

Doors:the Goddess

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 16 Jan 2003

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James Wynn — 16 Jan 2003, 18:43

Two responses.....

Marc says:

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.

Crush responds:

In the Wolfe interview with James Jordan that Mantis referenced (<http://www.op.net/~pduggan/wolfebj.html>) Wolfe says the following...

"People always fault me on it by saying I did not work out what a world would be like in which men died after intercourse, but I feel that I did."

"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."

This was sent yesterday (but seems to have been lost in the ether:

Roy responding to Mantis:

You have noted *Graves'* position vis-a-vis earth and sky; needless to say, *Graves'* sympathies were with the goddess. *Wolfe's*, needless to say, are with the other side. That being so, North, the wannabe goddess-killer, would be, in effect, in the service of the God of the Bible. Green, following the goddess, would be lusting after the very sort of figure that the Old Testament prophets were forever railing against.

That would make North a good guy, Green a bad guy, in *Wolfe's* cosmology, wouldn't it? How can this reading square with *Wolfe's* known religious views, and his own opinion that *THERE ARE DOORS* is his best book?

Crush butts in:

IMO, Wolfe enamored with Graves' White Goddess is a foregone conclusion -- trackable over several novels and series. So the question is "What does Graves' White Goddess mean to Wolfe considering his Christianity".

Soooo, here I go:

Wolfe almost always presents the Goddess stand-ins as generally in league with his protagonists (in the Soldier series there's some ambiguity here). In the Long Sun, the Goddess' aspect as Love (Kypris/Aphrodite) is the Vironese/Pagan image of the Outsider/Christian God --- the image selected by the Outsider for himself.

Now, consider that Wolfe himself came to his conversion by ****first**** falling in love with his eventual wife, Rosemary.

Perhaps Wolfe believes that God drew him to Himself through something so sublunary (pun intended) as romantic love. Perhaps that is the story he is telling over and over through Graves' White Goddess.

-- Crush