

What may have become of the Artificer's Litter

At the end of [The Artificer's Litter](#) the giant head's builders are scattered across Focus. It struck me this morning that that's an excellent founding myth for a stateless nation that practices a form of Mechanist Neoshamanism. This nation may or may not have any connection to the head, and they may not believe themselves to have such a connection, but outsiders do, so they're popularly regarded as the descendants of the Artificer's Litter.

They may in fact be a mechanist revival movement, or actually descendants of the mechanists themselves. Alternatively, instead of being a cohesive group living more or less alongside modern society, they are groups of feral Atavists living in orbital colonies who have convergently developed (or whose founders devised) machine worshiping cults to keep the colony running. These colonies would be violently xenophobic, attacking any approaching craft. The only thing connecting them are these similar religious practices and their status as spacers, so once again they're associated with the Artificer's Litter in the popular imagination.

I've mentioned the concept of feral orbital colonies in the past. Just think of them as every Sci-Fi short story involving generation ships. The crew forgets they're on a ship and believes the craft to be the whole universe. The difference being this is the intended outcome when the colony is founded, so stuff is put in place to help the myth along. There's no way to contact the outside world, and there may be no windows to show there even is an outside world.

Speaking of feral atavists, I've had a story idea in my head for a while that probably won't get realized as I have way too many unfinished stories as is. A human on Sweetwater gets shanghaied by a band of submarine pirates. They happen to have a feral atavist slave on board as well. Feral atavists as a rule have no idea humans exist, so the slave thinks the human is a demon. The slave barely speaks Commonthroat, and the pirates have taken the human's synth so he can't communicate at all. The human and the slave have to learn to communicate so they can escape. etc. etc. Then perhaps the story turns into a Robinsonade as the two end up alone on an island (fixed or floating) and have to survive.

And speaking of Sweetwater and submarines, I think I'm going to go with breathable liquid for divers as I talked about before. Subs have a station that injects the liquid into the lungs and sucks it back out again when the diver returns. The liquid also acts as a sink for CO₂, so no separate scrubber is needed. (One of my hard rules for this setting is no cybernetic implants, and a permanently attached CO₂ scrubber crosses that line IMO). I did mention before that long-term use of this liquid would cause some telltale condition that others use to identify Sweetwater surface dwellers, perhaps it's a persistent cough or a raspy voice.

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