

The Book Of The War [unused material]

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Protective Neotony

The inhabitants of the lesser worlds that form the backdrop of the war, resemble +»-+-+ at least on the surface +»-+-+ the scions of the Great Houses. There are a number of theories about this. One is that like species contend for like habitats, and thus contention over like habitats involves like species. This is true but unhelpful, and depends on limited definitions of both species and habitat. One is that the primacy of the Great Houses, the anchoring of the thread of history in their own world compelled the worlds that can later to resemble them. This is a half-truth. Consider for a moment the Samuri crab of the Japanese sea +»-+-+ so called for the markings on its shell which resemble a Samuri warrior+»-+-+s face. In local tradition such crabs are held to resemble the dead boy-emperor Antoku (1185) who, with his Heike followers drowned themselves rather than bend the knee to the victorious Genji after the battle of Dan-no-ura. Crabs possessed of such markings are revered and returned unharmed when caught, to the sea. Consider, also, the artistic evolution of Mickey Mouse. Originally, unsurprisingly perhaps, he looked like a mouse +»-+-+ albeit one with gloves, and ears whose position remained unchanged no matter how his head is orientated +»-+-+ but gradually over time he grew more and more to resemble a young child. The eyes grew larger, emphasising the pupil, the cheeks chubbier. Finally every crab has a face, and Mickey looks like a human infant +»-+-+ albeit one with gloves and disturbing ears. When facing a predatory history, it is a survival characteristic to resemble something that will interrupt the aggression of a potential victor. A helpless infant +»-+-+ squarling out evolutionary cues - a weaker version of themselves, something that reminds them of a famous moment in their past. On no account does it do to look threatening, alien, or dangerous, or even off-putting. The lesser races resemble the members of the Great Houses, because in the ebb and flow of time any who did not were pruned away. It may, not have been anything as deliberate as genocide +»-+-+ although House Mirraflex has undoubtedly destroyed a number of worlds to limited, obvious, tactical advantage +»-+-+ a subtle sense of squeamishness that makes an ally of one people, while another is left to wither, is quite sufficient over a long period. It is sufficient that the Great Houses only mix with +»-+-+people like us+»-+-+. This does however beg a question. If races and peoples have been moulded to resemble the inhabitants of the Homeworld by the tides of history, where are they ones moulded into the image of the enemy?

Instant Animals

William T. Cox, in his book *Fearsome Creatures of the Lumberwoods, with a Few Desert and Mountain Beasts* published Judd & Detweiler 1911, described the Squonk thus:- Few people outside of Pennsylvania have ever heard of the +»-+-+beast+»-+-+..common in the hemlock forests of that State. The squonk is +»-+-+..said+»-+-+..to be the most morbid of beasts. Hunters who are good at tracking are able to follow a squonk by its tear-stained trail, for the animal weeps constantly. When cornered and escape seems impossible, or when surprised and frightened, it may even dissolve itself in tears." Father Stendec isolated the active ingredient in squonk tears as part of his cryptozoological researches for Faction Paradox, and the resultant material has been likened to the infamous liquid of

the alchemists the **Alkahest** that would dissolve any container and which proverbially quickly vanished upon discovery because of the sovereign problem of what to keep it in. (Presumably a hollow cavity at the centre of the Earth's gravitational field, now contains a globular lake of the stuff, into which luckless subterrestrial travellers occasionally fatally intrude.) In the case of squonk tears there is however an obvious solution, Father Stendec stored it in bulbs of tanned squonk skin, and decanted it when needed through pipettes made of the interior of the squonk's tear-ducts. Stendec further discovered that the squonk's last ditch defense was not so futile as it appeared, the creature would indeed liquify itself, but it would also reconstitute itself from the liquid form once the danger had passed. The liquid carries a saturated solution of biodata, out of which the animal can in effect crystalise. Father Stendec, is rumoured to have, further, through experimentation, fractionally distilled a variety of squonk tear based liquids that can carry seed animals of other species. When a rhinoceros suddenly appears in a compartment of the London Eye, it is this technology that is being deployed.

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