## #25 – The Hand Of Fu Manchu, Sax Rohmer BOOK REVIEW

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## There are even better covers

I was watching the new Netflix sci-fi drama *Altered Carbon* last night, episode four, and was struck with how utterly degenerate modern culture is. The show is basically *Blade Runner 2049: The TV Show*. The production values are eye-poppingly slick so that it feels like a Hollywood blockbuster the whole way through. However, two contrary impulses overcame me while watching:

- 1. This is so sadistically vicious
- 2. This is so mind-numbingly *boring*

How can both feelings co-exist in a single 55-minute episode? Early on the girl cop - a thoroughly loathsome grrrl – is running her mouth with vulgarities at work and then takes offence at a male prisoner being brought in. He's got his hands cuffed behind his back and two burly cops escorting him. So this cunt of a woman stuns him with a cattle prod in the nuts. She assaults the bound prisoner right in front of the entire office.

Rather than beat the shit out of her, or bring her up on charges, or even mildly remonstrate with her, her colleagues just continue with work as usual. This scene seemed meant to let you know she's a tough no-nonsense independent woman. It was simply sadistic.

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The actress is certainly good at portraying a cunt

Later it gets worse. The main character, a Ryan Gosling-a-like, is captured by a shadowy group and then tortured in virtual reality (the twist being he can be tortured to death and revived ad infinitum). These scenes are *outrageously* vicious, sadistic to the extreme that I can't think of a single movie on the notorious <u>1984 "video nasties" list</u> that comes close.

But this is almost-network TV and .... meh!

The rest of the show has a dream-like ambience to it where nobody seems quite real and everything feels underwater. It was then that I figured out what was striking me so oddly about this TV show..... it was a metaphor for the modern rabbit people [1]

Anonymous Conservative has made much hay from the observation that as rabbits drift further into r-selection their amygdala is so withered that they need ever-increasing stimuli to get the dopamine rush they are addicted to. It's like a junkie needing ever more dope. We see this in the pick-up community with lost-soul PUAs getting into ever more depraved sexual practices until they are all hanging out in fetish sex clubs with horrendously unattractive women. We see it with jaded bedroom trolls scouring **LiveLeak** and **BestGore** for stimulation. And we see it in movies with ever-increasing sadistic violence.

It's not absolute *power* that corrupts absolutely. It's the absolute *comfort* you can acquire when you have absolute power. Consider <u>this Thomas Wictor thread</u> for a reference on what absolute leaders get up to. See what <u>this blog is saying about the what bored rich people get up to</u>.

When everything is easy, your amygdala withers and you pursue every more degeneracy for stimulation, and every moment between these hits is utter boredom. It's nihilistic. It's like watching an episode of *Altered Carbon*.

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Beautiful and sadistic

Sax Rohmer's *The Hand Of Fu Manchu* is almost quaint by comparison. It's the fifth of his books and if you haven't heard already, Fu Manchu was the prototype for the James Bond super-villain. Like *Altered Carbon* it too presents a sonanbulistic dreamy world as unofficial detectives haunt a dystopian metropolis where nothing seems quite real and they are constantly on the fringes of a secret world. Whereas *Altered Carbon* has mind-hacking as the narrative device to explain all the confusion, Fu Manchu has opium, hashish and bizarre Chinese elixirs (it was written in 1917). *Altered Carbon* has it's secret society of hitech conspirators whereas Fu Manchu runs the secret Si-Fan group of Chinese and Tibetan spies.

Really, the parallels are quite interesting. *Altered Carbon* is essentially an old-school hard-boiled detective story pasted into a cyberpunk future [2]. The difference is that Sax Rohmer lived in a K-selected world. In his world all of England is united in defence of it's culture and territory. The Yellow Peril is an enemy here and little good comes from letting foreigners in, unlike *Altered Carbon* which wants us to accept a multi-cultural shithole as the norm [3]

Sax Rohmer is also unburdened because he's not writing for an audience of nihilistic thrill-seekers desperately craving an escape from modern life. Everyone in Rohmer's books talks politely, they wear suits, they are punctual, and there are none of the pointless exchanges that pepper modern TV dramas:

Him: Fuck you Her: No, fuck you! Him, No, FUCK YOU!

That's not actually a scene from *Altered Carbon*, by the way.

Comparisons aside, the reason I've now read the first five Fu Manchu books is they present a nice alternative to their contemporaneous Sherlock Holmes stories. Both are puzzling mystery stories set in late Victorian London with a detective and his trusty (but dim-witted) sidekick exploring the secret worlds of conspirators. Arthur Conan Doyle was notable for his crisp well-organised and highly logical manner whereas Sax Rohmer plays up the mystical and the confusing. It seems like Dr Petrie (the narrator) is constantly confused and can't seem to stop putting his foot in it. He's a bumbling fool, unlike Dr Watson who was oafish but never got in Holmes' way. Petrie is *constantly* sabotaging investigations because he's madly in love with a gook in Fu Manchu's employ – in this book he has the deadly Chinese doctor held at gunpoint and lets him go in order to get his gook back **[4]** 

These books are crime fiction done the old-fashioned way. Atmosphere, a cat-and-mouse chase, everyone has a Browning pistol in his suit pocket, and most murders are knifings (and don't happen 'on camera'). There's none of the sadism you see in modern TV.

Back in 1917, people had plenty of other things going on to keep their amygdala busy.

If you like the idea of a mastermind who runs an international empire of nefarious actors who spread across European cities to befuddle and dishonour local women, always one step ahead of the police, you could try <u>Daygame Infinite</u>. Your hypnotic induction into my frame begins there.

[1] That's r-selected idiots, to you

[2] So, yeah, Blade Runner. It even has the Japanese script everywhere and lots of rain

[3] The white male hero lets a Mexican woman tell him what to do in real life, and an African woman tell him what to do in his flashbacks. It's horribly mis-cast and both are just mouthy cunts.

[4] Should've just paid the bar fine, imo

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