentially grow into something good if successful enough in sales to continue—Sitts does something with Brandt that I don't think was ever done with his great-grandfather in the writing.

Whenever the narrative shifts to a chapter about Brandt, the perspective shifts to first-person. So we are inside Brandt's head. We hear his fears, his anxieties, his nervousness, his insecurities. Why does this matter? I think it matters because for readers of the original Doc Savage stories, Doc's inner thoughts are a mystery for the most part. He was a man of action. Sure, he was obviously a genius, because the reader was told this, and the number of inventions he created along with his multiple doctorates and surgeon skills establish his bona fides. But we never got inside his head much to see what inner demons he was battling. Farmer tackled some of that with his Doc Savage pastiche, Doc Caliban. While the Caliban stories could reflect the prose style at times, there was still a Farmerian filter that deconstructed the implications of such a character. In Brandt, we have a young professor who is somewhat embarrassed of his connection to the legendary Doc Savage to such an extent that he has contemplated changing his last name. But as that is the name on his diplomas, he's content to just let it lie. This little tidbit is a key to

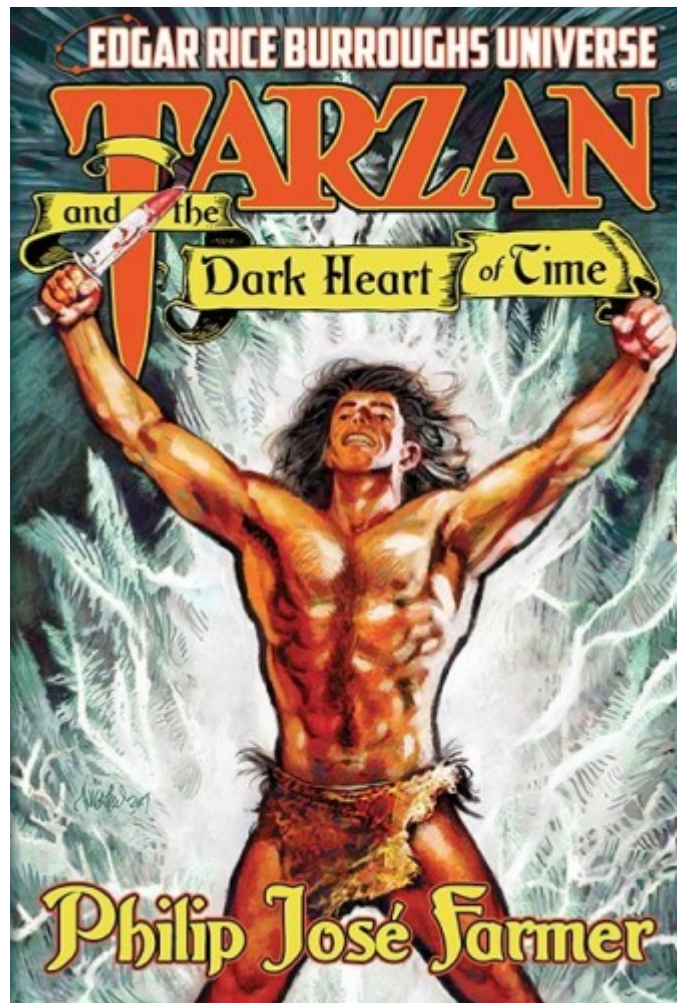
the struggles Brandt is going to need to overcome to ever fully embrace his role as the inheritor of the Doc Savage mantle. He is a character with the genetics necessary to be a hero, but none of the desire or the motivation to do it. Meed functions as the catalyst for his journey to becoming a hero and she has her own lineage connection to the past that is a conduit for her and Brandt to forge an unbeatable team. This is not a story about a carbon copy of the original Doc and his amazing five assistants. They were a product of their day. This is a flawed and reluctant Doc and his single partner who has her own hidden motives for why she needs to push him into accepting his destiny.

