

DOORS: Overwood as Avalon

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 15 Jan 2003

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 15 Jan 2003, 05:27

Shell quoted me and wrote:

<<In making this choice, while he is being true to himself and his dream, he is also paradoxically conforming to Overworld: where men die for Love.>>

I'm not sure why he would die. He can have sexual relations with a woman and live even in the other world -- Fanny herself remarked as such. So why would it be death to follow the goddess? I have only read TAD once but must have missed that part, I trust your keen eye to have picked it up but where is this reference?

In the big "White Goddess" pattern of Robert Graves, the goddess has a place out west (direction of sunset, i.e., place where sun dies) that mortals cannot visit. It is appleland, because apples are hers (they are hers probably because of the five-pointed pattern of the seeds in an apple core -- note the five-street intersection that plays such an axial role in TAD), it is the Hesperides, land of golden apples, it is Avalon, and others.

The hero first hears about Overwood from the doll surgeon. Then he asks the red faced man (a drunk?) and he mentions Marea as the town nearest Overwood, suggests the hero get a map at the place across the street. Getting the map, he tries to buy it, but the bills (hmmm) are seen as counterfeit and he is chased. In retrospect it shows that men who ask for a map to Overwood are going to be arrested, maybe "for their own good."

Anyway, later on (ch 6) he is talking to Eddie Walsh about Joe Joseph, the fighter, and how Joe is under pressure from his wife Jennifer. Walsh admits he sometimes wishes that Jennifer would get hit by a truck, but also knows that if that happened it would be even worse for Joe. The hero says "[Joe] Might kill himself" and Walsh says "Not with liquor . . . [he would go] Out west someplace." The hero, fishing for clues, asks "Somewhere around Manea?" and Walsh says "Yeah." This establishes that Overwood is the place where heartbroken men go to crawl in a hole and die.

In the next chapter (ch 7), North tells him: "There's a big place out west that's sacred to her [the goddess] -- ten thousand square miles . . . Nobody can live out there. Nobody's even supposed to go into it." This suggests that Overwood has some sort of death-dealing police force.

When the hero was trying to avoid police, he joined a parade. When the pretty woman on the ice float gestured for him to come through the rose arch into her camper hut, he did. Then he had to flee for his life, and he got a concussion and woke up in the hospital. In the hospital he had a dream/vision of a rose arch and the goddess, and he was filled with dread (ch 7). He has learned to read the signs of this strange world. Later on he is looking at his stolen map of Overwood, and among other locations on the map he sees "Goddess's Pleasure Garden, and there was a gray stone arch in the center smothered in flowers. Recalling that arch from his dream, he shivered." Overwood is a place of death.

Finally, note that one of North's names is "Ted West." (As for what his real Visitor World name

is, his tatoo "RN" makes it seem like "Richard North" might be the real one.)

It seems like Overwood is in California. Or maybe Hollywood? Or outside of California, maybe "Sierra Madre," since it seems to be in the mountains (and madre is "mother").

Another piece of the Graves "White Goddess" deal is that there is almost always a triangle: the goddess and two men who are fighting each other for her. IIRC the men are symbolically represented as a star and a serpent. Sometimes one wins, sometimes the other wins; she gives birth to a reincarnation of the loser and it cycles 'round and 'round again. So I would not be surprised if in Wolfe's version for TAD the one is always named William and the other is named Pat Garrett -- er, Adam.

(Having writ that, still I must stress that someone trying to kill the goddess herself is not one of the rival twins -- that would be the thunder god coming in from the hinterland trying to break up the urban ordered universe. The bringer of the patriarchy, in other words.)

=mantis=