

Catherine the Weal; Essays lost in Space and Time

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 21 Jan 1998

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David_Lebling — 21 Jan 1998, 17:21

I would also love to see Clute's essays. "Strokes" was at one time in the list from Amazon.com, but they lost touch with Serconia Press when it (apparently) moved.

So Clute thinks that the old Autarch was Severian's mother? Yikes! I know there are many places where the autarch is described as androgynous or feminine-looking, or whatever. Eventually we find that he was "unmanned" as punishment for failing to bring the New Sun. I don't recall who is alleged to have performed that punishment, and it doesn't strike me as the sort of thing the heirogrammates would be into. What is his evidence, or was he (*ahem*) going mantic on us?

On a similar topic, I recall reading an essay on the old Arpanet (the daddy of the Internet, for those of us Too Young To Remember), which had a great many excellent points to make about TBOTNS. I even had a copy of it which I kept forgetting to print out, and so it is lost to me forever. It had some very interesting things to say about the rose symbolism, and about Severian's geneology, and so on. Most interestingly, it was the first place I recall seeing the "time travellers" explanation of Severian's career.

That is (and I'm dredging this up from the depths), the essay said approximately: "Once there was an autarch of modest accomplishments, a freebooter who lucked into the autarchy by being in the right place at the right time. His reign showed some promise, however, and like his predecessor he tried to bring the New Sun but failed. In his far future, someone decided that if only he had been a little better, had lived a life that prepared him better for the test, he might have succeeded. So, they came back and gave him that life, and he did."

Is this what you think TBOTNS is "about?" Do you recognize the essay? Do you have a copy of it?

-- vizcacha
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