

5HC: Who Is Number One?

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 01 Jun 1998

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adam louis stephanides — 01 Jun 1998, 20:56

Earlier this year (in vol. 9 of the archives) the question was debated: assuming, as the consensus seems to be, that Number Five's designation arises from his being fifth in a series which also includes his "father," "grandfather," and "great-grandfather," who is the other member of the series? Robert Borski argued it was Mr. Million, while Tony Ellis argued it was an otherwise unmentioned predecessor of the great-grandfather, (I'm going to drop the scare quotes from now on, because they're irritating to look at) whose clone the g-g was. I'm doubtful about both these solutions. My feeling is that the g-g was the first in the "line"; had there been a predecessor, it seems likely that the father would have mentioned him in his oft-quoted speech: "You are here because I did and do, and I am here because the individual behind me did -- who was himself originated by the one whose mind is simulated in Mr. Million."

Nor am I satisfied with the Mr. Million solution, though I can't disprove it. My problem is not that I believe, as Tony Ellis does, that Mr. Million *is* the g-g. It's simply that Mr. Million is not one of the series extending from the g-g to Number Five. He's an offshoot.

Anyway, a few hours ago I got an idea. While I'm not sure of it, given the way (our) Mr. Wolfe's mind works, I think it's plausible. It's based on three facts:

- 1) There is no evidence that anyone but Number Five is ever designated by his number outside of the father's mind. In fact, if the consensus above is true, Aunt Jeannine must never have heard any of the other numbers used.
- 2) We know that both Number Five and the father are both named Gene Wolfe, and it seems likely that the grandfather and great-grandfather are also.
- 3) The colony is acquainted with twentieth-century science fiction.

Given all this, couldn't it be that Number One is our own Gene Wolfe?

--Adam

Derek Bell — 02 Jun 1998, 19:39 · follows adam louis stephanides

You are Number Six... Ooops! Wrong topic!!! ;-)

Derek