

5HOC

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 07 May 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3223>

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David Duffy — 07 May 2002, 01:24

alga wrote:

Without following the argument very closely, let me suggest that with the Annese, GW references the fairy tradition--he is not alone among good sf writers to do so. Fairies are flummoxed by "cold iron"--i.e. tools. They can sometimes shapeshift. And they have been known to interbreed with humans, as well has to kidnap human children.

And are polymorphic: short and ugly, taller and fair.

Yes, of course there is the Australian "dreamtime," quite specifically.

It is the obvious link, given the "abo" terminology, which I think is unique to Australian vernacular, but there is little material specific to indigenous Australian traditions in "A Story". The Dreamtime ended long before 1788, though it is a nice conceit to imagining stopping with the introduction of European time. I think it is a nod to Bradbury, not The Exiles but a similar short.

Adam wrote:

I can turn the question around, though: why, if Wolfe wants us to believe in prehistoric starcrossers and Shadow Children telepathically hiding the St. Anne, does he put this information in a document entitled simply "A Story" whose purpose is unknown, and which is mostly fictional in any case (unless you believe that the oral tradition preserved all Sandwalker's words and thoughts)?

To be tricky and ambiguous ;) I can't believe anyone would be gullible enough to believe Wolfe when he tells an interviewer Marsch was a shadow child! Unfortunately he is not so fervent a modernist as to provide a key to his works cf Joyce (writing to mates to tell them what each chapter of Ulysses is **really** about, and almost btw what David is reading ;)).

Of course, we are allowed to have multiple worldviews simultaneously "true" in this postmodern era.

"A Story" is pretty Wolfean in its' equation of simplicity and godliness versus the more technologically adept and nasty Mars(c)hmen, see the epigraph from StJotC. Aside from _VRT_, one could easily believe that No. 5 wrote it:

1) killing and replacing a twin -- the twin in this case is the other No 5 personality that runs things while the narrator is blacked out. It is presumably been inculcated by the father as in

2) The castration, and nightly examination of dreams and visions by Lastwind, a surrogate father.

3) cultural details: flails, ordeal by fire, mating with trees, drowning to honour rivers, stone tools not being needed

4) Etruscans, Atlantis and Gondwanaland

5) Veil: in where did the slavery and cruelty come from -- Marshmen

David Duffy.

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Adam Stephanides — 07 May 2002, 21:17 · follows David Duffy

on 5/6/02 8:24 PM, David Duffy at davidD at qimr.edu.au wrote:

_ "A Story" _ is pretty Wolfean in its' equation of simplicity and godliness
versus the more technologically adept and nasty Mars(c)hmen, see the
epigraph from StJotC.

Also in the opposition between the individualistic Sandwalker and the collectivist Marshmen and Shadow children: note also that Victor calls the mountain-dwelling Annese the Free People, and claims to belong to the Laissez-Faire Party.

--Adam