

Multitudes & Epitomes

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 03 Apr 2005

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4395>

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thalassocrat at nym.hush.com — 03 Apr 2005, 05:38

The big difference between Ushas/No-Ushas is surely that Ushas leads to transcendence - humanity evolves into some kind of angelic state, beyond the clutches of time & above this plane of creation. Without Ushas, humanity, no matter how abundant, eventually disappears with the end of this universe. Anyway, that's my understanding, and a straightforward utilitarian analysis points to Ushas as the optimal outcome, given that the bliss of one angel is surely vaster than the contentment of an infinity of mortals - or something like that :)

It would help if we had some kind of hint as to why Ushas is essential to this evolution. Perhaps it is not Ushas itself, but the sacrifice Ushas represents; if so, it would be nice to have some more hints on that, too.

The brief glimpse we get of Ushas isn't very promising. Those founders of the new population we meet are reminiscent of the passengers on the "B group" colony ship from Hitchikers' Guide to the Galaxy - the Urthian equivalents of telephone sanitizers. Survivors from The Battle are also in the mix, but they seem like a fairly motley bunch also. And Abaia & his minions (and Baldanders?) are still around.

I guess Sev is the key. Autarchs who fail the test are gelded so that they can't breed; perhaps the converse is that the New Sun is supposed to breed *lots*. And he's had some accelerated training in the Holy Man profession. Perhaps Ushas as we see it is like a new Eden, except this time with a mentor.

But I don't see why Ushas+Sev is more likely to foster a race of angels than Blue+Silkhorn. Another uncomfortable little fit between New Sun and Long/Short Sun? Or something deeper?

Roy pointed out Sev's lack of apparent qualifications for the role of Epitome. I can think of counter-arguments, but there's also a Short Sun angle. Horn is the Epitome of humanity for the Neighbors when he gives them permission to visit Blue (and also maybe when he cleans the sewer). His only qualification appears to be Seawrack's ring, which apparently identifies him as somebody Neighbor- friendly.

The Neighbors admit that they have fixed the game by choosing Horn as Epitome, rather than some other, yet I'm sure we are supposed to think that Horn's assent is required, valid and binding, in some sense, on humanity. Similarly, Sev has been groomed to give the desired outcome, but nevertheless his assent as Epitome is also required, valid and binding.

I think the same principle is at work in both cases, even though I don't really understand it.

David Duffy — 03 Apr 2005, 21:20 · in reply to thalassocrat at nym.hush.com

On Sun, 3 Apr 2005 thalassocrat at nym.hush.com wrote:

Roy pointed out Sev's lack of apparent qualifications for the role of Epitome...

A man so various that he seemed to be Not one, but
all mankind's epitome. --Dryden.

| David Duffy (MBBS PhD) ,_-|\n
| email: davidD at qimr.edu.au ph: INT+61+7+3362-0217 fax: -0101 / *\n
| Epidemiology Unit, Queensland Institute of Medical Research _,-._\n
| 300 Herston Rd, Brisbane, Queensland 4029, Australia GPG 4D0B994A v