

Dr. Island on WolfeWiki

The Urth list — 3 messages, 2 voices, 28 Jul 2007

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4891>

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Matthew Groves — 28 Jul 2007, 21:22

We have been working on the entry for "The Death of Dr. Island" on WolfeWiki. It's only begun, really, but it could use input from contributors with a background in mythology, or a knowledge of the poems, especially Enoch Arden and Il Penseroso. Or someone with a background in abnormal psychology or brain science. Or someone who can talk about the physics of the Dr. Island satellite habitat, and all that sciencey stuff. Or just someone who likes this story. It's one of those masterpieces of Wolfe's short fiction that seem to resonate thematically with all his other major works.

Matthew Keeley — 28 Jul 2007, 23:19 · in reply to Matthew Groves

I really don't know too much about Dr. Island, having read it only once, but I might be able to help out just a bit on "Il Penseroso." The main character of "The Death of Dr. Island" has a split brain and two personalities, while "Il Penseroso" is a companion piece to Milton's earlier "L'Allegro." "Il Penseroso" discusses the enjoyment of melancholy, while the speaker of "L'Allegro" is more conventionally "happy" (not really the right word I'm afraid). Essentially, the two poems form a dialectic or polemic (I get the impression that Milton himself preferred the worldview expressed in "Il Penseroso"). I'll try and take another look at the poems in the next few days; I'm writing this from memory, and it's been about a year and a half since I've taken a close look at either poem. In any case, count me in.

-Matt

On 7/28/07, Matthew Groves <matthewalangroves at gmail.com> wrote:

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Matthew Groves — 29 Jul 2007, 04:04 · follows Matthew Keeley

Matt Keeley wrote:

The main character

of "The Death of Dr. Island" has a split brain and two personalities, while

"Il Penseroso" is a companion piece to Milton's earlier "L'Allegro."

Excellent! I knew about the poetic pairing but I didn't connect it to Nicholas's divided brain (one of which is *silent* while the other does the talking!). Also, I should have linked to the page on DoDI:

<http://www.holkar.net/pmwiki/pmwiki.php?n=Stories.TheDeathOfDrIsland>

As I say, it's just a beginning, but I think if we can get some people together with a little expertise in the areas I listed, we could really make some headway on interpreting this story.

Matt G.