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The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 19 Apr 1997

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Matthew Freestone — 19 Apr 1997, 18:00

Hi to Everyone,

I've been following Whorl for quite some time, and Urth since it was set up, but I haven't posted before - mainly for want of time to check my views against the text. I had a couple of thoughts on things people said in the last mailing tho'...

(from Raster)

Does Severian suffer from spatial dyslexia? He seems to have trouble distinguishing left from right, and prefers to refer to orientations in other ways, "good-leg" / "bad-leg" for example.

I'd never noticed this, but it immediately made me think of the way you would see three dimensional things if you were looking at them from a higher than 3D viewpoint. Our left and right would be interchangeable. (If you find that confusing, consider that, if you're restricted to a plane then 'd' and 'b' are left-right opposites, but if you are allowed to pick them up in 3D, then one can just be rotated onto the other). OTOH, and I only just thought of this, perhaps Severian's memory makes it hard for him to conceive of general categories like 'left' and 'right', and he has to think in terms of concrete objects (Peter Wright makes this point in his 'God Games' essay in Foundation 66).

(from Mantis)

(I think Gene Wolfe once mentioned that they <aquastors> were like tulpas--see short story "Melting"--which makes perfect sense.

This thought had also occurred to me independently, fwiw.

(from Mantis)

(Did you catch this a few months ago as a new science factoid: I'm fuzzy on the details, but it seemed to be just that--a solid-o-gram projector that spits individual atoms into place, not only negating the need for mist/smoke that a hologram needs to be cast upon, but also making an ersatz shell 3-D form. I must be garbling an awful lot but I'm not making it out of . . . water . . .)

I've heard of two devices that would each do a part of what you are talking about - there's the type of electron microscope that can be used to move individual atoms around in order to (say) spell out IBM in tiny letters - not very useful for making things yet, unless you have a few million years to spare. There are also solid modelling tools that (as I understand it) allow you to fire a laser through a vat of liquid to solidify it in very precise ways. This lets you build the 3D shells you were talking about, but I doubt it's accurate to single atom level.

I hope to get around to posting about some more (non-New Sun related) topics - especially 'Castlevision', and some of the long short stories, such as 'Seven American Nights'.

Matt

(guess I'll have to think of a nickname now)