

The Terrible Clone Trio

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 13 Mar 2000

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Nigel Price — 13 Mar 2000, 19:54

And while I'm back in contributory mode again, however, briefly, I thought that you might like this pleasantly inane extract from my recent correspondence with my faithful friend Jeff in Minneapolis, who - *gasp!* - has *met* Gene Wolfe several times.

I should explain that I had told Jeff about John Clute's wonderful line, that Wolfe is a bit like Aslan as played by Sgt Bilko, and that I had added my own comment that in the photos I'd seen, Wolfe actually looked a bit like Bilko, as played by the great Phil Silvers.

Anyway, this was Jeff's reply:

The latest set of shelves are now up, and, in sorting out the books, I came across a copy of a nice volume called "The Faces of Science Fiction"; it has photos and short interviews with quite a number of authors. Since I had been sort of bemused by your comment on Gene Wolfe reportedly looking like the late, lamented Phil Silvers, I took a look to see if the description matched. I should also mention that one of the movie channels we had been getting a free preview of over the weekend ran "It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World" - which had Phil Silvers as one of the characters.

I'll have to concede that they do look like siblings - Mr. Wolfe is a bit more portly and respectable, while Phil Silvers always seemed to look a bit leaner and hungrier. Curiously enough, Americans visiting Tibet have been arrested for wearing T-shirts with Phil Silver's likeness on them - the locals think it's the Dalai Lama! If you want my opinion, Gene Wolfe looks more like the Dalai Lama than Phil Silvers does - aside from the strikingly similar face, they both have a sort of friendly, avuncular look about them. Sort of the

"Kris Kringle" look, I guess.

I'm not sure if this means anything - perhaps all three are really siblings, and part of some vast network of gurus in glasses... Oh, where are Mulder and Scully when you really need them?

It's curious; I don't remember noticing the resemblance in person. Gene Wolfe always seemed to radiate bonhomie, rather than that "used car salesman" attitude that Sgt. Bilko had. Hmm. Curiouser and curiouser, said Alice!

Well, there you have it, fellow Lupines: Bilko, Gene Wolfe and the Dalai Lama - clone triplets, bespectacled geniuses, genetically engineered by some mysterious alien entity and put here on this earth for a purpose that you and I can scarcely dream of...

Yeah, right!

Nigel