

stealing apu punchau

The Urth list — 12 messages, 9 voices, 05 Jul 2003

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4061>

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maa32 — 05 Jul 2003, 07:02

In response to Don's comments, I have a brief question about synchronicity.

So you don't think Severian is really the original Apu-Punchau? See, I always saw him as both the original conciliator and the original Apu-Punchau (ie - if he didn't go back in time, those guys would never have lived). The description of Apu Punchau in Claw led me to believe that he was doing the calling, which was facilitated by the Cumean, because she calls him a vivimancer: somebody who calls to the living from the realms of the dead. What else qualifies somebody to be a vivimancer? Of course, I recognize that the two callings would have to be at different points, and that the Cumean and Merryn are probably not present ... BUT there is that freaky, freaky dream of Severian's in Citadel of the autarch where a big fountain and a river shows up and Merryn and the Cummean are screwing around (surely you remember the dream - it was the most confusing part of the four books for me). Maybe that is a clue - I should find that dream and read it over again - especially since it directly ties those witches with a flood and a waterfall.

Do you think the ship causes the long night? And why did the moon get closer and become green?

I'm just trying to make sense of things ... Don't take this idea too seriously - I don't hold it as dearly as I maintain that Green is Urth, or that Horn is in Babbie (two convictions which I will probably take to my grave). This is just testing the water.

Take care.
Marc Aramini

Lisa Schaffer-Doggett — 05 Jul 2003, 08:16 · follows maa32

On Saturday, July 5, 2003, at 12:02 AM, maa32 wrote:

In response to Don's comments, I have a brief question about synchronicity.

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Don replies,

When I first read UotNS, before I read BotNS the second time and before delving much into Graves I did think that Severian was the original Conciliator and the original Apu-Punchau. And in a sense he is but I think also that he isn't because as he said himself he isn't the first "Severian" (I put this in quotation marks because I think the original Severian is in fact Ymar, the name meaning ox, which also means Aleph, which can also mean the first or the origin but that's a separate argument. One I can't resist bringing up, sort of my own little "Carthage must be destroyed!"). I think the original Conciliator and the original Apu-Punchau is the failed

"Severian" (whoever he may be. Ymar. Ymar.) whereas our Severian is the one who has been modified by the Hieros to be the New Sun. Personally, I'm beginning to think that It was altogether unnecessary for our Severian to go back in time to fulfill a role as either of these two past figures. I think it may have been a fulfillment of some dark ambition to assume these roles, maybe to salvage something good for himself since his destiny seemed to be that of a tyrant and destroyer. Even this doesn't seem to work out so well for him though. But I'm slipping away from my point which is simply that no, I don't strictly believe that Severian is the original Apu-Punchau or the original Conciliator. I would rather say that he contains them both and then some.

Brandon Mason — 05 Jul 2003, 20:05 · follows Lisa Schaffer-Doggett

I have always just thought that Gene Wolfe didn't originally intend for the Severian that we know (Severian 2) to be the Conciliator and Apu-Punchau. He might have intended these roles to be the first Severian, or someone else entirely. But then when Urth of the New Sun came along I think he changed his mind.

Josh Geller — 05 Jul 2003, 20:53 · follows Brandon Mason

On Sat, 2003-07-05 at 13:05, Brandon Mason wrote:
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I don't think this is so.

I don't think you are understanding the difference, and the sameness, between (amongst?) the two Severians. In fact, to talk of two Severians is in some fashion an extended metaphor, for all that there are at least two bodies that we are talking about. Severian dies several times in the story. In each case there is a bifurcation in his timeline. I say there are several instances, and I can call to mind two right away: At the duel with Agilus and on Tzadkiel's ship.

On Tzadkiel's ship (perhaps because of the special conditions which are inherent to the ship) he is able to close the eyes of his old body.

Not everyone experiences these things. To a person who has not experienced these things, it may seem that this is some kind of fictional strophe or analogy instead of a sober description of fact.

Remember the scene in the war, where Severian watches a formation of 'primitive' soldiers enduring bombardment, standing in formation, each doing his personal magick, oblivious to whether others live or die. The shells can go one way or another. If they go one way, one dies. If they go another way, another dies. Perhaps there in other worlds, other sets of them are alive and sound, or dead, or maimed. Perhaps there are a very large number of these worlds.

Gene Wolfe was an infantryman in Korea.

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 06 Jul 2003, 03:19 · follows Josh Geller

Brandon Mason wrote:

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Because I have a hard time envisioning the Claw as either a dumb object or as a mere "focus" for Severian's current/latent power, I tend to think (insist) that the Claw is the (holographic, fragmentary; blood magic) presence of the "first Severian" that Severian is referring to in the passage: that is, the first Severian who, I believe we are told, did =not= possess the Claw.

In this manner, by granting/denying miraculous powers at various junctures (revive this dead, fail to revive that one; cast a light now; etc.), the first Severian becomes, in part, author of the Severian we see. Or semi-puppetmaster.

