

Shattered scats

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 05 Aug 2001

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/2763>

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.

Tony Ellis — 05 Aug 2001, 15:45

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

But if some time-traveller were to strangle Hitler in his crib, I'm willing to bet the Holocaust would turn out not to have happened, at least not in the form and to the extent it actually did.

If there's one thing recent conflicts in Africa and Bosnia have taught us, it's that there is no shortage of people who think that the one thing their country needs is a good ethnic cleansing.

The historical momentum which ensured that, when the Great Depression struck, the unemployed, humiliated German masses would follow someone who offered them an international Jewish-Communist conspiracy to unite against, was hundreds, thousands, of years old. There for the taking.

In 1929 Hitler just happened to be in the right place at the right time. There was an emergency backup anti-Semite standing on a chair and shouting in every second beer hall in the Weimar Republic. Kill Adolf, and it would be rather surprising if one of these other men -didn't- rise to power.

Quoting you, quoting me, quoting Michael Straight:

All of human history and society would be very, very, very different if men died immediately after having intercourse.

Different, certainly. "Very, very, very different" is conjecture.

Ummmm... no. For example, the following things are absolutely true of such a world:

<snip>

...Long list of changes...

</snip>

Possibly there would be some "cancellation," but given the absolute differences that must follow from the premise, I can't see history simply healing over.

Neither can I. Neither can Wolfe. That's why he shows us a world plainly different to our own. Hospitals for the mentally ill are more enlightened. Technology, in some respects, is more advanced. Nobody said anything about history "simply healing over", only of it managing to arrive at a similar 1988 to our own -through different means-.

Michael Straight wrote:

This is actually a radically sceptical view of history: you're saying that we can never know anything about the causes of events.

Not even I'm quite that sceptical, Michael :-). I'm merely saying that we can't know -everything- about the causes of events. Would the Roman legion have failed to conquer the ancient world without the innovations of Marius, or would some other old campaigner have come up with the

same innovations two weeks later, because the time was right for them to be discovered?

Alga wrote:

The new NYRSF presents, from one Henry Wessells, citing a biography of Mervyn Peake by G. Peter Winnington, the fact that Peake (1911-1968) spent nine of his first eleven years in China: "Parallels between the early life of the Boy-Emperor and Titus Groan as recounted in the first two of Mervyn's novels are numerous and striking."

Intriguingly, Wessells has singled out what is only a passing thought in Winnington's biography, dispensed with in one paragraph and never touched on again. For what it's worth, I quite agree that the TV adaption wasn't nearly weird enough, but I think primarily it just wasn't -long-enough.