

A Solar Labyrinth: Dialing

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 05 Jul 1998

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Robert Borski — 05 Jul 1998, 22:04

While I think William Ansley's rebuttal of my tv-as-labyrinth theory was well argued, and I enjoyed prion's alternate intpretation, I still feel compelled to quote the following from Gene Wolfe's Introduction to STOREYS FROM THE OLD HOTEL:

"'A Solar Labyrinth' is another favorite. Labyrinths seem to fascinate just about everyone, and for a while I was almost equally interested in what used to be called dialing."

"Dialing," for those who of us who first came to tv in the late 40s/early 50s, involved the manual tuning in of a television station, which in those days, before the advent of remotes and solid-state electronics and broadcasting standards, had to be done by hand on a station-by-station basis--very similar to how radio still is on occasion, when you have to nudge the selection dial to pick it up better. Sometimes as well the channels would drift, and you would have to retune them, and sometimes you just plain couldn't dial them back in at all, so you'd often miss the end or beginning of your program.

We don't call it dialing it any more (although the construction of sun dials is **still** called that), because it's been made obsolete by technology.

Not that I'd expect any of you "kids" to know that, of course.

Grampa Scolex (who, yes, still misses the old days)

William H. Ansley — 06 Jul 1998, 01:20 · follows Robert Borski

Robert Borski wrote:

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Hi, Robert.

I hope you realize that I am not going to take anything you post to this list seriously ever again. I mean, you *know* you are not going to convince me that Wolfe meant "manual tuning in of a television station" by dialing (assuming *anyone* ever did). You even give the only reasonable interpretation ("the construction of sun dials") in your post, which I've quoted above. If we are going to go with less likely possibilities, why not dialing the telephone? (I am old enough to remember when *phones* had dials.)

So you were having a little fun with us. Well, I fell for it - hook, line and sinker. But from now on I'll try to go along with the gag and read all of your posts with a shaker or two of salt.

William Ansley