

The future of cloning, continued

The Urth list — 4 messages, 2 voices, 23 Dec 2013

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6495>

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DAVID STOCKHOFF — 23 Dec 2013, 19:50

I'm sure some of you are already up on cloning news, but some on this list may not be. From a nonscientific publication:

"While cloning was once the next big thing, it has lost its luster because of a problem called "epigenetic dysregulation" which causes up to 90 percent of cloned offspring to die. In fact, so many animals die to make one surviving clone that the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies said "the current level of suffering and health problems of surrogate dams and animal clones" renders it not "ethically justified." Cloned offspring "tend to be large for their breeds, and often have abnormal or poorly developed lungs, hearts, or other affected internal organs (liver and kidney), which makes it difficult for them to breathe or maintain normal circulation and metabolism," says an FDA report. The problems are so common in cloned cattle and sheep, they are called Large Offspring Syndrome."

This would make Number Five more like Number 50, ha ha. But the reference to Large Offspring Syndrome caught my eye as well. Is Doctor Talos in the house?

Lee — 24 Dec 2013, 14:02 · follows DAVID STOCKHOFF

David Stockhoff: Is Doctor Talos in the house?

Or even Doctor Crane?

I'm not an expert but it seems to me the current obstacles to cloning animals (plants are easier) reside mostly in the technology being in its infancy. I think epigenetic problems derive mostly from the accumulated centromere shortening and acquired mutations found in adult animal cells.

If you started your clone from a cell culled from a gastrula or even an embryo or fetus, I think most of the problems are avoided and you have your khaibit, ready to supply you blood (and body parts?) as needed.

David Stockhoff — 24 Dec 2013, 14:07 · in reply to Lee

On 12/24/2013 9:02 AM, Lee wrote:

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Makes sense. Stem cells, in other words. And you'd want to clone a person at birth anyway to get a khaibit of the same age. Not to mention that the decision to clone you is not based on your adult accomplishments but your status at birth.

I wonder what happens to khaibits whose originals die. Do they take their place in secret? They would then be able to marry and carry on the family. Or are they discarded?

Lee — 30 Dec 2013, 19:40 · follows David Stockhoff

David Stockhoff: I wonder what happens to khaibits whose originals die. Do they take their place in secret? They would then be able to marry and carry on the family. Or are they discarded?

The implication from House Azure is that the khaibits are notably shorter than their exultant donor/mistresses.

Still, I remain enamoured of my theory that nomenclature can denote clone status, as Thea is a derived diminutive of Thecla and Pega is the same for her mistress named Pelagia.

But Thecla and Thea seem both to be equally of exultant height. And Thea has her own khaibit named Thais (wordplay for "Thea's"?)

Then there are the "sunken cheeks". Thais has them. So does Severian. And is a "heart-shaped" face a sunken-cheek version of a "triangular face"? Mark of a clone? A product of having blood siphoned off?

I dunno. Too much contradictory and inconclusive evidence. I have to concede that Wolfe did not want us to fully know so much about everyone who is a clone in BotNS, perhaps to maintain the dark sense of identity mystery first established in Fifth Head of Cerberus.