

Shadow Children and Dead Languages

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 15 Dec 2000

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 15 Dec 2000, 08:43

Mantis wrote:

From a folklore standpoint, the Shadow Children are:

[...]

Actually, Mantis' list of Shadow-child characteristics immediately makes me think of the Fair Folk. Given Wolfe's penchant for reimagining fantasy, and especially faerie-tale, tropes in a plausible-enough-for-SF-"realism" form, I'd almost bank on it.

--ghouls, eaters of dead things, permanent halloween critters
that must be bought off with gifts of mice

That's certainly indicative; some folks in Eire still leave a bowl of milk out for the Fair Folk.

--children (they eat some, adopt others), cast off/abandoned
children, as implied by their name and their stature (OTOH,
when the second group meets Sandwalker as a shadowfriend, they
remark how young he is, so maybe they usually pick up cast off
elders?).

Leaving the question of elders aside, this is the one that made my Roach-sense go BING! BING! BING! -- Wolfe's potschke'd with the changeling motif more than once before.

--dead/dreaming

Weird but not alien to this demi-theory: the FF seem to have a different awareness from ours.

--sacred Lotus Eaters with a drug communion
--profane drug abusers (simultaneously autochthons wiped out by
alien alcohol/ex-conquistadors derailed by exotic opium)

These two seem to qualify as stfnal justifications of the one before.

--first and last: autochthons and invaders-gone-native; yet neither
first nor last, since the magic trees came before they did, and the
Anglophone colonists came after they did.

Again, a stfnal version of the idea that the FF are a race much older than humans, and what we see (when we do) are the last remnants.

Then the Mad Exultant observed that he is:

... still awaiting delivery of my used copies of 5HC (1
Scribner's, 1 Ace) from that emporium called, in one of
your dead languages, "Lacking Breast".

Not to be too fussy, but I believe a-maston would be "without breast," not necessarily implying a lack -- though, of course, the fact that they name themselves for this "withoutness" would seem to imply that they themselves feel this lack. One might speculate that the founders of

this emporium were bottle-fed and have never completely recovered from a lack of maternal intimacy.

In the meantime, please -- Support Independent Booksellers or we soon may have nothing left but B. Waldencrown, Barder and Borble, and the ubiquitous Breastless.

Advocatorially,