

5HC: primitives and skybending

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 01 Dec 2000

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/2482>

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.

Michael Andre-Driussi — 01 Dec 2000, 10:10

We see three or four groups in "A Story." It is interesting that none of them exhibit flashy shape-changing (rather than denying they have this ability, it points to VRT wanting to downplay or erase such a possibility in =his= particular case, where it seems clear that he has done it himself), but there is a whole lot of mind-changing, which might be just the same thing, after all.

If "A Story" is really just a political allegory from a mixed-up kid who bungled his way into an espionage set-up, then it is as I said before: the hill people are Annese and the wetlanders are Croixans, only stripped of all abo/human issues. (Taking the extreme view that there were no abos around when humans arrived.)

One of the things I wanted to look at in drawing up the categories was how various traits (shape-shifting, lack of manual dexterity, green eyes, etc.) might be limited to one group or widespread among all. Just as when we talk of fantasy creatures, for instance hobbits, unicorns, goblins, centaurs, and dragons: if we didn't already have these categories, we would be matching up traits all over the place and coming up with a horde of chimeras ("a hobbit has a single horn on its head, four horse legs, and it breaths fire"); we might argue about the minute difference between goblins and hobbits ("no real difference at all" <g>).

I really enjoy the cultures. Even though we are led to favor the hill people, still, in that Marvin Harris way we can see that their lifestyle puts pressure on the individual to perform or die of neglect; their children and young people die, reducing population pressure for the group. They are able to shrug off responsibility: "it was the environment," "it was the individual's fault--too weak." The marsh people do the opposite: they seem to support their own people and to deal with mounting population pressures they "export death" by doing unto others rather than themselves.

It might be that each group represents a different wave of prehistoric colonist from Earth: the Trees being the first, the hill people being the second, the marshmen the third and the Shadow Children being the fourth. I select them this way to make the earlier ones more "part of the landscape" than later ones.

The Shadow Children talk of the francophone starcrossers "bending the sky." This used to bother me quite a bit, since it sure seemed as if they were describing an FTL stardrive (and while all the other scant details seemed to point towards a NAFAL stardrive, still, it could be, somehow or other, FTL). Only recently did it dawn on me (duh!) that "bending the sky" can refer to NAFAL if your frame of reference is that of a generational starship. That is: the time-dilation is "bending the sky," cheating death so that a spaceman can cross the void in a trivial amount of subjective and objective time, when compared to earlier groups that crossed the same gulf in voyages that lasted generations.

So today I think the Shadow Children came over on generation starships. Theirs were slowboats,

not "nearly as fast as light" ships.

=mantis=