=mantis=

Sirius Fiction

booklets on Gene Wolfe, John Crowley

<http://www.siriusfiction.com/>

eBay Auctions <http://cgi6.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewSellersOtherItems&userid=mr.sirius>

Brandon Mason — 06 Jul 2003, 03:32 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

--- Michael Andre-Driussi <mantis at siriusfiction.com> wrote:

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Very interesting.

Lisa Schaffer-Doggett — 06 Jul 2003, 20:32 · follows Brandon Mason

On Saturday, July 5, 2003, at 08:19 PM, Michael Andre-Driussi wrote:

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Don replies, and then replies,

I agree with this in general. Regardless of whether Ymar is the first Severian (and I am unshakeable in my own belief in this) the original "Severian" and his timeline were not eradicated by the coming of the second Severian (or umpteenth "Severian" imho). His tomb exists and he's in it. He lived and he died in the same universe as our Severian who has his own separate memorial and who doesn't "die" in the sense that someone finds his body and puts it in a tomb. He dies and becomes an eidolon of the New Sun but it's still essentially our Severian. I think that Wolfe intentionally (and brilliantly) confused this issue by having Severian (ours) say "I am not the first Severian." There is no reason at all that the first "Severian" need go by that name any more than the Second Coming of the Messiah be named Jesus, Joseph, Joshua or whatever. "A rose by any other name. . ." Which leads me to wonder if the rose on the Mausoleum is a bit of a pun. Probably not. As I've said before, I think there are a lot of "Severians" out there, little Severian, the Mandragora, Palaemon, Ouen, and who knows how many others.

James Jordan — 09 Jul 2003, 02:17 · follows Lisa Schaffer-Doggett

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I'm confused. (duh! who isn't in these books?)

Earlier Sevs did not have the power to come back to life and to grant resuscitation. Our Sev did, and I've assumed this is part of why he could pass the test and bring/be the New Sun. I've assumed that a part of the SF aspect of the books, the Heirowhatevers prepared him as this person.

I also assumed that the Claw was a kind of sacrament of our Sev, extending his power, derived from him, and hence not from any previous Sev.

I guess I'm not understanding what you wrote. I await . . . enlightenment.

Pat. Nut.

Don Palumbo — 09 Jul 2003, 17:00 · follows James Jordan

One interesting possibility as to why Severian is successful in bringing the New Sun is that he IS a professional torturer, or at least still has the mind-set and sensibility of a professional torturer. I feel this is crucial to his task. Bringing the New Sun requires the destruction of the Old Urth, and only a professional torturer would have the necessary equanimity. New to the list, I wonder if anyone else has mentioned that only he can bring the New Sun BECAUSE he has been a torturer.

--Don Palumbo

At 09:17 PM 7/8/03 -0500, James Jordan wrote:

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 09 Jul 2003, 14:52 · follows Don Palumbo

Nutria wrote:

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Who is that shadowy man striding always 15 years ahead of you? It is my future self, sending me hints for threading the maze that is being built up around me.

In TBOTNS, narrative Severian has a sense that there is a future self doing things for which narrative Severian receives goods and services. He says that once the first Severian passed the test, agents of Yesod came down the timeline to investigate, retroactively complicating the horserace after it was done.

The first Severian ("Severian the Cruel," as I say) passed the test, and then went on to become the Conciliator. At the moment he gave the blood-soaked thorn to the soldiers, the Claw was born (like a sliver or mini-shedding of Sev1 at that time -- like little Tzadkiel, the banished one). About 1000 years later this item becomes a teacher of Sev2 (our narrator), no less a teacher than Thecla and Dorcas and all the other "new" details thrown up to retroactively make the horserace more intense. The more difficult maze is such that the effort to get through it really improves Sev2 into the optimum version of himself, and Sev1 is overwritten.

Time travel "message to self" loop thingie. In Heinlein you have DOOR INTO SUMMER. In movies you have either "Groundhog Day," where the narrative hero is going through every loop from beginning to optimized end; or something like "Donny Darko," where it is the final loop only and thus more like DOOR INTO SUMMER (and Severian's Narrative).

=mantis=

Chris — 09 Jul 2003, 17:53 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

I think this is practically explicit in the text, though I don't recall if it's been brought up here. It also fits in neatly with the qabbalistic references Wolfe uses (though I have come to accept that these are not as important as I originally thought, at least to Wolfe). Just to play the devil's advocate for a second, however, it always struck me as a little odd that Severian did not seem to understand the destruction he'd be bringing for such a long time. If he was to be an unconscious agent, then it wouldn't be all that important that he be a torturer. I suppose it is also possible that he understood but did not understand why anyone would care, which seems a bit naive even for Sev.

Chris

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 09 Jul 2003, 18:35 · follows Chris

Mantis having written:

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Actually, the best example of this I've seen is -- surprisingly -- the "Bill and Ted" movies. Both movies have sequences that involve the boys succeeding because of things they haven't done yet; the escape from jail scene in the first one, and the marvellous final fight with the bad guy in the second one, where they take turns explaining what they are going to do to forestall the effects of what the other one has just said he'll do -- ending with the obvious point that only the winner will actually get to carry out his plans.