

"Hour of Trust" and rape

The Urth list — 5 messages, 2 voices, 03 Feb 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/2916>

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Andy Robertson — 03 Feb 2002, 15:21

----- Original Message -----

From: "Michael Andre-Driussi" <mantis at siriusfiction.com>

It is a tactic to push the soldiers to commit more atrocities (killing white-flag waving civilians, even naked civilians), which will further erode civilian support for the government and boost support for the rebels.

While you are right, I think you are looking at the etherial symbolism and missing the earthy basics of his story.

What are wars fought for?

Wars are fought by men, to obtain power over the bodies of women and their sexual/reproductive potential. Ultimately.

The text focuses on the **women** rebels who take the suicide/flameout route because these are the people who are effectively, devastatingly, negating this, the most basic of male human motivations.

And symbolically proving to the troops who attack them that, even if they win, they will lose.

Notice, the "government" people are at the top of the male power hierarchy. They have women on tap. But in the same way that the grunts are not going to be able to rape any women even if they win, the executives and politicians will not actually improve their Broad Reproductive Success by fucking the models/prostitutes. They have in fact been out-evolved by the women, who get more from the transaction than their male "exploiters".

The whole government side is sterile, an evolutionary dead end.

The trope of the rape of defeated women in war occurs elsewhere in Wolfe. Mora's rape in IGJ, and "When I was Ming The Merciless", are two examples that come immediately to mind.

hartshorn

Michael Andre-Driussi — 09 Feb 2002, 19:07 · follows Andy Robertson

Hartshorn quoted me and wrote:

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Well, yes. There is truth to what you are saying. However, the imp in me is reminded of similar things done comically--was it in ZORBA THE GREEK that the woman determined that the way to world peace was for all the wives of the military men to refuse to have sex with their husbands if they engaged in war?

I don't think "Hour of Trust" is a "war of the sexes" story in the company of such Wolfe works as "In Looking-Glass Castle" and "The Ziggurat." I think it is about History, and historical turning points: we are witnessing a near-future turning point, chaotic and confusing for the people in it, yet clearly a moment that decides the shape of the future. (Again, it is a lot like "The Haunted Boardinghouse.") There are suicide squads, just like the kamikaze pilots of World War Two, but the point is not that they are all women, the point is that they are kamikaze. The fact that some of them are women is an added tinge of horror (as well as necessary foreshadowing for the story's end).

The story is about the fall of (corporate) empire and the triumph of "barbarism and religion." Wolfe is obviously well-aware of the birth of Christianity under similar circumstances--he includes the bald Christian guy among the three Peace people, clearly re-creating an "early martyr slain by Roman soldiers" sort of scene. (And there does seem to be a new cult/religion among the civilian population and the rebels, though how coherent it is remains unclear, likewise how central it is to the rebels.)

Allow me to back up a moment and retrofit context to my original post:

War is an institution. Slavery was/is an institution. These institutions grew out of, evolved from,

situations that were, according to some, worse. (Clearly an "anti-Golden Age" stance.) For example, I've seen it said that Slavery was the merciful alternative to Genocide (active/passive). Likewise War, by its very nature, stayed clear of certain behavior like Genocide and Scorched Earth campaigns--not that they never happened, just that they were recognized as large scale atrocities. War in the Modern Age is built upon this and more: hence the attempted genocide by the Nazis is a shocking descent of a highly civilized nation into pre-civilized barbarism in a very short time span.

So War is a game with rules, as ridiculous and sad as that is. War is an institution, and over time institutions change (sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse: Slavery in the US was worse than slavery in ancient Greece, for example)--they can even be done away with (Slavery abolished in Russian Empire, British Empire, and the US, despite the fact that Industrialization seems to =strengthen= the need for Slavery). But imho the flaming kamikaze hug is not a step towards evolving out of War, rather it is several steps backwards, forcing devolutionary behavior. Turning Modern War into something more like the take-no-prisoners, continental scorched-earth campaigns of the Mongols.

Scorched earth (killing peasants, destroying farming networks) worked rather well for the Mongols--it took centuries if not a chiliad for parts of Asia to recover, and that was what the Mongols wanted: to preserve their nomadic "cowboy" ways against the encroaching fixed-place-dwellers. Scorched earth worked poorly for Hannibal--if he had managed to win against Rome, perhaps it would have been seen as the necessary evil. But since he didn't, it justified the later annihilation of Carthage. (Hannibal's tactic probably also paved the way for Rome's shift from a Republic to a Dictatorship.)

=mantis=

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Andy Robertson — 09 Feb 2002, 18:00 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

----- Original Message -----

From: "Michael Andre-Driussi" <mantis at siriusfiction.com>

The whole government side is sterile, an evolutionary dead end.

The trope of the rape of defeated women in war occurs elsewhere in Wolfe.

Mora's rape in IGJ, and "When I was Ming The Merciless", are two examples that come immediately to mind.

Well, yes. There is truth to what you are saying. However, the imp in me is reminded of similar things done comically--was it in ZORBA THE GREEK that the woman determined that the way to world peace was for all the wives

of the military men to refuse to have sex with their husbands if they engaged in war?

Well, that is a comical story, while "Hour of Trust" is very realistic.

I don't think "Hour of Trust" is a "war of the sexes" story in the company of such Wolfe works as "In Looking-Glass Castle" and "The Ziggurat."

No, it is a war story, with one side having been hopelessly outevolved by the other.

