

urth-urth.net Digest, Vol 7, Issue 24

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 31 Mar 2005

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4388>

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Kieran Mullen — 31 Mar 2005, 15:30

I've never really understood how Christian readers of Wolfe can take the Christian imagery surrounding the New Sun at face value, ignoring the fact that unlike Jesus, it brings not salvation but indiscriminate death and damnation.

Well, as a Catholic and a reader of Wolfe I have found this thread to be rather odd. Your point seems to be that any change in the future of Urth that causes the death of anyone is immoral. The supposition is that the "Frozen Urth" future is the "true future" and that "Reborn Urth" is some choice that Severian makes leading to the deaths of millions.

Neither future is real until it happens. We see people from both (Master Ash and the Green Man). It is true that Severian chooses the cataclysm of rebirth. However, to choose the Frozen Future would be to condemn the Green Man and all those who might live in the future to non-existence. Is that inately better?

I always thought that the inhabitants of Urth got to choose their future - that was the point of the battle in UotNS. Those who opposed the New Sun fought those who favored it. The New Sun won.

For me the analogy is a poisoned bog that has some critters eking out some existence in it. You might choose to clean it up, but in doing so you wreak havoc on those already there, or who are adapted to the poisons. So you should just leave it a toxic dump.

Let's say Severian had to go to Briah to *stop* the arrival of the White Fountain and keep the Urth on its current path of freezing in the dark. Are you arguing that that would be a better choice?

Kieran Mullen

Chris — 02 Apr 2005, 23:35 · in reply to Kieran Mullen

Kieran said:

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By my reckoning neither is the "true future"; in reality we have no such conveniences to fall back on. If that's the case then you are left with the immediate effect of your actions on people who already exist. The effect, in this case, is devastating.

I always thought that the inhabitants of Urth got to choose their future - that was the point of the battle in UotNS. Those who opposed the New Sun fought those who favored it. The New Sun won.

This sounds just a bit too much like "might makes right". But the trial is an interesting issue to explore in its own right. Someone noted that at the time they held the trial, at least some involved already knew that Severian was the one who was going to bring the New Sun. What **was** the point of the trial? Well, if I remember correctly, for one thing, it somehow sealed the **inevitable** truth of the New Sun future.

This brings up something odd. I don't bring this up as a rhetorical point but as a serious question. Why would the Hierogrammates set up such a demanding test for an outcome which was actually **desirable**? (Assuming the outcome was, in fact, desirable). Why not, instead, offer it to the first Autarch that came along - or just do it on their own accord? The idea that they would only put it in motion when it had reached the point of inevitability makes the New Sun sound as if it were an undesirable outcome for them. Or at least, not an unqualified good.

For me the analogy is a poisoned bog that has some critters eking out some existence in it. You might choose to clean it up, but in doing so you wreak havoc on those already there, or who are adapted to the poisons. So you should just leave it a toxic dump.

Or move the critters to new environs.

Let's say Severian had to go to Briah to **stop** the arrival of the White Fountain and keep the Urth on its current path of freezing in the dark. Are you arguing that that would be a better choice?

Are you arguing that these are the only two possible choices?

Civet

maru — 07 Apr 2005, 15:25 · in reply to Chris

Chris wrote:

Kieran said:

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So you are arguing that any decision procedure based on probabilities is impossible?

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I recall the explanation being that the New Sun, before the trial, was *probable* but not certain. After the trial it was dead certain. Why though probably has to do more with consent issues.

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If you want to perform some risky, yet necessary surgery (like a heart bypass), you don't simply do it. You get consent.

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Civet

Do you see any other choices that don't break down into 'New Sun comes' or 'New Sun doesn't come'? Much as I hate to say, this would seem a pretty solidly binary choice.

~Maru