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The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 15 Jun 1998

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Dan Parmenter — 15 Jun 1998, 11:55

From: m.driussi at genie.com

But I thought that the English moths of Industrial England were always cited as textbook examples of evolutionary process? That is, when the environment changed (through sooty pollution, in this case), some moths had camouflage and some moths didn't--those that did, survived, until all remaining population (or majority, at least) had the same advantage. Then when pollution was reduced, the process reversed itself.

What would Dollo have to say about that? Did the Peppered Moths' (as they are called) coloration actually "revert" or did they simply evolve their white color a second time? If we introduced large amounts of red soot into their environs could they evolve into red moths (Cayenne Peppered Moths) or is the range of possible mutations only black and white?

From: "William H. Ansley" <wansley at warwick.net>

First of all, it seems likely that a great many people on St. Croix bear "Wolfe genes" perhaps most of the general population. This is why there is a "St. Croix" planetary face (which is Number 5's/Maitre's/Mr. Millions.s face). This is due to Maitre's (and his predecessors', we can presume) practice of selling off his (their) "pratice" clones in his (their) role as child broker or slave broker. There is probably a higher percetage of Maitre's genes circulating in the St. Croix gene pool than is true of any other individual on any other planet in the 5HC universe.

I guess that would depend on the status of the children born of slaves fathered (or mothered) by the owners.

There seem to be a lot of "Wolfe genes" among government functionaries: all three of the government representatives waiting for Marsch in his room when he is arrested look "Wolfe-ish".

And they're also "shape-shifters" or at least "job-shifters", or so they say.

Re: Borski's Hypothesis about Aunt Jeanine

I like it for two reasons:

The shriveled legs. Why?

The fact that we hear precious little about the Shadow Children except in "A Story" and so some vague, inuitive notion about balance and symmetry suggests to me that they are an important part of the two novellas that they don't seem to participate in directly.

Re: Tool using

Isn't it the case that to be a tool user is to not just use an object for some external purpose but to *modify* it for such use; in other words, the chimps who use a twig or a blade of grass to

retrieve ants from an anthill aren't necessarily tool users. Rope? Perhaps it's a tool for those who make it, but for those who simply come across it it could just as easily be a vine and could be used accordingly in ways that don't really involve modifying it. But tying a knot is surely a modification? But they might be half-abo and so have **some** instrumentality. V.R.T. **does** learn to write after a fashion, but imagines that should he be required to teach, blue mimeo sheets could be used.

From: "William H. Ansley" <wansley at warwick.net>

In fact, there seem to be as many mysteries about 5HC as there are about the whole BotNS. I think this may be mainly due to the fact that in 5HC Wolfe means to leave many mysteries unsolvable; I mean it's all very well (and very true) to say that when Wolfe leaves something unsaid it's important, but there is just so much left unsaid in 5HC that I cannot believe we are supposed to be able to unravel all of it or even most of it.

Yes, I believe that 5HC is deliberately ambiguous and open to multiple possible interpretations. I think that BOTNS is mostly watertight with a few leaks that are either mistakes or deliberate provocations that don't mean much, but might mean something.

BTW, one last thing:

I think that the name "Aubrey Veil" is very interesting. Why do I keep thinking about the illustrator Aubrey Beardsley (who on more than one occasion drew masquerades I think) and the significance of Beards that we've discussed? A coincidence surely, and yet I also find myself thinking of Aubrey, the little girl in Frederic Brown's remarkable story "The Geezenstakcks" who was called Aubrey and who controlled the destiny of her family with dolls. What does the name mean exactly?

Okay, it's a stupid idea.

D