

# PEACE

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 29 Jun 2005

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4468>

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Maru Dubshinki — 29 Jun 2005, 19:48

I just finished PEACE (and Watchmen, but everyone is still tired from discussing that the last time 'round, so I'll forbear, aside from noting that it appears to me to be far from clear whether the Pirates tale applies to Rorschach or Ozymandias or the owl-dude) and I am a bit confused.

My central confusion is over master-narrative: which do I apply to render meaning out of the shifting, kaleidoscopic pieces and fragments of stories and anecdotes and ruminations? I've narrowed it down to two possibilities.

One, I take the taoist Tale of the Jade Pillow, and the whole book is simply Den's imaging whilst his Aunt negotiates for the Egg (or earlier.) This makes the book fairly straightforward, with none of the more exotic possibilities I've seen mentioned in the archives, such as Weer-as-mass-murderer, Weer-as-dead-narrator (which I didn't notice at all.), Weer-as-single-murderer... etc. That counts against it, but Wolfe can write reasonable simple tales (Ex. There Are Doors struck me as fairly simple, at least as compared against the Sun tales).

Two, I home in on the tale of the pharmacist, Julius Smart. Weer himself says that Smart is the central character when he is recounting the tale of the alchemist^H^H^Hpharmacist, even though he appears only obliquely in most of the novel. This is, I sense, a vastly more interesting avenue of approach. Weer early on claims that he will be utterly honest- excepting that he will be omitting things. Obviously something is being hidden, since we do not see anything that would account for the inordinate importance Weer places on Smart otherwise (assuming that we reject the Pillow hypothesis, since dreams are but a variant of lies, which renders null Weer's promise not to lie, to only omit.) What exactly I am at a loss to say. I have a vague intuition that there was something less than licit about Weer's sudden restoration to wealth (he mentions at least twice that the family fortune was lost, and that he was poor in his fifties, but became even more wealthy than ever in his sixties; why he does not say.), and this may be connected, but there is no 'smoking pocket knife', to twist a phrase. Has anyone else thought along these lines and hunted down a more satisfactory conclusion?

Salaam,  
~Maru

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Roy C. Lackey — 29 Jun 2005, 22:30 · follows Maru Dubshinki

Maru wrote:

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This is old hat, but the first sentence of the book lets you know Weer is dead. That is, you know he's dead if you remember Mrs. Porter's hobby and that her maiden name was Bold. There was a big discussion about PEACE here during the last four months of 2000.

[snip]

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Weer became personally wealthy when Smart died and left the juice plant to him. There is no reason to suppose that Smart's death was other than of natural causes. And, just to maintain my penchant for pedantry, Weer was "a poor man at forty, and a very rich one at fifty". You can find a timeline for PEACE here, but be forewarned that I am biased about it. <g>

<http://www.siriusfiction.com/peacetimeline.html>

Salaam, indeed

-Roy

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Iorwerth Thomas — 30 Jun 2005, 09:10 · in reply to Maru Dubshinki

It's been close to a year since I last read it (and I think I need to do so again) so take the following with a pinch of salt...

From: Maru Dubshinki <marudubshinki at gmail.com>

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I did get the impression that he may have been the one who committed the prank leading to the death of the guy at the factory, but I'm not clear on why I did so...

Two, I home in on the tale of the pharmacist, Julius Smart. Weer himself says that Smart is the central character when he is recounting the tale of the alchemist^H^H^Hpharmacist, even though he appears only obliquely in most of the novel. This is, I sense, a vastly more interesting avenue of approach. Weer early on claims that he will be utterly honest- excepting that he will be omitting things. Obviously something is being hidden, since we do not see anything that would account for the inordinate importance Weer places on Smart otherwise (assuming that we reject the Pillow hypothesis, since dreams are but a variant of lies, which renders null Weer's promise not to lie, to only omit.)

I have to admit that the pharmacist sequence confused the hell out of me. I have next to no idea what to make of it. Help would be welcome.

Some other things that bother me:

The faces outside the window of the house early on: who could they be?

Visiting his grandfather for Christmas: 'Old Nick' referred to instead of 'Saint Nick'. Is this his grandfather actually referring to Satan, or have I just got hung up on a colloquialism? (Or does the 'Fantasy Masterworks' edition have a misprint? Wouldn't be the first time...)

Several of the segments carry a strong sense of something having lingered too long somewhere, beyond when it should have left - mainly the 'Necronomicon' excerpt and the story of the Sidhe. I keep thinking that it implies that, whatever he did or didn't do, Weer is unwilling to leave i) the memories of his now-dead town (obvious) ii) his now-dead town in a more literal sense (probably wrong)

I have a half-assed theory that he's hallucinating the whole thing as he expires from a stroke (or, if I rely strongly on the necronomicon bit, he's doing so while stuck inside his own decaying corpse, rather like the dead in 'Dr Bloodmoney'), but there's almost certainly something in the text that rules that out.

I'll try and track down that discussion, I think. And reread the damn book, when I have time.

Iorwerth