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The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 25 May 2000

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Dave Lebling — 25 May 2000, 20:16

alga wrote:

I think we need to

think about where Vodalus stands with regard to Ascianism--is he really a heartfelt ally, or just taking advantage of the fire-power?

Adam Stephanides wrote:

I think that the contrast between Urth returning to the stars through its own efforts (as Vodalus advocates), and Urth's relying on the help and guidance of the Hierodules--and, by analogy, between two different theories of salvation--is key to the book

The Autarchy and the Ascians are solutions to the same problem. That is, the people of Urth went to the stars, brought war and destruction, and were chastised by the placement of the black hole in the Sun. The cause is the inborn nature of humanity ("original sin," perhaps?). Both the Commonwealth and Ascia are attempting to keep mankind away from the stars until it is "perfected" or "cured" or "saved" (or whatever). Vodalus clearly rejects this point of view, proposing to recover Urth's empire, presumably with him at the head of it.

This is all pretty explicitly in the book, aside from whether the black hole was placed deliberately or it's just a funny coincidence. We are told all this by someone (the old Autarch, I _think_) lecturing Sev, in _Citadel_. It starts with an explanation of why the roads are closed.

I refer again to C. S. Lewis's position, explicated somewhat in _Out of the Silent Planet_ et seq., that space travel (or possibly only space colonization) and immortality are sins. This is a thread not far below the surface in much of _New Sun_ and even in other works by Wolfe.

-- Dave Lebling
(aka vizcacha)

Michael Straight — 26 May 2000, 08:14 · follows Dave Lebling

On Thu, 25 May 2000, Dave Lebling wrote:

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It's a fine point, but he didn't think space travel and immortality are themselves sins, rather they are a bad idea because they would allow sin to grow beyond it's current bounds of time (a lifetime) and space (Earth).

-Rostrum