

Severian and Apu-Punchau

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 30 Jan 1998

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David_Lebling — 30 Jan 1998, 13:42

CRCulver writes:

Apu-Punchau was the Severian of the first "iteration" of Briah, before the timeline was altered. (See _Citadel_ chapter XXXVIII, paragraph 5). I've never been adept at explaining temporal mechanics, so I hope you can get all you want to know out of the BotNS text itself.

I think Severian must be in error here, because in "our" timeline, near the end of "Urth of the New Sun," he becomes Apu-Punchau. As this hasn't happened to him yet when he writes _Citadel_, he doesn't realize that he too will end up as Apu-Punchau.

Or are you suggesting that the previous incarnation of Severian was Apu-Punchau, version 1, and "our" Severian is Apu-Punchau, version 2?

This suggestion, it seems to me, rests on the idea that the first Apu-Punchau died (for real), because Severian met his ghost in the Stone Town. Except, it wasn't a ghost; the Cumaean reached back through time to a period when Apu-Punchau was alive (or vice versa), just as Severian himself reaches through time (or alternate timelines) to work his resurrections and healing miracles. I think Severian was meeting his own future self, currently living in the past.

I agree wholeheartedly that following the temporal antics (much less the deaths and resurrections) in the five books is difficult if not impossible. I'd love to see the full accounting and a timeline with branch points...

-vizcacha
(david_lebling at avid.com)

CRCulver — 30 Jan 1998, 16:40 · follows David_Lebling

In Response to Vizcacha:

Let's get some terms out of the way here before I begin:

Severian1 - the Severian of the first iteration of Briah, who gained the Phoenix Throne but did not bring the New Sun to Earth.

Severian2 - the Severian who we know, who gained the Phoenix Throne, *with the help of the Claw*, and did in fact succeed in bringing the New Sun back.

Tzadkiel, or whoever, saw the 'mistakes' of Severian1, and altered the timeline so there would be a Severian 2 who would succeed in saving Urth, although transforming it into Ushas.

Apu-Punchau1 - the Apu-Punchau who Severian2 meets in the Stone Town. Apu-Punchau1 was

Severian1, but did not succeed in bringing the New Sun back, and for some reason (Mr. Driussi says it is entropy) is cast back in time.

Apu-Punchau2 - the man who Severian2 eventually becomes after the Urth-to-Ushas thing. He is, in my opinion, the person buried in the Citadel necropolis.

I think Severian must be in error here, because in "our" timeline, near the end of "Urth of the New Sun," he becomes Apu-Punchau.<

The name "Apu-Punchau" is so often associated with Severian1/Apu-Punchau1 that confusion erupts. However, although Severian2 becomes Apu-Punchau2, Apu-Punchau2 and Apu-Punchau1 are not entirely in the same temporal circumstances. They are two different people, i.e. Apu-Punchau1 is *from the first iteration* and coming from the soon-Ragnarok Urth (he did fail), but Apu-Punchau2 is from the second iteration, and coming from Ushas, because he did "succeed."

Put simply, Severian becomes Apu-Punchau2, a man who appears much the same as the Apu-Punchau of the Stone Town (Apu-Punchau1) but is not the same. See below for my comments on the Stone Town.

I think Severian was meeting his own future self, currently living in the past.

I disagree. In the Stone Town, I believe Severian2 was meeting himself of a former iteration of Briah, Apu-Punchau1. Severian2 was NOT meeting the Apu-Punchau which he would become, Apu-Punchau2.

Severian himself reaches through time (or alternate timelines) to work his resurrections and healing miracles.<

I don't really know if Severian2 does this, or the Claw does this. I am not quite sure how the Claw fits into the iterations of Briah, and it will be one of the most carefully scrutinized elements when I begin my rereading. However, I do know that, if Severian2 is correct, then Severian1 did not have the Claw.

I agree wholeheartedly that following the temporal antics in the five books is difficult if not impossible<

Excuse me whilst I get some more aspirin <g>

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"Ignorance, that light of fools steers a wayward path"
-Brendan Perry