

The "Number Five = Five Gen

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 06 Apr 1998

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/477>

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.

Tony Ellis — 06 Apr 1998, 16:01

06/04/98

13:54

The "Number Five = 3D Five Generations" Theory

Some interesting ideas on "Number Five" equating to five generations of clones. Here are my latest thoughts:

Robert Borski:

The only slight problem I have with your interpretation is that you count Mr. Million twice, once as a human being and again as the simulator, which feels like cheating to me! Since the simulator is a faithful copy of the original person, I don't think they can be regarded as separate entities to the extent that the various clones are.

And don't forget that Dr Marsch says that the first GW was someone "neither of you have ever seen". If Mr Million was the first GW, that would mean that Maitre never saw his own grandfather; in any event, Number Five and Maitre can see Mr Million's face in his screen. So for this reason too I don't think Mr Million can be simulating the original GW.

If I'm going to go along with the Five Generations theory I think I'll have to take Pedro Jorge's interpretation, where there is still another "Gene Wolfe" behind Mr Million, who was the first.

Having said that, do we know for sure that even Mr Million's "father", Number Five's great-great-grandfather, was the first of the line? Dr Marsch's remark could be taken to suggest that the line of clones stretches back quite far. This is why I'm not dropping my theory that Fifth equates to "Fifth Head of the Family" either.

And here's another reason:

"if, as I had always thought of them, the three heads represented Maitre, Madame and Mr Million... then indeed a fourth would have to be welded into place soon for David himself"

This basically foregrounds the idea that the heads of Cerberus represent the (living) heads of the family. If the number five does equate to five generations, it definitely equates to the five family heads too.

I submit that Phaedria, Number Five's early love interest (and later his housemate) is his sister, the biological daughter of Maitre.

Ingenious, but...

To tackle your points in order: (1) If Maitre had sold his daughter to Phaedria's parents, why should they now hope, as they do, to marry her back into his family? (2) The broken ankle/Aunt Jeannine link seems very tenuous: a broken ankle really isn't that much like having no legs at all! (3) If Phaedria's name is supposed to be a classical allusion, why not actually name her after

someone who committed incest with her brother, rather than a stepson? (4) I'm not sure I understand why you think letting his girls attend the play would further any designs Maitre might have.

Another objection is that Aunt Jeannine looks strongly like Maitre. You would expect any sister of Number Five's to have the old family likeness too.

Pedro Jorge Romero — 06 Apr 1998, 15:35 · follows Tony Ellis

Robert Borski:

The only slight problem I have with your interpretation is that you count Mr. Million twice, once as a human being and again as the simulator, which feels like cheating to me! Since the simulator is a faithful copy of the original person, I don't think they can be regarded as separate entities to the extent that the various clones are.

I have the same problem. I can not count him twice.

And don't forget that Dr Marsch says that the first GW was someone "neither of you have ever seen". If Mr Million was the first GW, that would mean that Maitre never saw his own grandfather; in any event, Number Five and Maitre can see Mr Million's face in his screen. So for this reason too I don't think Mr Million can be simulating the original GW.

If I'm going to go along with the Five Generations theory I think I'll have to take Pedro Jorge's interpretation, where there is still another "Gene Wolfe" behind Mr Million, who was the first.

Here is my theory. The original GW is the baby with the girl in the picture Jeannine shows #5. After all, she says she is the his true mother, so it is easy to figure out the girl is the mother of the original GW and the baby is #1.

And just speculating: is that a picture of Gene Wolfe's real mother?

And here's another reason:

"if, as I had always thought of them, the three heads represented Maitre, Madame and Mr Million... then indeed a fourth would have to be welded into place soon for David himself"

But that's just what he "always thought". He could be wrong.

Another objection is that Aunt Jeannine looks strongly like Maitre. You would expect any sister of Number Five's to have the old family likeness too.

Is Jeannine the "control" in the previous experiment? Then, why a girl? A boy, like David, would make much more sense?

Best

Pedro Jorge