

Spanish Castle Magic

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 10 Jan 2001

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 10 Jan 2001, 10:06

"The Laughing Skull" wrote:

1) Severian's 3 legged dog is named Triskle. The spanish word for sad is 'Triste', very close. If that dog's story isn't sad, I don't know what is

Actually, "triskele" is a standard (if uncommon) English word, which Webster defines as "a figure composed of three usually curved or bent branches radiating from a center." Possibly "triste" (French also) makes a good resonance, though; Wolfe is very resonant...

2) Probably the most recognized is the term Calde, coming from Alcalde, meaning mayor

I'm surprised you didn't also mention "calde," "hot." Certainly the Calde's throne is a hot seat... Another resonance.

3) The word 'Ayuntamiento' in Spanish means "copulation." Seeing as how the cause lots of problems for Silk, could this mean that they're "The Fuckers?"

Interesting. It doubtelss comes from the same root as the term I'd thought of -- "junta," which comes from Lat. "jungere," to join, and is cognate with Eng. "yoke" and so ultimately Sans. "yuga," hence "yoga."

But in fact "ayuntamiento" is simply the Spanish word for a city government; see, for example, the official website for el Ayuntamiento de Madrid, <http://www.munimadrid.es/>, or el Ayuntamiento de la Villa de Breña Alta, Tenerife, <http://www.balta.com/> -- there are many more; do a search for Ayuntamiento on Yahoo! or some other search engine.

I'm sure there are loads more that I've missed, but I'd just like to see what the rest of you thought

It's worth noting that juzgado is also Sp. for "court[house]," but also a panel of judges, and so is the root of the Eng. slang (Amer. western) word "hoosegow."

And Tony Ellis wrote:

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes made some interesting suggestions,

Thank you!

Three key points first:

1. I would like to resurrect Nutria's argument that Casteview is "about perception".

That's a very good point, and one I touched on with my comments about glammers but quite missed as a major theme. Me 'at's off ter th'rat.

2. Tom Stoppard once described "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead" as the dramatic equivalent of driving past Elsinore

castle. [...] you would have no idea from these snapshots what the "real story" was all about. I find that a useful way of thinking about Castlevania.

Yes, I agree -- we do not really know, and I believe we cannot know, what the faery war is actually about. It's part of something bigger and possibly permanent; we see it only as it impinges on the lives of some human and demi-human characters.

3. We see the supernatural characters, which Dan'l Danehy-Oakes usefully identifies as "fey", primarily in terms of late western European mythology, and particularly Arthurian mythology.

And bad science fiction, and monster movies, and Westerns, and (as you point out) urban legend -- at least.

In the fine Wolfe short story "A Cabin On the Coast" a pipe-smoking leprechaun tells the protagonist "Would ye like to see me as a tiny green man wi' horns like a snail's? I can do that too."

Good connect. That story does a lot to clarify how Faerie appear in things Wolfish.

Who is Lucie?

A tenant of Meadow Grass who has been turned into a vampire.

I'm not sure that's all that clear -- I had the impression there was something more/less about her from the beginning. But then... this works.

What's all the business with the organ playing in the museum?

I can't improve on Dan'l's "cool effects?" With its insanely, ludicrously frenetic pace, and magically-transformed cats, I don't think this is a book we are supposed to take -too- seriously.

Thank you. I think Wolfe was trying to write a fun book, and largely succeeded. It has several characteristics kind of uncharacteristic of Wolfe -- notably, the very short timeframe in which the action takes place, and the frenetic, non-stop action. Things happen as fast here as they do in TERMINATOR 2, and (as in T2) I think part of the intention is to keep things moving so fast that the audience doesn't have time to do much thinking until the whole thing's over (though, this being GW, I doubt that this is done for purpose of keeping us from noticing massive plot holes).

Viviane Morgan appears to be Vivian *and* Morgan le Fay. How does she manage to be both?

Because these are just our personifications of the same supernatural being.

... whatever "the same" means in this context. Again, I suggest that identity is a little wonky on the other side of the meadow.

--Dan'l