

Paradoxes

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 30 Mar 1999

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Roy C. Lackey — 30 Mar 1999, 01:02

Tony Ellis wrote:

But the "original" author is Severian himself. He's the one who actually witnesses the end of Urth and lives to write about it. Sev witnesses Urth's last day, Sev writes about it, Sev presumably casts his narrative into the seas of Time. (I say "presumably" because I can't remember if he ever actually says he is going to do this or not - but surely the implication is there.) If you can accept that Severian's narrative constitutes, either wholly or in part, the "lost" Book of the New Sun on which Dr Talos says his play is based, rather than Canog's text, then no paradox exists.<<

But that is precisely where the paradox occurs. That chapter, chapter XXXVII, is titled "The Book of the New Sun". The title implies, if anything, that Canog is the author of _TBotNS_. Either way, it is still a paradox because when Sev tells the story in his cell he has not yet witnessed Urth's destruction, which is still in his and Urth's future, which is why he has to rely on Dr. Talos's play for the information he relates.

Regardless of who put pen to paper when--Sev, Dr. Talos, Canog, or another--none of them originated the story. I've read _The Anubis Gates_, "By His Bootstraps" and countless other time-travel stories, as have we all. Time-travel stories inevitably involve paradoxes; there's just no way around it. If they don't, that's just because the author hasn't pushed the logical consequences far enough. When someone goes into the future and "steals" something--a book, idea, invention, whatever--then brings it back and uses it, that person is not it's originator, and whomever it was stolen from then can not/will not originate it. Thus we have uncreated creations. Effects without causes.

Which brings me to Dr. Talos again. He is several times mentioned as tinkering with the script of the play to accommodate his circumstances. When he does so is he changing history/destiny?

Roy