

DOORS: More questions and thoughts

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 04 Jan 2003

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StoneOx17 — 04 Jan 2003, 22:43

I've finished my rereading of There are Doors, and know the answers to some of the questions I asked in my previous post. Here are some answers and some more questions.

The discrepancy in time between the two worlds seems fairly clear. Green goes to the other world, and stays there three or four days (depending on how long he was unconscious after his fall) while 33 days pass here. He comes back, stays around 44 months, by my count, while four months pass there. So it looks like he was there three days, and time flows in a ratio of eleven to one. This fits with North believing that Nixon should still be president here, when it seems to be the mid-eighties (TAD was published in 1988, and takes place after the Bell system was broken up in 1984). This time flow doesn't gibe with Lara taking Green into the other world through a "door into summer" (that has to be a nod to Heinlein) in their walk through the park, but maybe goddesses don't have to play by the rules. For all we know, it could have been a door into this world's summer.

The hero's last name is Green. His first name is either Billy or Adam - there's evidence for both. Which one?

I asked "Are there any references to other Wolfe books [besides Peace]?" Maybe. Doctor Pille was originally named Di, but changed it for the obvious reason, a possible reference to "The Island of Dr. Death and Other Stories."

For a while I thought the explanation for the Kafkaesque episode when Green is locked out of the hotel was extremely simple -- that North had already checked out, so the management didn't think anybody was staying there any longer -- rather than Fanny's more complicated explanation of "a man protecting a man." I still like my explanation, but unfortunately it doesn't quite seem to fit with North's signed confession at the end. What exactly happened?

There are a number of things I think are references to the myth of Attis and Cybele. Attis was dead for three days (as was Christ), which he spent in the underworld; Green spends three days (their time) in the other world. Green's assumed name - that North gives him upon checking into the Grand Hotel - is Pine. Pine trees are prominent in the cult of Attis (Attis mutilated himself under one). Finally, Attis's death and rebirth are associated with the renewal of life in the spring, and most of this book takes place in the winter (their world), with spring coming at the end.

Most frustratingly, I still don't understand what's going on with Green's mother, but I remain convinced it's important. Is this also connected with the Attis mythology? I looked on the web, and there are apparently a number of different accounts of Attis's parents (or mother -- in some he doesn't have a father). I don't know the mythology well enough to know which version Wolfe would likely have in mind.

Stone Ox