

Easter stuff

The Urth list — 3 messages, 2 voices, 06 Apr 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/1488>

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.

Tony Ellis — 06 Apr 1999, 12:22

Lots of interesting posts while I was away from my pc for Easter. A few thoughts:

Allan Lloyd wrote (of Kevin Malone)

This story is to me one of Gene's more obvious Christian parables. The clues in the text are almost too many to mention...

Welcome, Allan. I suppose it's too much to hope that your e-mail was a victim of international datelines, and that the actual date it was sent was a day earlier than the date shown? Only Fooling. Sorry.

Roy wrote:

3) Who was the beautiful, weeping woman Sev saw in the loggia of the Secret House, being led away by six Praetorians? Ch. XLI, _Urth_ This was right after resurrecting the dead assassin and right before emerging behind the throne. He can't recall who she is.

She's the Contessa in Dr Talos's play, who relates seeing a mysterious figure as she was led away by guards. (I must admit, I thought this was what you had in mind when you suggested that the play was changing the future rather than reporting it.)

Mitchell A. Bailey wrote: (Of the Nature of the Aborigines of St. Anne)

The strangest inhabitant of a certain green world was one which I, taking a cue from Mr. Borski, will call the pleiomorph...

As you say, the various explanations for what has happened on St Anne are so finely balanced it may be that we are supposed to choose our own. Here's why I haven't chosen yours:

It may well have come not to possess what we would call a natural form of its own, so completely did it live in disguise. The Shadow Children remember them as wormlike creatures which lived in holes beneath the roots of trees.

What the Old Wise One actually says is "'We had no names before men came out of the sky... We were mostly long, and lived in holes between the roots of trees.'" My point being, the Shadow Children remember -themselves- as being this indigenous, primitive lifeform.

The Old Wise One is, of course, an unreliable narrator. Earlier he speaks of the Shadow Children as the space travellers, and Sandwalker's people as the indigenous shape-changers, which ties into your "Atlantean" interpretation. -But-, he later takes this back. The Wise Old One is a telepathic construct, and he is influenced by the minds that make him. When he is being generated only by the last Shadow Child and by Sandwalker, he says "Now I am half a man, and know that we were always here..."

It depends on how much credence you want to give to that remark, but for a long, long time

now it's been my theory that the Shadow Children were on St Anne first. They may have been indigenous or, as the Wise Old One also says "it may be that all are one stock" and that they are the remnant of a truly unimaginably ancient human migration. Either way, they were telepathic, and had a very tenuous sense of self. When the "Atlanteans" arrived from Earth, they so impressed these creatures that they began to emulate them, to the extent that eventually they came to think they -were- the humans. At the same time, the real "Atlantean" colonists became so seduced by the dreaming life of St Anne that they lost first their technology and then even the ability to use tools. They became Sandwalker's people.

Quite probably no Terran of the latter wave of colonization, French or English-speaking, ever encountered or spoke to a Shadow Child personally after that first landing

No? What about "animals shaped like people" Mary Blount remembers playing with as a little girl? "...the children, the little ones, you know." What about Robert Culot's grandfather, who knew that there were "many races" of Annese, and saw something "sometimes like a man, sometimes like old wood."?

Mitchell A. Bailey — 06 Apr 1999, 14:41 · follows Tony Ellis

Tony Ellis wrote:

The Shadow

Children remember them as wormlike creatures which lived in holes beneath the roots of trees.

What the Old Wise One actually says is "'We had no names before men me out of the sky... We were mostly long, and lived in holes between the roots of trees.'" My point being, the Shadow Children remember -themselves- as being this indigenous, primitive lifeform.

The Old Wise One is, of course, an unreliable narrator. Earlier he speaks of the Shadow Children as the space travellers, and Sandwalker's people as the indigenous shape-changers, which ties into your "Atlantean" interpretation. -But-, he later takes this back. The Wise Old One is a telepathic construct, and he is influenced by the minds that make him. When he is being generated only by the last Shadow Child and by Sandwalker, he says "Now I am half a man, and know that we were always here..."

It depends on how much credence you want to give to that remark...

The explanation I would offer is based on the fact that, as you say, the Old Wise One at the time this remark was made was being generated by one lone Shadow Child, Sandwalker, and a tenuous contribution from every other Shadow Child band on St. Anne. Sandwalker's alien contribution in particular probably confused the Old Wise One. Contrast this with the Old Wise One's manner when the Shadow Child band was intact earlier, at which time he was more knowledgeable and confident of his viewpoint and beliefs.

