

Marble on NPR

The Urth list — 4 messages, 4 voices, 20 Nov 2002

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James Wynn — 20 Nov 2002, 21:10

Today on National Public Radio, Terry Gross of "Fresh Air" interviewed poet Sekou Sundiata about receiving a kidney transplant from a female friend. He mentioned that transplant recipients sometimes report taking on attributes of the donors.

It made me think of Marble and Rose.

-- Crush

cilluff1 at optonline.net — 20 Nov 2002, 21:26 · follows James Wynn

Crush wrote:

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...or the Treehouse of Horror where Homer gets a hair transplant from Snake.

:)

- Joe

Chris — 20 Nov 2002, 22:22 · follows cilluff1 at optonline.net

You know, since you mention it I have to bring up something that's been nagging at me persistently since I first read it.

The easiest and most coherent explanation of what happens with Marble and Rose is exactly as you describe, that some of the attributes/personality of Rose came over with her parts when Marble scavenged them. This is what I intuited, at any event, even before Silk realizes what's going on. *But* then I got thrown a loop which I find disturbing. There's a passage where Rose/Marble is speaking as Rose, which basically implies that she was present in Marble *before* the parts came over. I this is the same passage where she uses the phrase "reclaim" (in reference to the prosthetics) which has led some people here to theorize that it was Marble speaking, and that Rose had originally taken those parts from Marble long ago. However, the sense of it was that Rose was explaining why she had to take back the parts from her old body, and it makes no sense for her to go through this thought process (even as a rationalization) unless she was present in Marble just beforehand.

Of course, Rose/Marble could just be very confused by what she's gone through. I am uncomfortable dismissing it so easily, though.

Chris

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 20 Nov 2002, 22:52 · follows Chris

Crush wrote...

The easiest and most coherent explanation of what happens with Marble and Rose is exactly as you describe, that some of the attributes/personality of Rose came over with her parts when Marble scavenged them.

Agreement: I understand/understood this* as based on the holographic model of memory. In this model, we postulate memories as stored not in a specific "location" but distributed, like the information which constitutes a hologram, throughout the host's neural net/nervous system.

* I mean understanding in the scientific/scientifictional sense of "finding a rational/rationalizing explanation for"; with the Books of the Foo Sun, we also have to allow for at least the possibility of a "mystical" and/or "spiritual" explanation, too.

Thus, with a bit of hokey-pokey and handwaving, we say that Rose's "parts," connected for so long to her nervous system, participate in the holographic storage of her memory. When removed from her body and attached to Marble's, they carry that holographic store of memory with them, like the pieces of a cut-up hologram that still show the "whole" picture (albeit with blurred detail: see also Samuel R. Delany's stories "High Weir" and "Time Considered as a Semi-Precious Stone").

I expect that, yes, Rorble/Mase does undergo a great deal of confusion, leading to the comments you cite. Later, she makes comments about how she had not fully "integrated" Rose's memories.

The Morsle/Rabe case also sets up (though I do not think it "foreshadows" in the sense that Wolfe probably did not have the plot of SS in mind when he created this particular situation) the confusing state of the Narrator of SS.

I can't help wondering, though, whether Wolfe intended a sly tribute to William Gibson in this.

After all, I think it reasonable to refer to the memories that Marble receives from her beneficiary as "Fragments of a Hologram Rose."

Scurrying very quickly under the sink,