

DOORS: men and goddess

The Urth list — 6 messages, 6 voices, 31 Jan 2003

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3825>

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Roy C. Lackey — 31 Jan 2003, 08:31

mantis wrote:

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You would think so, but if you look back at the total of Otherworld individuals noted by Green you'll find that the majority are males. (Red-faced man on street, clerk in doll hospital, mounted policeman, men in mental ward, Sheng, Pille, conspirators, W.F., boxers, cop and firemen after explosion, hotel clerk and bellboy, Mama's sons, Klamm's bodyguards, prop man at theater, both taxi drivers, etc. And most of the females Green noted were in traditional female jobs--nurses, waitresses, clerks, hairdresser. I don't know what this means for Otherworld society, but there it is.

The ice queen, ah. My view of her is changing . . . today I see her, and all the doll-attackers as following a model of the goddess which just happens to be wrong, according to the goddess herself. That is to say: the ice queen is enacting the behavior of Cybele, and the stained glass that Roy was bugged by (sorry Roy, the short answer was "Love-goddess-with-spear is far more ancient than Greek myths -- it is more like Ishtar and those other fierce Middle Eastern goddesses of Love & War") is an example of the wrong model being enshrined. Because Cybele loved Attis and became insanely jealous when he fell in love with a mortal princess, so she caused his insanity, which made him cut himself: but in TAD Lara says this was all a mistake and misunderstood, which I take to mean that Lara is more like Aphrodite, and the Otherworld church is focused on Cybele.

[snip]

I dunno. Fanny's excitement is very odd to me . . . it marks her, somehow, but as what? A visitor, maybe. Or an Aphrodite devotee in a world of Cybele worshippers. (Oops, these two options aren't that different.)

Right; the two are one. If we *must* peg TAD to THE WHITE GODDESS (a point I'm not willing to concede; Wolfe has admitted to not even finishing reading stories/books he was passing judgement on for some contest; I find the prospect of him plodding through such a tiresome tome of tortured scholarship for so little reward to be incredible), then we must look at the larger picture of the Goddess as Graves (and his ilk, such as dear old Joe Campbell <g>) saw her. From virginal nymph to hideous crone and every stage in between, she is *the* goddess. There's only one. If Wolfe didn't write TAD with that in mind, then he wasn't taking his cues from Graves.

Chapter XXXIV of Frazer's THE GOLDEN BOUGH (abridged, one-volume edition) is instructive. There may be found, in the Attis rituals, music such as that noted by Green at the parade, as well as mention of the everGreen pine-tree, and even priests of Cybele with "little images suspended on their breasts", mindful of Sheng's root. Green was at the tail-end of the parade;

who knows what had gone before?

Green knew only the Aphrodite persona of Lara. She showed signs of the bitch-goddess, and she hinted at her darker side at lunch, but Green was either oblivious or hadn't thought it through. Lora *Master*man, indeed. She seems to have cared even more for Captain Billy than Green, yet . . .

"How long did you stay with him?"

"Until he sailed. By that time I had fallen ill and had to be left behind." (279)

Wolfe says it only that one time. Goddesses don't get sick, unless it's 'morning sickness'.

-Roy

Michael Andre-Driussi — 31 Jan 2003, 17:25 · follows Roy C. Lackey

Roy Lackey wrote:

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Yep. If this is "The Planet of the Apes," then where are all the "apes"?! Could it be that the capital city of the nation has a high concentration of a numerical minority?

Roy quoted me and wrote:

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Oops, I was trying to avoid that misreading! I meant that "a Visitor" and "an Aphrodite worshipper" would be virtually identical in the hypothetical Cybele-world.

That Cybele and Aphrodite are the same is a different statement which I'll address next.

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Graves often shows three, and they usually come in this order:

- 1) white goddess (crecent moon waxing) the love goddess
- 2) red goddess (full moon) the mother goddess
- 3) black goddess (new moon) the death and prophesy goddess

Green himself intuits three in chapter 7, titled "Lara, Tina, and Marcella":

- 1) dark scent amber, sultry, spice: Marcella (light red hair)
- 2) daring, seductive, ravishing: Lara (dark red hair)

3) light scent ripe pears and apples, a pink flower: Tina (dark red hair)

It might just be my own idiosyncrasy, but I do not see the Graves list and the Green list lining up: in the Green list I do not see a mother or a crone, I only see the white goddess in three aspects (from oldest to youngest). If you want to say that Tina is virginal nymph and Marcella is black goddess of deathland, I guess you can do that, but then you'd be going along with my Overwood = Deathland thing. <g> (And I find it hard to consider Lara as a red goddess, despite her hair color. <g>)

Lara has all sorts of pseudonyms, and she doesn't flinch when Green says she is Marcella and she is Tina (but Tina flinches). Yet Lara claims to be not Cybele as we know Cybele.

Maybe it is just me, but I see a rather large difference between a Love Goddess (Aphrodite) and a Fertility Goddess (Cybele), even as I recognize that both lend themselves to orgiastic celebrations. If the focus is on Babies, then imho she is a Mother Goddess (a red goddess), and what we see of Otherworld is built upon babies and Mother Goddess and not Love.

Since Wolfe seems to have an interest in battles between different goddesses, it is perhaps too easy for me to think along these lines.

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Hmmmm. To anticipate: you mean that the parade started off with the black goddess, then had the red goddess, and finally the snow-white goddess?

