

# Doors: opening the man trap

The Urth list — 4 messages, 4 voices, 16 Jan 2003

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3762>

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maa32 — 16 Jan 2003, 18:19

I have a hard time accepting that Wolfe would ever be sympathetic to a feminine point of view, especially when attempting to equate the moral stance of the novel *There Are Doors* with a perspective analogous to Graves.

The very premise of the novel is that sex with a woman can kill you dead, dead, dead. Is reproduction worth it? Of course Mr. Green wants the goddess.

Perhaps choosing earthly love is bad if it could kill you. He is an ordinary man who cannot free himself from the ordinary entrapment - the flowering stigma of the goddess, which exists only to trap his pollen. I see the novel as the failure of ordinary men to overcome the sexual drive. While love might be worth it, the love Wolfe talks about is not necessarily sexual in nature. I think.

Mr. Green is just kind of dumb.

Marc Aramini

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 16 Jan 2003, 18:33 · follows maa32

Marc wrote:

Mr. Green is just kind of dumb.

Bingo.

In Wolfe's words, from that same interview:

"He is kind of dumb, but he is a nice guy...

"In *There Are Doors* I wanted to do something that I think has only rarely been done. It certainly has been done, but it isn't done very often. I wanted to present a protagonist who isn't very intelligent. Green isn't. He has almost no virtues. By that I don't mean that he has many vices, but he is not outstanding in any good way. He is a man of very limited intelligence, not terribly courageous, not terribly energetic or enterprising or any of those other things. He is the sort of man who would be quite content to work all his life in a dead end job and never try to get very far outside of that..."

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cilluff1 at optonline.net — 16 Jan 2003, 18:39 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Marc Aramini wrote of Mr. Green and TAD:

<<He is an ordinary

man who cannot free himself from the ordinary entrapment - the flowering stigma of the goddess, which exists only to trap his pollen. I see the novel as the failure of ordinary men to overcome the sexual drive. While love might be worth it, the love Wolfe talks about is not necessarily sexual in nature. I think.

Mr. Green is just kind of dumb.>>

FWIW, Mr. Green is intentionally written by GW to be kind of dumb. In an interview with James Jordon Wolfe describes Green this way:

"In *There Are Doors* I wanted to do something that I think has only rarely been done. It certainly has been done, but it isn't done very often. I wanted to present a protagonist who isn't very intelligent. Green isn't. He has almost no virtues. By that I don't mean that he has many vices, but he is not outstanding in any good way. He is a man of very limited intelligence, not terribly courageous, not terribly energetic or enterprising or any of those other things. He is the sort of man who would be quite content to work all his life in a dead end job and never try to get very far outside of that---except that he meets Laura. That is what changes him. Laura is looking for lovers, but Green is looking for love and he has found it, or he thinks he has found it. And whether she loves him or not, he loves her enormously. He can deal with the idea that she doesn't love him, that she doesn't have any particular feeling for him. It makes no difference to him; he still loves her."

So, according to GW, Green IS indeed fairly dumb, but it is not sexual drive, but love, that captivates him.

Despite Mantis' excellent literary analysis I respectfully disagree that Green is going to his death at the end of TAD. Mantis had sold me on it until I re-read the GW/JJ interview, which, although unspecific, does not sound like a man going to his death:

"JJ: At the end of the novel Green goes off in pursuit of Laura in Manea near Overwood, and that leaves the novel open. Do you intend to come back to it?

GW: I might. I didn't intend to go back to it at the time I wrote it. JJ: Does he make any mistake running after her?

GW: Oh no, no. I don't think he's making a mistake. I think he is making a great correct decision of his life, which is to go after such love as he sees.

JJ: Even if what is there at the end is likely to be hollow? Because she doesn't really love, does she? She just wants lovers.

GW: But how is going to be at the end, and how much is that going to matter to him? He has found something to love. I think the trouble with a whole lot of people in this world is that there is nothing at all that they care deeply about. And it is certainly the trouble with Green. But now he has found something to care deeply about and he is making the correct decision. He has not made the mistake of saying, "It is too much trouble and so I'm not going to do it." I have a friend named Paul Marksa who is only a little bit younger than I am. I am 61. Paul must be about 50. And he is training now to be a missionary and he is going to go most likely into South America and do missionary work. And I think he is absolutely right. I know Paul, and he has finally found what he needed to find all his life and he is making the right decision. It is not going to be comfortable and it might be painful, and it is darn hard for a man his age to throw off everything and start studying all the things he has to study in order to be ordained in his church, the Church of Christ, and become a missionary, but that is what he is going to do. That is the right decision for him."

Nowhere is Green going to his death mentioned, as one would expect, but Wolfe's reading here

seems to suggest he simply is pursuing what ultimately will be unrequited love despite the great sex.

-- Shell

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Alice K. Turner — 17 Jan 2003, 02:01 · follows cilluff1 at optonline.net

Shell quoted a Rodentoid interview with GW:

"...Laura is looking for lovers, but Green is looking for love and he has found it, or he thinks he has found it. And whether she loves him or not, he loves her enormously. He can deal with the idea that she doesn't love him, that she doesn't have any particular feeling for him. It makes no difference to him; he still loves her."

snip snip

"He has found something to love. I think the trouble with a whole lot of people in this world is that there is nothing at all that they care deeply about. And it is certainly the trouble with Green. But now he has found something to care deeply about and he is making the correct decision. He has not made the mistake of saying, "It is too much trouble and so I'm not going to do it."

Nowhere is Green going to his death mentioned, as one would expect, but Wolfe's reading here seems to suggest he simply is pursuing what ultimately will be unrequited love despite the great sex.

I have no intention of reading Doors again, but this is also a description of Silk and Hy.