I was pleased to see that the Patterson machine did not undo the past or do an "everything you know is a lie" approach. No. Everything you knew is true, mostly, although there are some new wrinkles introduced and established connections with Doc Savage history is interwoven throughout. He smartly avoids filling in the gaps of what happened to the original Doc Savage and even maintains a noticeable vagueness about Brandt's unnamed parents and who they are. He is aware of his famous great-grandfather, but has not ever known him, so his journey of self-discovery is also learning about his great-grandfather. There is no betrayal of the original character and concept but there is most definitely a major change introduced to it. The most intriguing to me involves the importance of "twins" in the very concept of genetically engineering the perfect human. I feel like Sitts or Patterson (or maybe both) has read Farmer's Doc Caliban, but I can't prove it. However, the twins idea, name-checks, and the new twists we learn about Doc and his lineage are surprising enough to bring me back to see how that is developed in future installments.

My overall impression of *The Perfect Assassin* is that it could have been more creatively skilled with its prose style and achieved its goals better. The end products winds up as a perfectly middling exercise and unlikely to garner new fans of Doc Savage but also unlikely to please current Doc Savage fans. However, even with the exceedingly simplistic writing style and choppy construction, I enjoyed it well enough and it ended strong with the new Doc Savage ready to start on a new adventure and I would like to read more about him.

Tracking the Trackers: the Secret Origin of the Shong

by Jason Scott Aiken



Cover artwork by Mark Wheatley

In *Tarzan and the Dark Heart of Time*, first published as *The Dark Heart of Time: A Tarzan novel* by Del Rey in 1999, Philip José Farmer introduced readers to a new race of intelligent bear-like beast-men known as the Shong. This appears to be Farmer giving his take on the Nandi Bear cryptid from East African folklore.

The events of the story take place between Burroughs' *Tarzan the Untamed* and *Tarzan the Terrible* from mid October to late November during the year 1918. Tarzan meets a male of the species named Rahb on this particular adventure.

Like Tarzan, Rahb is skilled in stealth, is an excellent tracker, and moves through the canopy of the rainforest like a fish in water. Before learning the proper name of Rahb's race, Tarzan dubs the mysterious bear-man, a Ben-gotor, which in Mangani means something horrible and indescribable. Indeed, Rahb proves to be a formidable adversary for Tarzan during the early portions

of the novel until the two later join forces. Tarzan, ever the skilled linguist, is able to learn the basics of Rahb's language in a short amount of time, and aided by hand signals, the two are able to communicate.

Once the pair are on speaking terms Tarzan is told of Rahb's pregnant mate who is being held captive. Their mutual adversary, Helmson, used her as leverage forcing Rahb to hunt Tarzan. According to Rahb they're the last of their kind, but thankfully the beast-man was incorrect about this. As members of the Shong have appeared not only before, but *after* the events of *Tarzan and the Dark Heart of Time*.

In the novella "Kwasin and the Bear God" by Philip José Farmer and Christopher Paul Carey, the bronze giant Kwasin encounters a member of the Shong in roughly 10,012 B.C. This particular Shong is the titular Bear God of the story and is called Old Father Nakendar by the ancient Khokarsans. In the Khokarsan pantheon Nakendar is the nephew/lover of the goddess Besbesbes, the goddess of honey. According to the legends this led to couple's bear children being highly attracted to the honey of their "cousins." Nakendar's mother and father are never specifically named, but from the information presented it's logical to conclude that the mother goddess Kho is his grandmother.

Nakendar and Kwasin cross paths on the island of Khokarsa in the valley of the Q"okwoqo which is located in the northwestern mountain range of the island. The mountain village that Kwasin has been set to liberate there is also named Q"okwoqo. This village has ties to the Klakordeth or Thunder Bear totem to which Kwasin himself belongs.

