

LB: Drugs, escapism, and cycles

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 29 Apr 2000

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Adam Stephanides — 29 Apr 2000, 23:09

Nutria wrote:

[alga wrote]:

And Alice is not a drug user at all (oh, she may have inhaled once or twice, but who hasn't?).

There was some kind of reference toward the end of the novel that George Mouse, Smokey, and the two sisters were getting high in Mouse's apartment. Maybe I mis-read that. I was taking it as a "first step down a risky road" motif. As I said, I wrote my post because I was very unsure of my take on the novel.

That was one of George's false "recollections" when lost in the forest; and even within this delusion, George is the only one who is high (and it's Franz, not Sophie, who is the fourth person present). So it doesn't prove anything. On the other hand, IIRC George at one point gives Smoky and Alice a present of high-quality hash, and there's no indication that she finds the gift unwelcome. So it seems likely that Alice was a recreational drug user. I for one don't hold it against her, and I doubt that Crowley does.

2. More generally, it appeared to me that GWOt has a certain theme, and that taken at face value, LB seems to run in the opposite direction. The caution would be: If you reject the real world and look for a world of fantasy, escape, irresponsibility, etc., you may well find it.

Value judgments aside, I don't think this is accurate as regards either GWOt or LB. The secret society in GWOt weren't trying to escape the real world, they were trying to improve it, misguided as their efforts may have been. And it seems no more justifiable to accuse the Drinkwater clan of "looking for a world of fantasy, escape, irresponsibility" than to accuse the Christian whose eyes are fixed upon Heaven of the same thing. To the Drinkwaters, the world of the Tale is realer than the "real world." (And of course, within the book it's not fantasy at all.) Of course, you can argue that the Drinkwaters' heaven is a false one; but that's a different issue.

And you may think you like it. But in fact it will be a tiny world, a world without real meaning or future, and you will be reduced to merely two-dimensional characters, like cards in a deck.

Personally, I feel the same way about the ending (even aside from the ambiguities I mentioned in my earlier post). I much prefer Smoky's quiet heroism, Auberon and Sylvie's love, and even George's cheerful hedonism to all the future fairy-tale exploits of "Titania" and "Oberon." Whether Crowley feels that way, I don't know, even after rereading the ending. Crowley's vision is broad enough to embrace
both sides.

mantis wrote:

But have you [alga] abandoned the

"multiple worlds within" theory for the much more mainstream "fairy oneworld"? Because clearly the family has =replaced= the fifty-two odd fairies that inhabit that place at the beginning of a cycle: wars and

accidents reduced the fairy population down throughout the age (we are told, iirc) until it is near some unspecified "magic number target" (this is my hunch), at which point it is time for the musical chairs . . .

No, fifty-two is the number of fairies now. ("A Parliament," Book Six, Chapter Two). There were originally many more. And if the number of Drinkwaters who go "in" is indeed fifty-two, which seems likely (fifty-two being an important number in LB) this casts doubt on the "cyclical" theory. So does the assertion, which I seem to recall being somewhere in LB, that the number of doors between worlds is declining over time.

Where did all the "old" fairies go? They went "in" to the next level, where the population limit is much lower!

This, it least, is definitely true (except for the part about the population limit). We see it happening at the end of "Come or Stay" (Book Six, Chap. Five).

It seems that the intersection/interaction of this world and the next is rather like the conjunctions between Blue and Green: cyclical, recurring, eternal.

--Adam