I myself when I first read 5HC pondered the possibility that the Shadow Children were the evolved offspring of pleiomorphs and the abos were descendants of human colonists. I believe that the evidence, apart from what the Shadow Children say about themselves, more convincingly suggests the converse. Consider:

The Shadow Children are portrayed as stunted and rather weak and unhealthy scavengers with a poor grasp of reality. They are clearly nocturnal and very shy. I cannot find anything in the text to suggest that they were shape-changers to even a minimal extent, or even thought to be, though they allegedly had other odd telepathic and psychokinetic powers. This seems to me more consistent with degenerated, drugged humans.

The abos of Sandwalker's kind, including the Free People of the mountains, the marshmen, and their alleged descendants the Trenchards, are diurnal, strong, healthy, and possess a talent for chameleon-like self-camouflage or alteration of appearance. In my view that makes them much better candidates for descendants of the native Annese shape-changers, who took on the human form for so long and so thoroughly that their pleiomorphism degenerated to a vestige which (per Dollo's Law) they can never reverse.

Quite probably no Terran of the latter wave of colonization, French or English-speaking, ever encountered or spoke to a Shadow Child personally after that first landing

No? What about "animals shaped like people" Mary Blount remembers playing with as a little girl? "...the children, the little ones, you know." What about Robert Culot's grandfather, who knew that there were "many races" of Annese, and saw something "sometimes like a man, sometimes like old wood."?

My impression of the contact accounts Dr. Marsch recorded in his journal in "V.R.T." were more likely with pleio-abos than Shadow Children. It is strongly implied they only occurred in daylight, and the last one remembered by Culot's grandfather in particular was alone and camouflaging itself. Mary Blount's "children" could conceivably have been SCs, but I don't think little Mary would have allowed out in the late evening (if the SCs didn't eat her, there was always the ghoul-bear!), or that true SCs would have come out during daylight.

BTW I notice that Shadow Children are mentioned as such only by Victor, either as recorded by the real Dr. Marsch, or in the accounts, including "A Story", written by Victor impersonating Marsch. Note that first-person references to hanging up food for "those who hunger" occur only after the transition in the journal marking Marsch's demise. John Marsch evidently was unfamiliar with the idea of Shadow Children, thinking that Victor referred to a constellation. Although Dr. Marsch's sources, such as Culot's grandfather and even Dr. Hagsmith, recognized that there were several distinct "ethnic" groups of Annese, it was probably only Victor and his parents who knew much of the 'genuine' abo lore concerning the SC.

Mitchell A. Bailey — 06 Apr 1999, 20:06 · follows Mitchell A. Bailey

Mitchell A. Bailey wrote:

... What the Old Wise One actually says is "'We had no names before men me

out of the sky... We were mostly long, and lived in holes between the roots of trees.'" My point being, the Shadow Children remember -themselves- as being this indigenous, primitive lifeform.

The Old Wise One is, of course, an unreliable narrator. Earlier he speaks of the Shadow Children as the space travellers, and Sandwalker's people as the indigenous shape-changers, which ties into your "Atlantean" interpretation. -But-, he later takes this back. ...

The explanation I would offer is based on the fact that, as you say, the Old Wise One at the time this remark was made was being generated by one lone Shadow Child, Sandwalker, and a tenuous contribution from every other Shadow Child band on St. Anne. Sandwalker's alien contribution in particular probably confused the Old Wise One. Contrast this with the Old Wise One's manner when the Shadow Child band was intact earlier, at which time he was more knowledgeable and confident of his viewpoint and beliefs.

...

Guess I better own up to a goof: when the OWO makes that statement there are still three Shadow Children of that band remaining with Sandwalker.

I don't think that cripples my point, tho.

Let me hasten to point out that the band had suffered defeat and capture, probably pretty traumatic considering their inflated and fragile egos. Then by this point, it had just lost two of its number to violence, this violence and this loss being felt all the more acutely because every Shadow Child was part of a telepathic mental continuum and probably the pain of one was shared by all.

And Sandwalker still made up 1/4 of that telepathic community (neglecting the attenuated contact with other Shadow Children bands).

So I still think the OWO was in a somewhat stressed and disoriented state compared with the earlier scene where Sandwalker was initiated a Shadowfriend.