Old Father Nakendar is said to have inhabited a cave north of the village for over four hundred years ever since he was brought there by the legendary hero Rimasweth whose party captured him near Kethna. This would have occurred between 10,423 and 10,420 B.C. Kethna is located within the Khokarsan empire, but not on the island itself. It's located on the main land of ancient Africa on the eastern coast of the Strait of Keth. This wouldn't be very far from the events which occurred in *Tarzan and the Dark Heart of Time*.

Kwasin dismisses the legend that the same Bear God has been living in the cave for all these centuries. Instead theorizing that brown bears brought to the island from the northern mainland might have bred with the giant cave bear known as Old Father Nakendar and produced the bears still inhabiting the valley. Mind you, at this point Kwasin and the reader have no indication that Old Father Nakendar is a Shong and not a cave bear.

When Kwasin investigates and visits the cave we are given a few subtle clues as to the true identity of Nakendar. Those Farmer fans who had previously read *Tarzan and the Dark Heart of Time* may have been able to pick up on the clues but those who hadn't (like myself) most likely were surprised and confused by the reveal. I read "The Song of Kwasin" in *The Worlds of Philip José Farmer 2: Of Dust and Soul* and had the benefit of Charles Berlin's wonderful illustration

of Nakendar, so I at least knew he was some type of cryptid, although at the time I believed him to be one of the Gokako (the term the ancient Khokarsans called the Mangani).

Nakendar is revealed to be a Shong when Kwasin successfully frees him by removing the boulder blocking the cave. In doing so, Kwasin causes the ground to give way at the cave mouth and he would have surely plunged fifty feet below had it not been for the intervention of the Bear God.

Nakendar grabs hold of Kwasin's wrist, raises the bronzed giant up, and sits him down in the cave. Nakendar, through a mouth not designed for human speech manages to respectfully mutter the Khokarsan word for, "brother," then gracefully makes his exit via freehand climbing skills that leave Kwasin in awe.

Given the events of this novella, we can be sure the Shong were in ancient Africa going back to at least 10,423 B.C. However, that does not appear to be their original habitat.

In fact, during the events of the novel *Tarzan: Battle for Pellucidar* by Win Scott Eckert, Tarzan encounters an entire tribe of Shong within the inner-world of Pellucidar. The novel takes place (at least on the outer surface) around September 1943, during the closing years of World War II. Tarzan is dispatched by Allied intelligence to Pellucidar in order to thwart a dark alliance of Mahars and Nazis from locating a lost colony of Atlantis.

During this adventure Tarzan is briefly captured by a tribe of Shong, but quickly becomes a trusted ally to the bear-people of the inner-world. In his time among the tribe he notices how their scent matches that of Pellucidar and comes to believe Pellucidar is their place of origin. He realizes why Rahb's scent was so alien to the African rainforest in his past adventure.

It's interesting to note the Shong of the Hollow Earth speak the same language as Rahb did on the surface. While Tarzan is among them in Pellucidar he makes the connection that their language includes some commonalities with other languages spoken by denizens of Pellucidar such as the native humans, the gilaks. But how did the Shong arrive on the surface? Tarzan does not pursue an answer to this but neither Rahb nor the Pellucidarian Shong were aware of each other's "world" let alone each other.

Tarzan does ponder on the connection between the unusual beings he has encountered in central Africa such as Rahb and the inhabitants of Pal-ul-don, and Pellucidar. Tarzan's thoughts seem to imply a hypothesis of the Shong evolving from ursine stock similar to how the inhabitants of Pal-ul-don evolved from monkeys, but this is never directly stated.

From a World Newton perspective, perhaps the origin of the Shong is revealed in the pages of *More Than Fire*, the final novel in Farmer's World of Tiers series. Early on in the novel, Kickaha and Anana find themselves back on the World of Tiers, or Alofmethbin, it's Thoan name, and encounter a being that

resembles a Shong. The specimen, a female, is described as thus by Kickaha:

The creature was at least seven feet long and formed like a hybrid of woman and bear. The face lacked the ursine snout, but its jaws bulged out as if they would have liked to have become a bear's. That forehead indicated that she was highly intelligent. The structure of her mouth and the teeth, however, showed that she might have had much trouble pronouncing human words. Whether or not she could speak well, she must have understood Thoan speech.

