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The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 18 Apr 1997

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m.driussi — 18 Apr 1997, 17:24

Reply: Item #3759208 from URTH at LISTS.BEST.COM@INET#

(Q&D count down: 11 remaining)

Raster makes some good points. The question, as he interprets it, becomes one of comparing and contrasting the outer most narrative frame tales of TBOTNS and URTH.

In TBOTNS, the frame tale is that this story is all written, ala Gravius Cladius <g>, in the wee hours of autarchial free time; the entire story is hologrammically contained in the first chapter--the beginning and ending are given, what remains to be seen over the course of the remaining four volumes is the seemingly miraculous process that allows such a humble beginning and lofty ending to be possible.

From time to time Severian reminds us that he is sitting there, writing it out in vermilion ink, etc.; and mentions daily happenings at the court that tie back into the narrative thread. Then there is the translator's frame tale, rather like Tolkien's trick of claiming to be translating THE RED BOOK OF WESTMARCH, which provides a rationale on how said manuscript made it to Earth.

OTOH, URTH is not structured as a memoir, nor does it have a translator's frame tale; it has a more conventional, action novel structure, which is handy for a number of reasons. (For one: it would really reduce the impact of the pyramid scene late in the book if Severian imitated the first chapter of TBOTNS and started URTH with, " . . . and so I became a god. Not bad for a dead man.") Where URTH is being written remains vague--a bower of trees. How it is being "written," what is going on around Severian as the writing is taking place, how the manuscript is getting to Earth ("Gridley Wave," perhaps? <g>), etc., are all ignored by the text.

As a result, where TBOTNS is looking backwards, URTH is looking ahead.

=mantis=