

5th Head Genealogical Revisions

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 06 Apr 1998

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Robert Borski — 06 Apr 1998, 16:56

I have now revised my family tree of the Wolfe clan of Saint Croix a bit, at least in regards to the position of Aunt Jeannine.

I originally held Jeannine to be the biological daughter of GW#1, the patriarch of the Cerberids and genetic source of all the clones to follow--doing so for several reasons.

(1) Jeannine is described by Number Five as "a little gray-haired woman," indicating she is probably older than Maitre, who is approximately 50; how _much_ older is problematical, given the varying rates at which people age, and the fact that she lives in futurity, where the aging process may be less severe due to advancements in medicine, pharmacology, gene therapy, etc.

(2) In FIFTH HEAD, all terms like aunt, brother, sister and father are putative and may have no relevance to genuine descent/relatedness. Yes, Jeannine refers to Maitre as her brother, but nowhere does he speak of either aunt or sister. In fact, I don't believe he ever mentions her at all, not even inferentially--a grievance perhaps that relates to her cupidity and an earlier quarrel?

(3) In the library scene near the end Marsch compares Jeannine to David (an outcrossing, according to Maitre), though "from an earlier generation." Adding to the ambiguity of this is that Marsch has now chosen to address both Maitre and Number Five in the singular and we are not sure if "earlier generation" refers to that preceding Number Five or Maitre or simply David.

(4) A question I've always pondered is this: why did the original Gene Wolfe clone himself? Maitre's quest to find out why the family has never advanced sociopolitically or in celebrity status seems to be largely moot at this stage, since it is in the early days of Saint Croix's colonization and GW1 is the first of his line, not of a succeeding iteration. But what if his first child--Jeannine/Aubrey--is born deformed (i.e., with withered legs)? Perhaps not wanting to chance another deformed child, coupled possibly with the desire for a male heir, he clones himself.

Again, all this is speculative, and related only to bolster my original placement of Jeannine in the genealogy.

Now however I'm having second thoughts. Three quarters of the reasons cited above can just as easily be used to support the notion that Jeannine belongs one generation down in the genealogy. I.e., that she is the biological daughter of GW#2, not GW#1, which would indeed make her the "sister" of Maitre.

As for my gloss on the reason's behind GW#1's decision to clone himself, I'm also now thinking more along the following: Let us say that an aging or sick GW allows himself to be cerebrally replicated in Mr. Million only because he hopes that someday the process might be reversible

and that his mechanical brain might be able to be core-imaged _back_ into its organic equivalent. He therefore creates (or has already created) a clone of himself to be his future vessel, and spends the next 150 years tutoring himself through the generations, awaiting the day until once more he is mortally-bound and incarnate.

All of which, in less than succinct manner, leads me to state I'm willing to place Jeannine one generation down in the Wolfe/Cerberid genealogy, making her the daughter of GW#2, not GW#1, as I earlier supposed.

Robert Borski (who once his main computer is fixed and he can go back to work will have much less time to spin his lupine theories)