The fact that women captives suicide does not make this a "war of the sexes" story. It simply means that their side, the winning side, has gained a transcendent resolution, and has become

able to step out of the old rules and define new ones under which they are winning.

Government (if it is not blessed by god) becomes a predator upon the nation, a tyrant. Here we have a tale of the government being thrown off by the tactic of preemptively destroying all the "loot". So it seems to me.

The rest of your points are perfectly valid, and indeed do not contradict this.

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So War is a game with rules, as ridiculous and sad as that is.

You know Wolfe's position perfectly well. War must be, in a sinful world. Therefore it had better have rules. War as a game with rules is **better** than war as genocide.

By imagining that we can avoid war, in a fallen universe, we always find ourselves back with war-as-genocide, as the Holocaust, the Gulag, and other equivalently sized genocides in the pursuit of Utopia show.

hartshorn

Michael Andre-Driussi — 09 Feb 2002, 20:51 · follows Andy Robertson

Hartshorn quoted and wrote:

I don't think "Hour of Trust" is a "war of the sexes" story in the company of such Wolfe works as "In Looking-Glass Castle" and "The Ziggurat."

No, it is a war story, with one side having been hopelessly outevolved by the other.

You are banging that evolution gong again. This is where we disagree: I see kamikaze pilots as devolutionary to both sides. You see it as evolutionary, as in the next bit:

The fact that women captives suicide does not make this a "war of the sexes" story. It simply means that their side, the winning side, has gained a transcendent resolution, and has become able to step out of the old rules and define new ones under which they are winning.

Whereas I tried to show that it is devolutionary--if it is not scorched-earth itself, it certainly demands scorched earth in response. I see it as the fanaticism of the medieval assassins, or the kamikaze pilots: transcendent in the Mishima Death Cult way.

If the rebels "win" like the Mongols "won," then, as I alluded in writing about alternate Hannibals, the act might later be seen by History as a necessary evil. (The Mongols won in the short term goal of creating the first world empire; but they lost in that they were culturally absorbed by their enemies.) We know they will win, and we sense that America, then Britain, and finally Europe will enter a new Dark Age as the new religion and new political system work themselves into a new civilization.

Your other point about women as chattal, spoils of war, and reproductive strategies begins to fall apart when it must be made plain that reproduction is for the living, colonizer and colonized alike. Kamikaze do not reproduce--they are far more sterile than whore-mongering fatcats, they are the ultimate in sterility: they are dead.

To get back to the barbarian hordes, Mongol reproduction was served on the genetic level, but lost on the cultural level. Which level really "counts" is different for different people, naturally.

Government (if it is not blessed by god) becomes a predator upon the nation, a tyrant. Here we have a tale of the government being thrown off by the tactic of preemptively destroying all the "loot". So it seems to me.

This is the opposite of Gandhi's Tactic, which was truly a military evolution, and highly successful.

War must be, in a sinful world.

Therefore it had better have rules. War as a game with rules is *better* than war as genocide.

By imagining that we can avoid war, in a fallen universe, we always find ourselves back with war-as-genocide, as the Holocaust, the Gulag, and other equivalently sized genocides in the pursuit of Utopia show.

Now I get confused--I thought you were saying that breaking the rules (waving a white flag, etc., to lure soldiers to death) was =evolutionary=.

=mantis=

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Andy Robertson — 09 Feb 2002, 18:58 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

----- Original Message -----

From: "Michael Andre-Driussi" <mantis at siriusfiction.com>

No, it is a war story, with one side having been hopelessly outevolved by the other.

You are banging that evolution gong again. This is where we disagree: I see kamikaze pilots as devolutionary to both sides.

Oh dear, this is my fault. My background thinking is steeped in Evolutionary psychology.

I didn't mean "evolve" as in "get better". That is not an idea much countenanced today. It is simply a new winning group competitive strategy.

Morally it is indeed far worse - Wolfe is not portraying the rebels as "good", but simply as winners - but I think there is some hint that a new hope may be possible after the rebels have won.

Your other point about women as chattal, spoils of war, and reproductive strategies begins to fall apart when it must be made plain that reproduction is for the living, colonizer and colonized alike.

Yes, but the rebel girls do not kill themselves when they are having orgies with their commune mates, of course. And only a few of them kill themselves. These few are soldiers - sacrificing themselves for their tribe.

Their suicide is a political statement directed at the government troops

****WE ARE ABSOLUTELY SERIOUS. EVEN IF YOU WIN YOU WILL GET NOTHING. OUR RESOLUTION IS TOTAL. HERE, I WILL DEMONSTRATE****

Government (if it is not blessed by god) becomes a predator upon the nation,
a tyrant. Here we have a tale of the government being thrown off by the tactic of preemptively destroying all the "loot". So it seems to me.

This is the opposite of Gandhi's Tactic, which was truly a military evolution, and highly successful.

Agreed,

War must be, in a sinful world.
Therefore it had better have rules. War as a game with rules is *better* than war as genocide.

By imagining that we can avoid war, in a fallen universe, we always find ourselves back with war-as-genocide, as the Holocaust, the Gulag, and other equivalently sized genocides in the pursuit of Utopia show.

Now I get confused--I thought you were saying that breaking the rules (waving a white flag, etc., to lure soldiers to death) was =evolutionary=.

Once more "evolved" in this usage is not the same thing as "good" but rather is "winning".

But perhaps I should have defined my terms more closely on this list, with Teilhard de Chardin lurking ever in the background! My fault.

hartshorn