

Dis, Dat and D'Otter

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 05 Jun 1998

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Robert Borski — 05 Jun 1998, 21:36

Oh brother mantis across the great aetheric divide:

The Marsch timeline needs to include the

I-took-up-smoking-got-fat-and-found-a-decent-pogonocure- detail. Much to my dismay, however, the barber mentioned is in Roncevaux, not Laon (my assumption, not yours), where he could have been the special correspondent, Codename Delilah. I also believe the term 'beard' has some sort of connection with the homosexual equivalent of passing; remember the Seinfeld episode where Elaine must act as the girlfriend of her gay friend, so his boss will think he's straight? She's called his *beard.* Wonder if this is relatively new coinage or something Wolfe might have known about, maybe from the sexual underground, home originally to vibe and other such appropriated argot. alga-of-culottes: any clew?

Also, re timelines: they'd work really well as html hyperlinks, but otherwise not sure where to put them. Think I should put them after the most appropriate entry or all in one clump somewhere, like an appendix?

Do you think any of the stuff about circumcision in VRT is meant to play off the fact that Proust was Jewish? (aka VRT: The Secret Journal of Marcel the Moyle.)

I'd like to see VRT schematically broken down someday, but am too lazy to do it myself, at least right away. One approach would place everything in chronological order of event; a separate casting of runes would place everything in order of narrative exegesis; i.e., Victor's childhood reminiscences would come in the section detailing his prison days, near the end of the timeline; Marsch's interviews would link to when he conducted them shortly after arrival, not to the linked recalled times he's recording. Then some sort of flowchart approach needs to be taken, showing exactly what the garrison scenes either precede, interrupt or follow, with arrows then subsequently attempting to gestalt everything together. It is, after all, very challenging to sequence events in a straight line from beginning to end and I think it requires multiples reads. Did for me.

For me, the book's last scene involving the Wolfe clone escaping the silk factory invoked notions of temporal grace and release, of rising above destiny's chains (or helical chains) to a somewhat better fate, comparatively, than being gnawed to death from within by tiny mechanized dandruff (or chromosomal bytes, if you will). Not exactly Bodhisattva or New Jerusalem, but still better than his isogenetic kin back at the House of Wolfe. In this respect said slave somewhat resembles Roy Trenchard, who does not die incarcerated (at least that we know of). So, yes, not everyone's fate is predetermined and those who attempt to live within the boundaries of their universe, as opposed to going the poseur or attempted master-of-the-planet route, might yet survive. Salvation *is* possible. A small grace note of hope in an otherwise fugal dirge.

Hey, you, the guy who's doing the Wolfe recent short story compilation? [Can't find your

name--drat.] Any chance you could somehow widen the scope of your project and attempt to list all of Wolfe's uncollected short fiction for us? I think it would be asset to the group. And then I wouldn't have to keep on being corrected by mantis because I'm more Latro than Severian.

Still puzzling over the most curious bashful hooker scene as well as the one involving the vaginas-for-hire-Algonquin-Round-Table scene with Jeannine and John. V. Marsch. "Tell me, Roxanne: you think a man like Joseph Campbell wore boxers or briefs? Oh, do share."

Lastly then, did you know that in chess, after the first five moves, there are more myriad potential games that can be played than there are atoms in the universe?

I bet Gene Wolfe plays chess.

Robert Borski (who doesn't, preferring the mindfields of this list instead)

m.driussi — 06 Jun 1998, 03:21 · follows Robert Borski

Robert,

Right, the smoking, weight, barber at R--I meant to include that!

Appendix the timeline(s), that's what I think. Dividing the dictionary/concordance from the essays--Terminus Est, if you will.

Re: the weird twinness between V.R.T. and Number Five. V.R.T. has dreams of the labor camp robots killing him (p. 232) at what looks to be the time that Number Five saw the robots go berserk and kill prisoners, three years into his term (p. 77). Makes me wonder what was going on in Number Five's life when V.R.T. sacrificed Dr. Marsch--that would be about four years before the murder of Number Four.

=mantis=