Compare the above to these passages from Tarzan's perspective in *Tarzan and the Dark Heart of Time*:

But his face...it was not as flat as a man's nor was his forehead, and he had jaws that protruded more than a man's but less than a chimpanzee's. Halfway between a man and...a bear? Only a scientist could know if he had evolved from an ursine creature or some other animal.

Then, he spoke. One word only he uttered. It wasn't from a human mouth, but it was formed well enough for the ape-man to recognize that word.

.....

The bear-man again spoke the word.

Now, the ape-man understood it.

The creature's larynx, tongue, teeth, and mouth chamber probably were not quite like those of human beings. Thus, they could only approximate some human sounds. Some, however were very close to those human languages used. But the t, for instance, was a click. The a was long and far back in the mouth. The r was really a d or sounded as such to the ape-man.

But the word was clear enough.

"Tarzan."

The observations by Kickaha are very reminiscent of Rahb having a difficult time saying Tarzan's name in *Tarzan and the Dark Heart of Time* and Old Father Nakendar pronouncing the Khokarsan word for brother in "Kwasin and the Bear God."

This being, called an Oromoth by the Thoan, is able to sneak up on and get the better of Kickaha, who is no slouch when it comes to situational awareness, having spent decades of his life navigating pocket universes and the dangers within them. This is similar to Tarzan spending a large portion of his life in the African rainforest, and Rahb being able to close in and capture him. Both creatures show a high aptitude for tracking and concealing their presence that vexes two of the more capable members of the Wold Newton family.

Kickaha mentions a legend of the Bear People on the Amerindian level of the World of Tiers. These humans were the descendants of Amerindians taken by the Lord Jadawin from prehistoric Earth around twenty thousand years ago. The Bear People had tales of a being called the Man-Bear that they believed was descended from the mating of the original "Great Bear" and the daughter of the first human couple. The Bear People believed the Man-Bear and themselves are both descended from this coupling. (It should be noted that during the events of "Kwasin and the Bear God," Kwasin takes part in a ritual dance with several bears and wonders if he is possessed by his ancestor Klaklaku the Man-Bear.) However, Kickaha believes the Oromoth's (Man-Bear's) ancestors must have been made in a Thoan biolab, most likely Jadawin's.

It is interesting how the bear plays a mythological role in both the Ancient Opar/Khokarsa series and in the myths of the Amerindian descendants in the World of Tiers series. One must also note the commonalities between the languages, customs, and beliefs of Amerindians and of Ancient Opar/Khokarsa as well. There is an explanation for this if one reads Farmer's *Time's Last Gift*.

The totality of evidence above leads me to believe that the Shong and Oromoth are one and the same species.

Farmer himself connected the World of Tiers series to the Wold Newton family via *Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life* and *The Lavalite World*, where he includes Kickaha as a family member, a descendant of Phileas Fogg and a cousin of Richard Henry Benson, the Avenger.

Given the involvement of the Thoan in the wider Wold Newton Universe it's not hard to explain how the Shong have popped up in multiple eras and locations. The Thoan seem to be by far the most advanced of beings in Farmer's monomyth, thanks to the technology they command, but unlike their predecessors, they are unable to replicate it. Thus, the remaining Thoan greedily compete for the remnants of said advanced technology to include biolabs, pocket universes, and gates.

