

# Memory house

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 20 Oct 2000

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Roy C. Lackey — 20 Oct 2000, 23:55

mantis's wrote:

Obviously this is a book about books, and we could list all of the books mentioned, alluded to, read from, et cetera.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes' wrote: (Excellent post, btw!)

Weer definitely built a house in life. He probably even built some "memory rooms" (which explains the "architect" comment).

To which Adam Stephanides replied:

That had been my impression on reading the book, but in his interview with Jim Jordan (on Paul Duggan's Wolfe site) Wolfe denied this: "I wanted to do the rooms that were recreations and rooms that he had known as a very young man and I didn't think that anybody would actually do that. That it had to be a supernatural stick [sic] or a mental quirk or something of that sort."

And Dave Lebling asked:

Has the gang of three looked into the relationship of the Chinese tale to the overall story? It seems to me that that story (sorry, I'm at work, details will be sketchy) provides a possible explanation for Olivia's voice over the intercom. That is, just as in the fable, Weer lives or dreams his entire life, seeing the consequences of the choices he makes, and then at the end Olivia wakes him to live it all over again as a wiser man. I don't see the point of including that story unless it speaks to something else in the novel, as all the other included tales do. What is its relevance to the novel, unless it is that?

Then we have Den saying to Lois (and this right after learning that banker Blaine's old mansion no longer existed): "There's a house in town I'd like to own, but I wouldn't want to move away from Cassionsville." (page 179, Berkley pb.) Now what house would that be? He had already owned (and sold) his mother's house. There was only one other house in town mentioned in his stories--his aunt Olivia's, then the town's library, a house of books. When he became president of Smart's company he had the money to buy it and build the town a new library.

He describes his aunt's house as having "rambling walls that never ran straight for more than one room at a stretch" (p.40), and in his museum-roomed house there is "the smaller of the halls, the crooked one" (p.135), and "Down the corridor and through my aunt Olivia's solarium" (p.79). There is a flower garden on one side of the room he wakes up in on the first page, as there was on one side of his aunt's house. Could it be? His memory mansion superimposed on the house where he was living for much of the time period covered by the book? Where he in fact heard his aunt's voice saying "Den, darling, are you awake in there?"

Roy