

alga's enumeration

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 12 May 1998

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m.driussi — 12 May 1998, 05:43

alga,

Re: seven Severians as ten or more. Yes, of course you are right. And you know I know--I've listed the probable resurrections (under "Miracles," AE& p. 13) including eight for Severian himself.

The thing is, the text talks of a "first Severian," which then makes the narrator a "second Severian." This Sev2 goes through four deaths before leaving TBOTNS, and then all the rest in URTH, but from his point of view as narrator he remains Sev2.

He knows this mindset has flaws. He can see Apu get up and walk around without "him," et cetera--the whole sliver phenomenon. And some of the deaths are more spectacular than others, they offer less leaway for non-miraculous explanation. Finally when he has to accept that he has been a ghost putting on weight (more than once!), which the reader had begun to suspect long before with those long swims underwater-without-breathing episodes, Severian comes close to having a breakdown.

We see all these Severians from Sev2 onward because they are the narrative voice; but we cannot see Sev1, the one who made it without the Claw (and all the other bells & whistles). Sev1 is =not= the boy who drowned in the river--Sev1 is the one who did the whole quest without dying once (!). The one who is at the pivotal point (maybe); the one who is (perhaps) confessing to and receiving counseling from the time-traveling angels at his testing in Yesod. ("But didn't you have a dog? Tell me more about your mother. Ever talk to the girl next door?"<g>)

Sev1--the unseen.

Sev2--drowned apprentice.

Sev3--journeyman killed in Fiacre crash.

Sev4--journeyman killed at Sanguinary Field.

Sev5--irregular soldier killed at the front.

Sev6--autarch killed on starship.

Sev7--the white fountain.

Sev8--Conciliator.

Sev9--Claw of Conciliator.

Sev10--New Sun drowned at deluge.

Sev11--Apu Punchau, strangled at dawn age.

Sev12--the Sleeper awakes . . .

Aside to viz,

Argument that Sev1 was granted a white fountain anyway. Because

If there is no white fountain in transit, then it only exists as a probability wave (like the ragnarok/ushas futures).

Then again, this thought =might= go a distance towards explaining the Claw's wishy-washy, sometimes yes, sometimes no miracle production; that is, it isn't the Claw acting like some kind of boy scout/Jimmy Cricket/Super Ego, awarding miracles for good deeds done. Rather, according to this half dead/half live cat model, the Claw as dumb object (like the photographs in BACK TO THE FUTURE and THE TERMINATOR) only responds in Ragnarok mode (when Sev errs toward entropy) by doing nothing or in Ushas mode (when Sev blunders into goodness) by doing something random. Litmus paper.

More about the limbo land between Briah and Yesod--as the ship goes through it, Severian thinks of Master Ash and says "It seemed to me that he was beside me again . . . on the ship I learned when he had fled me" (V, ch. 14, p. 99). So it seems at least Ash, who disincorporated, is there in some form.

=mantis=

Mark Millman — 12 May 1998, 09:53 · follows m.driussi

mantis wrote on 12 May 1998:

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- Sev12--the Sleeper awakes . . .

Sev4.5--traveler who dies of fever in the mountains.

Giving us 13 Severians? Hmmm.

Mark Millman