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A few points. Even while I argue above there is a difference between such similar goddesses as Cybele and Aphrodite, still I want no one to mistakenly think that I'm claiming Aphrodite is infertile or a pre-mother

-- she has had children (Eros/Cupid and Hermaphrodite being only two), but that detail did not/does not change her sphere from Love to Motherhood or Fertility. So Lara could have been pregnant by Captain Billy and in my book she would still be Aphrodite, not Cybele, as I'm making the distinction between them.

FWIW I don't think that Lara was really sick. The text is pretty clear about how Lara works -- she finds the guy, she shows him a wild time, she leaves him "sad and alone on the cold hill side" (to paraphrase "La Belle Dame sans Merci"). What happens next is up to the man: he can "pine" away and die of anguish (like Attis, like the nameless knight of "La Belle Dame," and I presume like Captain Billy), or he can follow Lara into the deadly hedge maze, a labyrinth in which she always dances a few steps ahead.

When Lara says she didn't want Attis to die, I take it as (possibly) meaning not that she wanted him to be immortal (i.e., he would never die), but rather she did not want him to follow her into the deadly maze (where he would die sooner in life than if he stayed on Earth), so she purposefully did not give him the hints on how to find the doors. Then he cut himself and she was upset.

=mantis=

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cilluff1 at optonline.net — 31 Jan 2003, 17:39 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

Mantis postulated about Roy Lackey's observation that Green met mostly men in Otherworld:

<<<Yep. If this is "The Planet of the Apes," then where are all the "apes"?! Could it be that the capital city of the nation has a high concentration of a numerical minority?

...or just that, as in the real world, members of the lower class (in Otherworld determined by gender, not \$\$\$) mostly are responsible for doing society's menial jobs.

Wolfe in that now-famous interview went on record as saying that he didn't think there would be that many differences between a goddess-driven world and our own, and that more likely is why there's no real rhyme or reason to how many men Green meets.

- Shell

Jeff Wilson — 01 Feb 2003, 03:35 · follows cilluff1 at optonline.net

From:

"Roy C. Lackey" <rclackey at stic.net>

mantis wrote:

So in Otherworld most men die between the age of 14 and 21, let's say. Any man who survives beyond these years is either asexual or possesses an iron will or is simply too frightened. And the breeding population isn't a minority, it is just that the men are winnowed out so early that adult men are a numerical minority.

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There may be more reproductional derrangements in the Otherworld than is spelled out. It's possible that many men and women are infertile or lacking in libido, some or all of the time, or perhaps all of either sex could be "ready" only for a small period of time, or go through a period

of unreadiness and then are ready from then on. This would explain there being numerous men and women present in non-reproductive roles, the parade as a means of hooking up newly ready women with newly ready men, and the dolls as kind of coxer for boys who are slow in showing signs of getting ready, or as a secondary service; if they can't serve as a father, they can serve the Goddess. It's also possible that a single man can fertilize multiple women; either by artificial insemination, dividing the single sample, or, since according to the play, the man doesn't die immediately, by multiple ejaculations before death. The dying state doesn't seem erotically conducive, but electroejaculation is a possibility....

Jeff Wilson

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Tami Whitehead — 01 Feb 2003, 05:50 · follows Jeff Wilson

As I said before, after reading Doors, I just sat and scratched my head for several days. It took 3 Star Trek novellas to purge my grey matter and bring me back to sense of normalcy (an entirely subjective state for me, and if I seek it, then I am truly sick <wink>)...be that as it may...

Sex without women in This World usually leads to varying stages of homosexual behavior. Why not in Otherworld? (And Wolfe is not above using homosexual behavior in his tales, as in Latro's little faun boy that the Spartan general was hot for) Guys may have to adapt, but they rarely go without...

And what about masturbation? If it were me, and my life were on the line, I think I could get by quite well, er, manually.

I think there is something else going on. I think it has less to do with ejaculation and more to do with actual congress, so to speak, with the Goddess or her handmaidens. Someone else suggested I think that the Act was more to do with giving oneself to the Goddess much as Attis did, with knowledge of what would be required in return, and with the Goddess pitying him even though she still required it (ok, chicks are weird, and I can say that because I am a chick, and always pleased when men are willing to die to sleep with me. I am just not that strict in enforcing it <wicked grin>This is just a guess. But I do think it has more to do with the "giving" of the sacrifice to the Goddess than having sex with regular women, sorta. Then again, I am just guessing. I like to think I understand about the Goddess Consuming, but then again...

Tami

--- Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:

From:

"Roy C. Lackey" <rclackey at stic.net>

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Adam Stephanides — 03 Feb 2003, 22:43 · follows Tami Whitehead

on 1/31/03 2:31 AM, Roy C. Lackey at rclackey at stic.net wrote:
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It's odd, but there are some considerations which make it more plausible. For one thing, for every dead father there's a woman who is a mother, and probably a mother with one or more young children. So a lot of women are presumably at home with their children. For another, Fanny tells Green: "Nature ... gave you men more strength than most women, and what's much more important, more drive, more ambition." (151) I imagine Wolfe would agree with this sentiment. And then the bits of Otherworld we see through Green's eyes are hardly representative of Otherworld society as a whole: a psychiatric ward, a boxing arena, a theater where subversive plays are performed, and various marginal enterprises. (As I remarked before, we hardly see any children, though there must be loads of them.)

I suspect that Wolfe's own attitudes towards women also have something to do with their relative absence.

--Adam