

Rosa Abo, Please Move to the Back of the Bus

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 10 Apr 1999

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Mitchell A. Bailey — 10 Apr 1999, 23:23

In his essay "Roy Trenchard, Homeboy", Robert Borski posits an influx of Annese abos attempting to 'pass' as Terran humans into the cities. The motivation might be to escape genocide by the Terran colonists, particularly the defeated French afraid the English-speaking 'carpetbaggers' would love an excuse to dispossess the French altogether. He quotes Roy's words on this topic: "A farmer thinks: 'Suppose they are men like me after all? That Dupont, he is a clever lawyer. What if they engage him, eh? What if he spoke to the judge--the judge who has no French and hates us--and said, This man you call abo has nothing, but Augier's farm was his family's--you make Augier show us the bill of sale?'"

Here's the rub: Robert goes on to speculate

"...perhaps some uppity Rosa Parks type abo decided to take such a case as Roy outlines to court? Perhaps Rosa Abo even wins."

It just occurred to me that something is a little wrong with that scenario, in spite of its appeal. The problem I have has an "artistic" component, if you will, and also a (negative) textual foundation.

The most central source of tension in the entire book is this question of whether the Annese abos do or ever did exist at all. It is my suspicion that Wolfe did not intend there to be an objective correct answer to this question at all.

For a "Rosa Abo" type case ever to have been tried, particularly after the war, would have resulted in the existence of abos (or perhaps nonexistence, as the case may be) being established as legal fact in case law.

Furthermore, presumably one or the other of the Dr. Marsches would have discovered this case record fairly quickly in research, if it wasn't indeed common knowledge on St. Anne.