

5HC

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 31 May 1998

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m.driussi — 31 May 1998, 17:36

Last night I finished reading THE FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS. I think it was the third or fourth time, the previous time being some years ago.

What a great book.

This time I am struck by the unexamined twins, Number Five and Marsh/V.R.T.; probably unduly influenced by my own Gilgamesh/Enkidu note from before.

Both are in quasi-Oedipal conflicts ("quasi-" because the father figure isn't their father and because there is no mother involved as goal/reward/reason). Both are murderers. Both plan to use beards as a disguise (Number Five to mimic Number Four; V.R.T. to signal to other abos that he is now a man). They are apprehended and imprisoned at the same time for the same crime (murder of Number Four). They are in the same prison for a while, but then the urban one is sent into the wilderness and the wild one is put into a cramped cell.

These two have very little contact with each other. Yet information =seems= on occasion to flow from Number Five to Marsh/V.R.T. in the E.S.P. way that twins are fabled to have; in the way depicted between the twins-separated-at-birth in the "fiction" of "A Story."

This is very faint.

Number Five's dream of court fenced with Corinthian pillars is echoed in the abo dream of the observatory on Sainte Anne (where one brother is a priest dreamwatching his hillman twin), which is then traced to the anthropological notes regarding the cedar-stump ruins of the observatory.

Fainter still: the awakening from sleep of Number Five, "He wants you"; the awakening from sleep of Marsh/V.R.T. "You are wanted."

Which leads me to another appreciation of the "V"; granted this is mantic, but disregarding the "five" aspect of the symbol, we see two "I"s (ones; selves) which converge into one at the end.

Then, at the end of the book, just as things are taking on more solid form, suddenly it seems like the planet is crawling with abos. The officer with his scarred head (V.R.T.) links to the head-scarring practices of the marshmen (A Story).

Okay, granted that "A Story" is (probably) generated by Marsh/V.R.T. while in prison, after he has been arrested by the scarred officer. But there are other things that Marsh/V.R.T. doesn't see: the same officer washing himself post-coitus links to the fictitious abo doing the same in "A Story" and to the boy V.R.T. doing the same in the April 12 entry. (Again: that "A Story" links to the anthro journal in "V.R.T." is to be expected; it is the other linkage that causes some

wonderment.)

In addition, Cassilla seems like an abo, from what we know about abo female prostitutes (shape shifting, make themselves ugly when they aren't in the mood, green eyes? [Is this an echo of their world color, the green of Sainte Anne? If so, gee, blue eyes might be for Sainte Croix.]).

Then there is the Edgar Allen Poe sequence: the officer is distracted by a one-eyed black cat; then by a mysterious black bird that flies in and perches on the picture frame--one almost expects the bird to croak, "Nevermore." Both creatures in Poe's work signal missing women: the first a murdered wife, the second a wife lost to disease. Regardless of that, animal messengers are a part of the abo world rather than that of the colonist.

Anyway, if the place is overrun with abos (i.e., Veil's Theory), then one side of the conflict between the two worlds could be the same old ancient hill versus marsh battle depicted in the fiction of "A Story." And Cassilla might be the presumed dead cat-girl, working out her revenge upon the traitor-to-his-race-and-girlfriend Marsh/V.R.T. With Number Five the doomed heir of the only "pure" humans left.

=mantis=