

Several things...

The Urth list — 3 messages, 2 voices, 01 Jan 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/1314>

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Alex David Groce — 01 Jan 1999, 16:15

Wow... You head into the hills and lose email for a few weeks, and the list just explodes with stuff...

Anyway, thoughts from holiday reading:

Has anyone ever noticed that THERE ARE DOORS is very close to 1st person? If you replace the word "he" with "I" you have something almost indistinguishable from 1st person. Green is always (as far as I can tell) referred to as "he". I don't think the other males in the book are ever referred to by pronouns. It's very strange--and led me occasionally to mentally replace the "he" and transform it into a Weer/Severian confessional... Any ideas on what this means? It's clearly intentional, because I would think that it simply couldn't be done without conscious effort--not like leaving out the letter "e" or anything, but still--restricting the male pronoun to the protagonist only, and NEVER referring to him by name...

Also, read Chesterton's ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI, and wondered if anyone else found it plausible that Silk's (brief and unsuccessful) career as burglar was inspired in part by St. Francis' attempt to repair a ruined chapel with money stolen from his father--Chesterton concentrates quite a bit on the event and its meanings, and I'm certain Wolfe's read the book... The relevant material is in Chapter IV of the book, especially p. 54 of the Image edition... If it is a source, then Silk really is a very Chesterton-influenced figure (given the obvious Father Brown heritage).

By the way, I found this list's Patrick O'Leary's THE GIFT under the Christmas tree at my house a few days ago (oddly appropriate...) and am eagerly awaiting a chance to delve into it.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." - John 8:32

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Kevin J. Maroney — 04 Jan 1999, 11:42 · follows Alex David Groce

At 04:15 PM 1/1/99 -0500, Alex wrote:

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Any ideas on what this means?

I have the feeling--based on only one reading of the novel; Wolfe's contemporary fantasy novels don't inspire me to re-read them---that "Mr. Green" is not his name. If I recall correctly, the only source for that name was a mental hospital, and as you point out, the narrator strenuously avoids calling him anything other than "he".

Alternately, it may be the case that Green is the first-person narrator of the novel but, due to mental disorders, is disassociated from his own identity to the point where he views events happening to himself as happening to a third party.

Wombat, a.k.a. Kevin Maroney kmaroney at crossover.com Kitchen Staff Supervisor, New York Review of Science Fiction <http://ebbs.english.vt.edu/olp/nyrsf/nyrsf.html>

Alex David Groce — 04 Jan 1999, 14:56 · follows Kevin J. Maroney

On Jan 4, 11:42am, Kevin J. Maroney wrote:

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Hmmm... Despite having heard a good deal before reading it of the ambiguity of TAD, I think it's (for Wolfe especially) very heavily weighted in favor of the alternatte worlds/fantasy explanation, and against the "the guy is nuts" explanation. The name identification (a nice piece of Wolfe dialogue, where the receptionist thinks "Green" is giving her his name when he's answering a question about what the word "viridian" means) does come from the receptionist at the mental health institute, but later, after being called Mr. Green several times, the protagonist wonders how she knew his name--so either it really is his name, or both he and the hospital are confused...

No, contemporary fantasy isn't Wolfe's forte, although I found THERE ARE DOORS much more enjoyable than CASTLEVIEW.

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