

More on "Hour of Trust"

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 02 Mar 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3006>

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Adam Stephanides — 02 Mar 2002, 03:14

Further thoughts, taking off from my last post:

If it is indeed the case that the rebels' sole "pitch" to prospective suicide bombers is broadcasting footage of those who have already committed themselves (and the "emcee" in the broadcast we see attempts no other form of persuasion), then American society, not just the government, is in terminal decay: there must be hundreds, maybe thousands, of people ready to throw their lives away, who only need to be shown an example to trigger them off. It's all the more likely, then, that Clio is not in contact with the rebels, but was inspired in the same way by earlier broadcasts. Nor need she share any beliefs with the rebels, since the suicide bombers we hear don't seem to have any beliefs in common.

Pushing the argument further, we can surmise that the reason we hear nothing about the rebels' ideology or program is that they don't have one, just a general desire to change things and a countercultural milieu. The rebels' troops are the same sort of people as the suicide bombers, just a little less aimless. On this reading, then, the rebels are not a new society being born, but a symptom of the old society's decay: in mantis's analogy, they're less like the barbarians than like the Roman mob.

--Adam

Michael Andre-Driussi — 02 Mar 2002, 04:44 · follows Adam Stephanides

Adam Stephanides wrote:

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Right. Technically the rebels cannot possibly be "barbarians" in the classical sense (external non-members), they must be the alienated proletariat. So I apologize for that--there are no barbarians in the story. Their action is therefore a "civil war" in the classical sense (class

warfare) rather than in the regional conflict of US history sense, or perhaps like the slave revolts in classical times. The cult of ken has an "alien" feel to it, but this again is supposition--in any case, barbarisms (imitation of the alien) are often seen as a trait of decay in both the ruling class (modes of dress, hair styles, new religions) as well as the proles (most famously new religions that offer what the rulers are no longer providing), but again, barbarisms do not make proles into barbarians.

"General desire to change things" I would ammend to "change things through violent revolution." Bullets, not ballots.

But yes, in the past when I've said the rebels were using the immolators, I meant it in just the way you have presented it now: that is, I never meant that the immolators were indoctrinated in any way, shape, or form; rather, I meant the immolator behavior is a wave that is being channeled by the rebels for their own purposes. (Maybe as if the castrators of Russia had been somehow used by the Bolsheviks to further the revolution? No, make that the Mensheviks? Constitutional Democrats?)

In any case, it seems to me that immolation tv (iMTV) viewers will in broad terms either be shocked/demoralized or intrigued. Those who are intrigued will either want to be rebels and film those people (join the new movement of the living), or they will want to be immolators themselves (join the new movement of the suicidal).

Re: the rebels and their cause. I'm not so sure. Looking at history, it seems like the (Western) Roman Empire fell to "barbarism and religion," but even the religion side is cloudy: the victorious barbarians had Arianism, which in turn was part of a struggle which Catholicism eventually won. That is: it wasn't like the barbarians rolled in on this year, and then everyone was Christian (Catholic) the next year (or even the next century). The Christian martyrs being fed to the lions were not generally Arians, to my knowledge; the barbarians who sacked Rome and took over Western Europe were Arians; from a distance both groups are Christian, but the "smoothing out" of difference took some time and bloodshed.

My problems with this reading: if Clio has just switched, either today or some other day, then I think the need to nail down what it was and when it happened would be essential. Without this, I cannot see how it is supported except in the General Nihilism way.

(Her coded speech, which I take to be as much a character statement as we can get from her, seems much more pro-rebel than nihilist. Her action is undeniably that of an immolator, and as such it forms a cryptic link between the heretofore separate groups of immolators and rebels.)

(If she had said anything before flaming, like "This is for Flint Michigan!" then many questions would be resolved--maybe not!) :)

Then there is the tricky bit about the immolation device. Even granting General Nihilism, if a novice can whip up the immolation device on her own and use it as easily as deodorant, well that would be an important story detail, too.

(Hey Adam, read "The Blue Mouse" in CASTLE OF DAYS. Come on, please!)

Even after all this discussion on the one short story, I guess I should claim to be both stoned and watching tv (with reference to the Wolfe interview), since otherwise I must be retarded.
<g>

=mantis=

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William Ansley — 02 Mar 2002, 06:39 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

At 8:44 PM -0800 3/1/02, Michael Andre-Driussi wrote:

Even after all this discussion on the one short story, I guess I should claim to be both stoned and watching tv (with reference to the Wolfe interview), since otherwise I must be retarded. <g>

I am glad someone else mentioned this passage from the interview. I found it to be a rather petulant and unnecessary outburst and quite unfair to all of us who are just trying to figure out what's going on in some of Wolfe's stories.

(I should go on to say that Mr. Wolfe is certainly entitled to the occasional petulant outburst, especially at his age, and also that I have a lot of nerve criticizing him for this, since, if you look at the archives of this forum, you will see that I have posted more than my share of petulant outbursts here.)

William (Lotta Nerve) Ansley

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