

Cenotaph, Warp, Cast

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 11 Jul 1998

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/962>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

m.driussi — 11 Jul 1998, 18:08

Adam,

As I pointed out, Severian has =just seen his cenotaph=, so he knows that something is afoot. Something rotten in the state of Denmark, er, the Commonwealth. OTOH, he seems to assume that only the 100 days he has experienced subjectively have passed in the objective universe, so he would figure that Valeria is not dead of old age, but he might worry for her safety as a prisoner of the warlord Agia, Baldanders, Loyal to the Group of Seventeen, or whoever else might have staged a coup, if there was a coup.

All he knows consciously is that he has been officially presumed and declared dead, which is by itself a very bad omen.

Re: Severian not knowing the ship was traveling through time. Huh. So all that talk about the centuries washing against the hull (even mentioned in TBOTNS, iirc) was just poetry that he didn't really believe? I thought the part he didn't grasp at first was that he would see people on the ship from the subjective past and subjective future(s): the "time warping" aspect of the ship ducking in and out of hyperspace. That he could meet O, B, and F on the ship for the first/last time; that there could be two Burgundofaras; that there might even be his successor to the Phoenix Throne on the ship (this one didn't prove to be true).

Re: Clinton in China, and other mundane examples of 20th century technology. The problem here is that, with telecommunications and all, Clinton doesn't have to have to name a "temporary president" to govern while he's gone--and besides, the chain of command has been so hammered out that there is a vice president, and speaker of the house, and so on down to the janitor. So if (when) Clinton has to have surgery to remove the alien implants, what do you know! For the few hours when he is under general anesthesia there actually will be a "temporary pres" in charge of the USA, running breathlessly to a press meeting where (s)he will say, "I'm in charge!"

Which is why I was trying to use medieval and mythological models. The universe is a big place, Horatio, and when you go to another one, that's another big place, further still.

Your regentless and successorless Commonwealth of Severian's swift silent abdication is sounding more and more fascinating. Please continue fleshing it out--I can't wait to see what happens!

(Valeria [weeping]: He said he was just going out for some ice cream, but he never came back.

(Claviger General: Did he act strange in the weeks before his disappearance, autarchia? Engage in weird new hobbies, keep odd hours, invite strangers over?

(Valeria: Well, there was that zero-gravity party . . . with the human skulls floating around the

room . . . and those other meetings with all those wild people in their outlandish clothes, talking about gobbledygook . . . I don't know, maybe I was wrong, but I just laughed it off at the time.

(Claviger General: Autarchia, does your husband have a substance abuse problem? Analeptic alzado addiction is treatable, if caught in time . . .

(Valeria: Oh, I don't know! He said--he said he was just experimenting! Why me?!

(C.G.: Don't take it personal, autarchia. Some autarchs just can't handle the pressure, the commitment of a relationship and a Commonwealth. So one day they just walk away, start a new life somewhere else.)

Re: the mysterious lovely woman, yes this has been gone over time and time again, but for some inexplicable reason (probably just that I haven't written that essay, and might not ever!) the repetition doesn't bother me yet: she (is/is like) the Contessa Carina. From the play "Eschatology & Genesis." Re-read the play right now, you'll see.

Mechanics of hyperspace:

My model insists that time in Yesod travels in a direction opposite that of Briah. This is based upon the two universe model of "Procreation" (ES), where it is explicit, and certain elements of URTH.

One URTH element is that the ship sails to Yesod, eating up time in a big way (centuries against the hull). They spend a day there, and then this curious detail--rather than take the ship back, Sev and Gunnie are teleported to Briah and picked up by the ship in passing.

Teleportation (even between universes) implies "simultaneous." So the simultaneous moment between Yesod and Briah is represented there/then.

Yet after a trivial bit of deceleration (which contains its own apparent paradoxes, I'll be the first to admit, but I won't open that tangential can whole of worms right now) they are dropped off on an Urth a thousand years (or more, depending upon your model of posthistory) in Severian's past (and who can say how it compares to Gunnie's past). Thus, one "day" in Yesod is about one thousand years retrograde in Briah.

Which goes a long way toward explaining how ships/the Ship can ever get back to Briah from Yesod--since the deceleration will always eat up as much time as the acceleration, at best a ship/the Ship would be skipping into the future at a period of (2 x acceleration time), rather like the Last House. (That is if we take "the end of the universe" as being a spacial boundary dividing Briah/Yesod rather than a temporal boundary signalling Grand Gnab. If a temporal boundary, then return to Briah becomes more or less impossible if Yesod time isn't retrograde, and certainly much more difficult even if Yesod time is retrograde.)

And since we see the Ship eclipsing the Sun in the Miracle of Apu Punchau, we know that it can travel rather far into the past. (Or, alternate view: the Ship =is= just skipping forward in time, but it has been doing so for a very long time, and the only way to go back in time on the Ship is to teleport onto the closest convenient timeframe ship and go forward from there. Say there's a Ship at 1492, 1550, 1775--depending upon what you want to do, you send agents to the Ship at the time nearest your goal. So the Ship at Apu Punchau time gets the trans-temporal tachyon message: "Occlude the Sun over South America for a while." And they do.)

(Convolutd. I like the other way better.)

=mantis=