

PEACE: Olivia's house expanded?

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 22 Oct 2000

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 22 Oct 2000, 17:05

Roy wrote

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?"

Crafty Roy seems to be saying that the memory mansion was begun on the grounds and form of Olivia's house. Outrageous! And yet, here is another strange detail that may back him up: one of the only other mentions of elm trees in the book tells us that elms are along the street in front of Olivia's house.

Or sneaky Roy might be saying that the memory palace (i.e., a purely cerebral construction) has its mnemonic foundation in Olivia's house.

FWIW, Olivia's house is on the same block as John Weer's house, but across the alley (and thus on a different street). Since many of the streets have tree names, does this mean that Olivia's house is on "Elm Street" (which is not one of the given street names) and the other streets have their name trees along them, too?

Back to memory mansion: the implication is that Den died and was buried in the yard of his mansion, right? (If we want to cling to the literal interpretation and avoid the yawning chasm of pure solipsism.) Like Elvis, etc.

=mantis=

Roy C. Lackey — 25 Oct 2000, 01:36 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

mantis wrote:

<<Crafty Roy seems to be saying that the memory mansion was begun on the grounds and form of Olivia's house. Outrageous!>>

<<Or sneaky Roy might be saying that the memory palace (i.e., a purely cerebral construction) has its mnemonic foundation in Olivia's house.>>

Or both. If Wolfe himself maintained that the museum-roomed house did not in fact exist, but was a supernatural or mental aberration, then it would seem that not even he had any clear-cut idea of its structure. Still (and I'm not really invested in this notion), Den was rich and he had to

live _somewhere_. The remark to Lois about the house in town he wanted to own leads me to Olivia's old house; there just aren't any other candidates, unless it be the unmentioned home of Julius Smart, who also had to be living _somewhere_, and it wasn't Olivia's house, because that was already the town library. And there was at least one other room from her house in his memory mansion, the one with the Napoleon figure. And we agree that not all of the described rooms ever actually existed (e.g., the Persian room).

Then there are the nitty-gritty details few here like to belabor, such that at the time of Den's imaginary visit to Dr. Van Ness, where he sought medical advice for his non-existent stroke, Den was then new to the presidency, yet the doctor advised him to exercise in his "large garden". I don't think the huge house that is implied by the memory mansion, complete with flower garden, could have been built in the time available.

<<Back to memory mansion: the implication is that Den died and was buried in the yard of his mansion, right? (If we want to cling to the literal interpretation and avoid the yawning chasm of pure solipsism.) Like Elvis,etc.>>

Could be. The elm tree _was_ just outside his window, and was to be planted on his grave.

Roy