

PEACE: Labyrinth

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 07 Jul 2009

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Christopher Keiser — 07 Jul 2009, 17:20

Mantis, way back in 2000, provided a wonderful clue (he he) regarding Weer's mansion.

"The House of the Axe" is the literal translation of Labyrinth, iirc. So Wolfe is signaling that Den is at the entrance to a maze . . . well, =obviously= . . . and Wolfe also has a track-record of mixing up Daedalus (labyrinth maker) with Minotaur (labyrinth monster/inhabitant) with Theseus (labyrinth visitor).

Following up on this, I discovered that "palace of the double-axe" is the full meaning of Labyrinth. The labrys ("double-edged axe") symbolized power, or royalty in Cretan art and architecture.

This sheds some light on the text. The issue of Weer's inability to wield the double headed axe, as described in the first few pages, may also symbolize his loss of power and vitality. He has strength enough to use only Bunting's single-edged axe.

Also of interest is Mantis's statement "and Wolfe also has a track-record of mixing up Daedalus (labyrinth maker) with Minotaur (labyrinth monster/inhabitant) with Theseus (labyrinth visitor)."

In the case of PEACE, Weer is definitely the creator of his memory mansion (maze) and the visitor, lost and confused in the maze. Is he also the monster in the maze?

Chris Keiser

James Wynn — 07 Jul 2009, 17:53 · in reply to Christopher Keiser

In the case of PEACE, Weer is definitely the creator of his memory mansion (maze) and the visitor, lost and confused in the maze. Is he also the monster in the maze?

Well, Daedalus was also lost in in own maze. Weer might be Theseus if Sherry Gold is Aphrodite, I suppose. But if Weer is also the Minotaur, where are the virgins sacrificed to him? If Sherry's father is King Minos then the Minotaur is the hidden treasure.

Stephen Hoy — 09 Jul 2009, 15:52 · in reply to James Wynn

Try this idea on for size: Gold's story about Venus as fake is artistic invention, acting as an entertaining distraction not much different from Weer's unrevealed story of Napoleon's pose.

The inside story of the discovery of the Venus de Milo can be found in Disarmed by Gregory Curtis; bottom line, the statue is genuine. If money were the object of the forgery, we can quickly calculate that Gold's premise doesn't add up. The French purchased the Venus de Milo fragments for 750 francs from the farmer who discovered it, with another 250 francs presented to the primates of Melos to help them justify reneging on a sale to a Turkish dragoman. By comparison, Canova's marble statue of Napoleon as Mars was obtained by the Duke of

Wellington for roughly 375,000 francs.

So what's the point in having Gold toss out his story? Probably commentary on Wolfe's creative process, a touch of "the whole being greater than the sum of its parts" added to "re-shaping existing stories."

I've seen suggestions that the Venus statue represents the armless Mrs. Turner or Aphrodite Pandemos Sherry Gold, but I'll make a case for Lois Arbuthnot as Venus/Aphrodite. The Venus de Milo is paired in the text with the Napoleon figurine; the surname Arbuthnot links to Napoleon via Harriet Arbuthnot, the diarist who was the closest female friend of the Iron Duke who commanded the allied forces at Waterloo.

Wolfe punningly connects Arbuthnot with the statue when he has Weer disarm her. There's even a scene where Lois--tipsy with alcohol--removes her upper garments and topples over, mimicking the statue.