

Play Answers (a few)

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 24 Nov 1997

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m.driussi — 24 Nov 1997, 02:34

Christopher Culver,

Re: the contessa, I think she represents (aside from the contessa who cameos in URTH OF THE NEW SUN) the aristocracy, yes, but also a facet of the old human race. In evolutionary terms, Meschi-boy and Meschi-girl are sort of like Cro-magnon arriving at the end of the Neanderthal time; the contessa hopes to subvert the new paradigm (heh) by getting some of Meschi-boy's seed and founding a hybrid line (i.e., she wants to pull a "Lilith"). (The Autarch of the play, independent and on his own, comes up with a similar plan for himself and Meschi-girl.) This strategy we might call "the cuckoo gambit" in shorthand.

Not all of the old humans follow this strategy, but then, so few of them understand the metaphysical depths of what is going on in the screwball comedy around them.

Gabriel is played by Dr. Talos, according to Gene Wolfe in one of the articles in THE CASTLE OF THE OTTER.

alga,

What?! I failed to list Kyneburga, Solange, and Lybe--not only in the LEXICON URTHUS but also in AE&1 and AE&2?! Bad, bad. Very bad! They are saints. I've got Kyneburga (aka Cyniburg) here right now (Oxford), and I'm 95% certain I spotted Solange and Lybe at the library. I'll double check later in the week. (The contessa is scared and is calling for her friends and/or maids, I think. But yes, I first thought one or more might be a goddess, as when Thecla mentions "Caitanya," another word I couldn't find anywhere so Gene Wolfe helped me out--the goddess called Wisdom in Bible translations.)

(Which isn't to say that saints can't also be former goddesses! I mean, St. Catherine and Kali seem to go way back, just to give one example off the cuff.)

Re: statue kissing Jahi's foot. You know, this has always struck me as being that archaic tableau wherein the Goddess (who became Eve in the OT version) treads upon the head of the chthonic circuit Serpent (her consort who became the tempter in the OT version). A stage in that old cycle: SHE (god) and HE (snake) have HIM (icon: a five pointed star); HIM and HE fight it out, the winner/survivor HIM becoming married to SHE; SHE and HIM have HE; HE and HIM fight it out . . . et cetera.

Re: play enacted elsewhere in the text. When Sev gets back to the House Absolute and regent Valeria is on the throne, the =lines= are straight out of the play. Which is especially interesting because most of the speakers did not see the play; also Jader's sister turns out to have become the prophet (so "autarch" and "prophet" roles are being played by women); and then there's the contessa who sees Severian . . . just like "the contessa" reported seeing a "strange man" in the play!

=mantis=