As for the Shong being denizens of Pellucidar, perhaps the scent Tarzan recognizes from the Shong and Pellucidar is that of not only an artificially created being, but of an artificial universe as well? Perhaps it is a trace scent of the Thoan technology used in their creation that he is detecting? In *Tarzan: Battle for Pellucidar* he doesn't mention, recall, or postulate anything about the scent of the denizens of Pal-ul-don or Caspak being anomalous to the surface world, only the Shong and Pellucidar. Perhaps the former are indeed truly the products of natural (albeit alternative) evolution, rather than a Thoan biolab. If that is the case, I believe Pellucidar could be a Thoan-constructed pocket universe like the World of Tiers. I'm not the first person to make this hypothesis, as I have seen this theory appear on Win Scott Eckert's *Wold Newton Universe* website (<http://www.pjfarmer.com/woldnewton/Pulp.htm>) in articles by Win Scott Eckert himself.

Regarding the prehistoric appearance of a Shong in "Kwasin and the Bear God," Jadawin's involvement with prehistoric Amerindians twenty thousand years ago (as mentioned in *A Private Cosmos*) fits the timeline for the Shong appearing in Khokarsa, since we know the Lord was active on Earth even prior to Old Father Nakendar first being discovered by Rimasweth's party in ancient Khokarsa. Jadawin must have created Pellucidar and the Shong prior to this, and thanks to Thoan gate technology, some of the Shong were transported from Pellucidar to central Africa.

Finally, according to ISFDB both *Tarzan and the Dark Heart of Time* and *More Than Fire* were published fairly close to each other when Farmer's full-time writing days were beginning to wind down. *More Than Fire* was first published in March 1993 (in France, September 1993 in the United States) and *Tarzan and the Dark Heart of Time* was first published in June 1999. I wonder if anyone who read these two novels, released fairly close together were able to pick up on the similarities of the Shong and the Oromoth. Had I not read them so close together, I'm not sure I would have noticed myself.

About the Fans/Writers

William H. Emmons is the host of the Planetside Chats videocast on Youtube and a regular contributor to the SFFAudio Podcast. William is @Planetstories39 on Twitter. He is a communist agitator and general ne'er do well. He lives in Eastern Kentucky with his fiancé, elderly dog and an ever increasing number of feral cats.

Sean Lee Levin discovered Philip José Farmer's work as a teenager in 2002 and has been obsessed ever since. A lifelong resident of Chicago, Illinois (the same state Farmer resided in), Sean spends much of his spare time reading, watching movies, and writing. He is the author of *Crossovers Expanded: A Secret Chronology of the World* Volumes 1 and 2, published by Meteor House in 2016. He is currently looking to get a Western story published. You can find Sean's blog, which contains his movie reviews and other cool things, at <http://seanlevin.blogspot.com/?m=1>.

Atom Mudman Bezecny is the editor-in-chief of the independent pulp press Odd Tales Productions, a position she has occupied for four years. Her previous publications include the novels *Tail of the Lizard King*, *Deus Mega Therion*, *Kinyonga Tales*, *The New Adventures of the Flash Avenger*, *Flint Golden and the Thunderstrike Crisis*, and *The Return of the Amazing Bulk*, a canonical sequel to Lewis Schoenbrun's superhero film *The Amazing Bulk*. She is also the author of many short stories, including a series starring her original heroine Bloody Mary. Her stories can be found at www.oddtalesofwonder.com.

Keith Howell is a graphic artist, illustrator, schoolteacher, and recovering lawyer trapped in Central Texas. You can visit his Facebook page @artistkeith or visit his infrequently updated website www.profchallenger.com to interact with him or see some other examples of his art and writing.

Jason Scott Aiken came to know of Philip José Farmer's work just a few weeks before Farmer's passing in February 2009. Aiken's journey to Farmer was concurrent to his discovery of pulp magazines and culminated with him attending FarmerCon VI at PulpFest 2011 in Columbus, Ohio. Aiken has been attending FarmerCon and PulpFest ever since and also hosted and produced Pulp Crazy, a podcast dedicated to pulp authors, literature, and themes. In addition to Farmer and Pulp fandom, Aiken has had short fiction published by Black Coat Press, Cirsova, and Paizo Publishing. He can be found online at jasonscottaiken.com and pulpcrazy.com.

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