

PEACE: Psychopompous Circumstances

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 30 Oct 2000

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 30 Oct 2000, 09:22

ADG wrote:

... perhaps there's something less solipsistic about this than we think.

Well, yeah, I was trying to make that point but did it far less clearly than this. As nearly as I can read it, Sherry Gold really

is in the "next room" of Dr V's office, etc.

I think WEER sees them to some extent as simply memories, ghosts, or shadows, but what if that is a reflection of his isolation rather than the actual state of things?

Beautiful! That's another aspect I hadn't picked up but fits marvellously with this whole reading -- W has to come to "peace" not only with himself but with his neighbors; and as long as he continues to regard them as figments, he can't.

Which makes Part V, and especially the last few pages, a real breakthrough. What I at first thought of as W's consciousness undergoing final disintegration makes as much sense, or more, if we look at it as W ceasing to deny the reality of the people he's interacting with in his "LAD."

(Alex's sigquote [Jn 8:32] fits this idea nicely, too.)

This fits nicely with the lich's implication that Den and Gold are the spirits; perhaps to Miss Birkhead, Den is simply a character in her TAT-guided "purgatory."

I agree with double demurral:

1) We see only W's "purgatory" or search for "peace;" there's no particular reason to suppose that Miss Birkhead would regard the psychopomps as doctors or their guidance as psych tests.

2) We see only W's point of view; perhaps Miss Birkhead does not share his trouble in perceiving her fellow "inmates" as real.

This sharing of stories makes more sense thematically than to have the characters simply be dredged up by Den's dead soul -- even Den states openly that this is not his story.

But Den is kind of clueless about what's going on here 8*) -- the story we read is Den's story. And while

He calls Julian Smart, of all people, the central character.

Specifically, if I recall correctly, "the central character of my book," though I'm too lazy to go hunt it up at the moment. But remember also the extremely suspect status of books in PEACE.

--Dan'l