

PEACE: visiting the doctors

The Urth list — 2 messages, 1 voices, 30 Oct 2002

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 30 Oct 2002, 06:20

William Ansley wrote:

The Orb paperback edition also reads "underweight." If this version is correct, then Weer is always skinny, which would seem to throw at least a small monkey wrench into your time-splice-at-the-doctors-office theory. That is, if we have a "thin, prosperous" Weer rather than a "fat, prosperous" Weer, then there is less evidence that we have jumped from the Weer of one time to the Weer of another. At the very least, we have lost a convenient marker.

Thank both editions that we still have "Sherry, who is sixteen now"! And all those weird antics with nurse repeatedly coming into the examining room and telling Weer to take his clothes off.

Okay, here are some notes, paragraph by paragraph (at first, but skipping more as it goes and the chunks become bigger):

[AD 2274] The elm tree...

This morning...

When I... (a memory of 1927 that remains a memory)

My little fire...

Sometimes I walk...

I consult...

[1973] I stand... (president)

[1953] ...Sherry, who is sixteen now...

Sherry turns...

I go to...

You are thin...

Yes, you...

Strip to...

I undress...

[1963] ...I have stopped carrying it (the knife: new president)

[2274] I stand, holding (in the fireplace room)

[1963] It is quite...

Sit down, for...

Mr. Weer--

There's not a...

But I can't...

I dress again (splice w/ nurse)

I want to...

[1953] Mr. Weer!

[1963] Doctor, for a stroke...

You promised me... (second paragraph of section 3)

[1919] Yes, Mrs. Weer? (Dr. Black, first and last time, end of section 3) [1963] And now this... (first line section 4)

Your reactions to... (begin section 5)

Another bit, not directly doctor face-to-face, but about the timeframe: "[the island], at about the time I imagined myself visiting Dr. Van Ness, to harbor a hermit called Crazy Pete" seems to peg the "I asked for help with my future stroke" episode to circa 1963.

I have a creeping sense that Dr. Van Ness did not see Weer after Weer's first, non-fatal stroke -- that Dr. V was himself dead or retired by that year of 1973 -- and Weer's stroke doctor is some new guy he doesn't know and can't remember his name (and Weer's memory is getting shakey enough at that point that he isn't tracking who has died, or maybe he never knew that Dr. V died or retired). For Weer's second stroke he wants a trusted doctor to talk to, hence his attempts to talk to Dr. V.

I also wonder at this detail: one of the last things Dr. V says is "Could you come back this afternoon," but the whole trippy doctor's office thread started very specifically at 1:30 pm (first few pages of the book). It was already afternoon when they started. If the doctor was in the same timeframe, he would probably say "later this afternoon" or "this evening," but as it stands it seems as though Dr. V's interview with Weer has happened in the morning hours.

Since I'm not advocating time travel, I cannot help but wonder if Weer's attempt to warn Dr. Black, which was received as if he was Cassandra, didn't in fact get back to Bobby, who received it as some kind of weird threat . . . which prompted the fight on the stairs. (Standard time travel trap.)

(And the doctor's office is in Blaine's old bank building, right? Hmmm, I wonder if there's an angle there.)

=mantis=

Michael Andre-Driussi — 30 Oct 2002, 17:12 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

Oops, correction!

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I =am= advocating time travel! That was a slip of the keypad.

My textual reference here is the fact that when Bobby arrives at Weer's party he is already presented in a belligerent mode, and we never get any backstory as to why this is the case.

More on this one:

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I toy with the notion that we have been given the doctor thread out of sequence: that Weer walking in at 1:30 is Weer going to his afternoon appointment. (Which would make it 1963 when

he is walking in.) And then the other 1963 material we see is from earlier that same day.

If this mental breakdown was for outside observers a single episode that happened for a few hours one morning in 1963, then it is not too difficult to imagine a sheepish Weer going to the afternoon appointment now normal again (his "possession" is past), and everybody can chalk it up to overwork.

In any event, according to the slippery text, Weer went from the doctor's office to the factory and there started reading the letter from Charlie Turner. Again, this points to a specific time circa 1963, and it seems to rule out the Doris letter as being a mundane cause of the mental breakdown (since it comes after the episode at the doctor's office). So the breakdown would seem to have happened between the time of Charlie's visit and the arrival of Charlie's letter.

The time-slippage continues, however; and where Weer once thought he was in the memory mansion casting his mind back, now he seems enmeshed in the mundane timeline but with thoughts that it is all an illusion. He rings the buzzer for Miss Birkhead in 1963 (the day of his brief mental breakdown) and 1974's Miss Hadow answers (the day of his death).

=mantis=