

Butter-fingered Annese

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 03 Apr 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/1478>

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.

Roy C. Lackey — 03 Apr 1999, 00:50

On 4-2-99 Mitchell A. Bailey wrote:

<snip>

As an aside: I've always found the manual dexterity attribute of the Annese kind of troubling. For one thing, it isn't consistently applied. How can a race which can allegedly craft fishing nets be inherently incapable of using a shovel? How can a race too clumsy to use tools even survive? Even chimpanzees use simple tools. I suspect that the Annese Manual Dexterity Issue is one of those Wolefean Smoking Chekov's Guns which has deep implications going to the very theme of the story (in this case 5HC). It says something fundamental about the nature of the Annese and deserves closer study.<<

I think Wolfe was applying Lamarck's idea that once an organ or attribute has "lost" its functionality and, if favorable circumstances for it recur, that that organ or attribute can not resume its former functionality. I think what Wolfe intended here was that the Annese had lost the use of their opposable thumb and could not reacquire it. You can weave a net with just your fingers and teeth, but just try to use a shovel without using your thumb. It is also why V.R.T couldn't write worth a damn.

Roy

Mitchell A. Bailey — 03 Apr 1999, 17:10 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Roy C. Lackey wrote:

On 4-2-99 Mitchell A. Bailey wrote:

<snip>

As an aside: I've always found the manual dexterity attribute of the Annese kind of troubling. ...>

I think Wolfe was applying Lamarck's idea that once an organ or attribute has "lost" its functionality and, if favorable circumstances for it recur, that that organ or attribute can not resume its former functionality. I think what Wolfe intended here was that the Annese had lost the use of their opposable thumb and could not reacquire it. You can weave a net with just your fingers and teeth, but just try to use a shovel without using your thumb. It is also why V.R.T couldn't write worth a damn.

Roy

Thanks, Roy

You meant to say Dollo's law, I presume. Actually, I had never heard of Dollo's Law until I read 5HC almost twenty years ago, and I never heard of Lamarck until I read the archives (Master Ultan Knew exactly which shelf to find it upon). My education was rather light on biology.

I am indeed pondering possible answers to my own question, and Lamarck (as I understand it from you folks' previous discussions) plays a part. Watch this space.