

narrative errors and time displacement

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 16 Jul 2003

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maa32 — 16 Jul 2003, 04:39

Andrew points out that Triskele must have been around for more than a week if the time between Dorp and Silk's two visits are contiguous in time. Of course you know my position: this isn't an error at all, but further proof that Silk can travel through time (I also argue that him showing up in Inclito's mother story with Oreb is another example of this time travel, but that's neither here nor there right now)

Everyone seems to have latched onto these small errors in memory, and I agree that it makes sense if Severian is trying to reconcile multiple memories (after all, the only reason I can think of that he spares Agia is because he already knows that she will save him from Vodalus) from interference in his time line. However, these "errors" are as nothing compared to some of the most famous works of all time: in Anna Karenina, the text follows two different couples - for one couple, one less year passes than for the other couple during their period of separation, so that in a true master stroke of relativity Tolstoy omitted a year. Dostoevsky is famous for having changing buildings: was that two stories or four in the police station? Proust has THREE major characters die and then show up at the same party that confronts their death (of course, the party lasts for hundreds of pages ...), including the influential Bergotte and the very important Dr. Cottard. Did he forget that he killed these major characters off? No author is perfect; my only problem with these errors in Book of the New Sun is that they are not egregious enough by themselves to point to anything. If characters were dying and coming back to life like in Proust, there would certainly be more to work with ... And isn't Gravity's Rainbow is one huge seething mess of mutually exclusive events, but that's because Pynchon must have been stoned out of his mind when he wrote it ... and a bit of an ass, eh? (And do I really need to read a 900 page book to tell me that everything is relative and that I can't trust what I hear? Thanks, but no thanks!)

Marc Aramini