

PEACE: Death; lying (was Re: (urth) Grounded in the text?)

The Urth list — 5 messages, 3 voices, 08 Dec 2000

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/2497>

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Adam Stephanides — 08 Dec 2000, 17:03

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:

So do I; but I think the evidence that Weer is dead is overwhelming, and will stand with that until and unless.

I, too, am convinced that Weer is dead, but I wouldn't say the evidence is overwhelming, especially if you don't regard Wolfe's interview statements as probative. If somebody were to insist that Weer was alive, there is no one passage in the book (even the elm-tree passages) I know of that I could point out to him/her and say "See? This proves you're wrong." Rather, it's that Weer's being dead ties together a number of details which, while not contradicting his being alive, remain unexplained in that case.

I don't see any particular evidence of Weer's lying, except perhaps to himself, defensively. I'm not eliminating it as a possibility, mind, but I'd like to see where you think he's lying and why.

I don't think that Weer has been definitively shown to be lying, which is why I put in that "perhaps." The best candidate for his lying is his account to Dan of the coldhouse prank, which I discussed in my earlier post.

My apologies; I should have said "lying in his account," as opposed to lying to one or more of the people in his account. This makes a great deal of difference.

If he lies to one of the people in his account, and he gives no indication to us that he is lying or that he habitually lies in such situations, then he is implicitly lying to us, I think. This is not just a convention of narrative, but of ordinary conversation.

Thanks for the very interesting post about book covers, by the way.

--Adam

Michael Straight — 08 Dec 2000, 16:35 · follows Adam Stephanides

On Fri, 8 Dec 2000, Adam Stephanides wrote:

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number of details which, while not contradicting his being alive, remain unexplained in that case.

Oh, come on. Is there anyone who doesn't get a shiver when they first connect the two elm tree passages? That's too good to be an accident. Maybe it's a Weer getting a Ghost of Christmas Future look at how his life might look after he's dead, but the ghost has got to be in there somewhere. It's too good not to be right.

(Of course I got also got a shiver when you suggested the tree may have fallen after all men are dead, but that's different. I think.)

-Rostrum

Adam Stephanides — 08 Dec 2000, 18:04 · follows Michael Straight

Michael Straight wrote:

On Fri, 8 Dec 2000, Adam Stephanides wrote:

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Strictly speaking, this "proves" only that somebody died, not that Weer did. Of course, I agree that it was Weer; but if somebody were to deny it, I wouldn't be able to prove them wrong.

(Of course I got also got a shiver when you suggested the tree may have fallen after all men are dead, but that's different. I think.)

Not my suggestion. It may have been Roy Lackey's, or mantis's, who have both touched on the "end-of-the-world" hypothesis (another hint I wish mantis would flesh out!).

--Adam

Alex David Groce — 08 Dec 2000, 19:33 · follows Adam Stephanides

Adam, re: the end-of-the-world hypothesis:

Not my suggestion. It may have been Roy Lackey's, or mantis's, who have both touched on the "end-of-the-world" hypothesis (another hint I wish mantis would flesh out!).

I don't know that I originated it, but:

Actually, this line has always given me the haunting image of that elm falling over Weer's grave not just fifty years later, but perhaps even after (for whatever reason) men no longer live...

(from Aug. 25, 1998)

Adam also wrote, about THE ARABIAN NIGHTMARE:

It's actually a while since I read it, and while I'm sure I instinctively pegged it as postmodernist, I would have to reread it to tell you why I thought so. Why do you think it's modernist?

Because although the book tells a story about utter disintegration and what you might call utter narrative collapse (no story is ever complete, nothing ever "bottoms out"), I think the overall story is actually in a sense very coherent and focused, even down to the final revelation

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that our narrator all along has been "The Ape of God," Shaitan, and that our poor protagonist is in Hell--and one of the most nightmarish visions of Hell literature has managed to come up with. PEACE on the other hand, "breaks the loop"--rather than suggesting that Weer undergoes continual disintegration, it suggests that the stories are done in some sense, and he has passed on. But they both use a fragmented, complex style to arrive at, ultimately, I think, coherent images. But perhaps this is just my take on modernism as (in a way) shattering the narrative but making sure that in the worst case the pieces add up to a picture of broken glass, while postmodernism is all about making sure there is no authoritative way to put the pieces back together at all. Which, now that I think about it, leaves few writers who are really postmodernists (or at least few of any interest).

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32

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Michael Straight — 08 Dec 2000, 23:23 · follows Alex David Groce

On Fri, 8 Dec 2000, Alex David Groce wrote:

Actually, this line has always given me the haunting image of that elm falling over Weer's grave not just fifty years later, but perhaps even after (for whatever reason) men no longer live...

(from Aug. 25, 1998)

Yes Alex, I was thinking of you when I mentioned that. Sorry...I think it was an Adam/Alex confusion.

-Rostrum