

A Solar Labyrinth DUH

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 06 Jul 1998

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Jim Jordan — 06 Jul 1998, 23:17

At 09:59 PM 7/6/98 -0500, you wrote:

Nutria here. I wrote:

All kinds of religious symbols mark the labyrinth:

lampposts - shed light, truth.

pillar-box - a mailbox, for the Word, for prayer, communication.

fountains - for baptism, the Spirit.

yawl - ship - the church.

dead tree with roses - the rose-decorated cross.

FOUNTAIN

SHIP

ROSE

Well, d'UH, as you younger folks say. Old Clutee had his finger on something, at least. Moreover, since the Sun is the within-creation representative of God in this story, that'd be another linque to the Severian Cycle. Also, "the sun's red disk" would be hint, though sunrise is all that is meant here.

I was asked by private email about why "glasses help." Let me try a stab. First, boys tend to enjoy the maze more than girls, though not by much. If I put on my Catholic hat (I am after all, shudder, a Calvinist!), perhaps this means that women tend to relax and live by faith, while men tend to be more active and seek good works as well. More mystics are women. Don't know if that is true historically, but I can see Wolfe thinking that way. A mystic would not bother with the maze; an activist would.

They must be young, but not too young. "Childlike faith" isn't interested in the maze. Youth explores.

Glasses help. Ah, Gene, thou trickster. I strongly suspect that "glass" here means mirror, not spectacles. The mirror is for self-examination, an essential part of the walk of faith.

Another note: a sandstone 12 on a (sandstone) sundial. Hourglasses use sand, of course, but possibly the impermanence of this present creation is in view. Jesus warned against building on sand, because of its impermanence. This world will pass away. The eternal world is built on The Rock (God, Christ).

The new maze is the first since the Age of Myth. In other words, it is Christianity: a new *kind* of maze.

Minotaur as anti-christ, Satan: His roar interrupts the words of Mr. Smith.

The passing cloud that offers rescue to adults MAY allude to the pillar of cloud-and-fire that led Israel through the wilderness.

Finally, "dialing" is the act of making sundials, and obviously relates to the story. A solar labyrinth is a labyrinthian sundial. Nothing to do with television or telephone. What USED to be called "dialing." An old term. Look in the OED for more.

Jim Jordan

Marc Coleman — 07 Jul 1998, 08:34 · follows Jim Jordan

perhaps

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Like what you wrote overall, but can't agree that mystics are passive. I'm a very pro-active mystic, like Severian... marc