

Comments on Hour of Trust

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 20 May 2008

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Dave Tallman — 20 May 2008, 15:41

From an interview online Some Moments with the

Magus<<http://www.infinityplus.co.uk/nonfiction/intgw.htm>> :*

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GW: "Hour of Trust" was inspired by a Damon Runyon story, "A Light in France." It's basically an early WWII story, written when most people expected that world war to be much like the first one. (We tend to forget that the first and second world wars were only about twenty-five years apart. We are losing the last WWII veterans; when Hitler's army marched into France, there were still a whole lot of WWI vets around, including Hitler.) Anyway, I read "A Light in France" and started playing with the idea in an SF setting.

General Virdon sounds like "Verdun," a WWI battle notorious for its terrible casualties. The France side went in failing to recognize that the tactics had to be changed from the last war.

Tredgold, the English model agency manager, may be on the side of the rebels. He wears "jade earrings and a (phallic) jade pendant." Rebels wear "exotic, vaguely erotic jewelry." Tredgold may have been the source of the secretary, Clio Morris. She is twice referred to as a "girl," and all the models are called "Tredgold's girls."

The name Morris suggests this line from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, also quoted in *PEACE*: "The Nine Mens Morris is fill'd up with mud."

The early part is full of foreshadowing:

1. Clio is good for lighting things.
2. Force Cougar will be pinned down.
3. Donovan is right that he can be hired by a European firm when America falls.

The starting quote from Proust gives us context to understand how badly the government side is doing. Their forces are clearly a "composite formation of odds and ends" sent in where superior forces have failed.

The next two pages give a description of the hotel suite in excruciating detail. What is the purpose of this? The impression I get is of symmetry and banality. North and south walls are identically blue; east and west walls are glass. There are matching candelabras and pictures flanking the north door, and symmetrical bedrooms to the south. This symmetry is extended to the attendees later on: "Donovan was already deep in conversation with a man who looked so much like himself that he might almost have been talking to a mirror."

In contrast, the rebel side seems to be pure chaotic individualism. No two of the ken-kin have the same philosophy. It's appropriate, because they practice asymmetrical warfare.

The corporate folks are either anonymous, represented by a single last name, or with first and last names nearly identical ("Lou" Lewis). In contrast we have Clio Morris with a complete name, foreshadowing her importance. She also does an individual act unrelated to the presentation -- she opens the drapes "in order to see the stars" (for the last time). This moment is described as being like a principal opera singer entering a market scene, "calling for the thrill of romance or (what is much the same thing) the defense of France."

Clio seems to be a fanatical individualist. She thinks she is striking a blow for a new America where initiative and creativity will be important again. I believe she takes out Peters not because he has the potential to turn things around, but because she sees he will fail and become another Lewis.

"You don't remind me of anyone."

"That's good, because you remind me of somebody, Mr. Peters."

But behind the scenes is Tredgold, wearing the jewelry of the cause to fit in but intent on feathering his nest. His type will take over after the naive idealists have sacrificed themselves. Meet the new boss, same as the old boss.