

5HC: This 'n' that

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 02 Jun 1998

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adam louis stephanides — 02 Jun 1998, 17:17

mantis writes:

I think Robert Borski is probably on to something, in the way that the two texts relate to each other beyond the handwriting issue. This might be the "next level" of meaning and is probably beyond the officer's awareness.

Oh, I agree. I didn't mean to imply that I thought Robert Borski was wrong about the symbolism of the shriek.

Incidentally, I apologize in advance if anything I write duplicates CAVE CANEM. I haven't read it yet, only because I don't know how to decipher texts in doc format and I don't have time at the moment to learn.

Next, I'm not sure in my mind exactly how V.R.T. killed Marsch, or on what day it happened.

You make an interesting argument for the murder taking place on April 12, but I still have to go with the "easy answer" of sometime after April 21.. Your argument depends upon V.R.T. using the heavy rifle from a distance. But I doubt this, for the reasons Robert Borski gives; and also, why would V.R.T. insist on killing Marsch in this way when he could kill him up close when he's sleeping virtually any time, as you yourself state later?

And then there are the changes in handwriting and tone of "Marsch's" entries after April 21, which I still prefer the obvious explanation for.

Why, then, as you ask in a later post, does Wolfe bring up the numbers in the back of the book? They're what first lead the authorities to suspect "Marsch" is a spy. That V.R.T. is carrying them around is his bad luck, just as it's his bad luck that he's a patron of Cave Canem and is there the night the Maitre is murdered, making himself a suspect.

Okay, so we assume the April 21 entries are the last of Marsch. He was killed sometime after that. But the last part of that entry, the part about V.R.T. being uncircumsised and that he will kill them, seems so bizarre and unlike Marsch (and so much like the fantasies of V.R.T. to come later in the journal) that it makes me wonder.

I think Robert Borski's explanation for this is sound.

Can I say now that the "new prisoner" being brought in (p. 251), the fat middle-aged guy, is the bewildered sf author G.R.W.

But surely we're the ones who are bewildered, not Wolfe. I know I am, anyway.

Adam was asking about "A Story." We read it first as the anthropological fiction "reconstruction of a lost world" it purports to be, then we learn that it is the fantasy of a criminal in solitary confinement and questionable sanity. And dubious anthropology.

I think it's still a "reconstruction of a lost world" as well; V.R.T. is genuinely interested in anthropological questions. And while V.R.T.'s credentials may be dubious, his portrayal of the marshmen is very close to David's description of the aborigines' way of life in Mr. Million's lesson (except that in "A Story" it's the Free People and not the marshmen who mate with trees, IIRC).

Robert Borski writes:

Why does VRT kill the abo catgirl? Well, for starters, he's extremely psychosexually-disturbed, having not only a mother who was a prostitute, but he also initially thought she abandoned him because she saw him sexually trysting with a girl. In other words Sigmund Freud could have made him his life's work, and Tony Hopkins would have been the ideal actor to portray him. We also see further evidence of VRT's maladjustment in his consorting with whores at Roncevaux and the Maison du Chien. Likewise at Mde. Duclose's boarding house when he tells us Celestine Etienne does not appear to be masturbating with her candle tonight--later admitting he doesn't "even know this young lady." That he eventually becomes racked with guilt and/or disgust and/or Oedipal angst and kills the girl does not surprise me in the least.

I'm still not persuaded, though I don't want to belabor the point. Upbringings like V.R.T.'s don't necessarily produce murderers outside of Hitchcock movies. It's not uncommon for young single men to "consort with whores," and such consorting seems also to be accepted in Port-Mimizon. His remark about Mlle. Etienne might reflect the influence of his time at Cave Canem.

But the reason I'd like to advance is sexually-charged. Dr. Marsch, I posit, is a homosexual.

I think you've made a breakthrough here.

world to know Dr. Marsch is dead. He also does not dwell on the matter in prison because he himself hating women is tottering psychologically close to latent homosexuality, but is totally in denial.

OTOH, this I'm not convinced of. How would V.R.T. know, even unconsciously, that the instrument he bought is used for circumcisions?

The horizontal configuration includes the current batch of Wolfes, the one Aunt Jeannine can't quite total to five (because she's unaware of who Number Five's sister is).

1. Maitre
2. Aunt Jeannine
3. Number Five
4. David
5. Phaedria

Jeannine includes Mr. Million, just like you do, so that would make Phaedria Number 6 if she really is Number Five's sister. (And why is Jeannine unaware of David's existence until Number Five tells her? I don't recall any evidence that he was kept a secret.)

To Adam Louis Stephanides (who is probably still squirmish about the notion of aliens doing it with humans, Stephen Spielberg's wet-dreams notwithstanding):

You forgot one reason in your otherwise cogent summing up of the abo-human hybridization problem:

As mantis now has me convinced, VRT, the alleged human father of RT, may not be human.

Stay tuned...

You can't leave us hanging like this! Tell us more!

But I also forgot the most obvious reason: that Veil's Hypothesis is true, and that R.T. is indeed non-human along with everybody else except the Wolfes.

Robert Borski (who's still dubious about Superman boinking Lois lane)

I presume you've read Larry Niven's "Man of Steel, Woman of Kleenex."

--Adam