

Urth: Superflous?

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 25 Oct 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4754>

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.

Jack Redelfs — 25 Oct 2006, 20:21

Dan'l:

I think this is unfair to one of GW's most powerful moments. "I took off my boots and threw them into the water, so as not to walk shod upon sacred ground."

Oh, it certainly was unfair, I just have a penchant for irreverence. It's a great scene, and it moved me immensely the first time I read it, but I guess it's true what they say: familiarity breeds contempt.

Have you read _Urth of the New Sun_? It defines rather clearly where the power actually came from.

It's been years. The power comes from the White Fountain, I seem to recall, but I cannot recall whether it is specific to the Conciliator or not. I'm still curious about the "Sev-as-aquastor" angle.

who, if anyone, besides me finds BotNS more satisfying without the fifth volume?

I partly agree with you. It was an excellent book, taken on its own merits, but, although I always felt that Severian was the Conciliator somehow, I found his on-screen turn as the Conciliator to be quite underwhelming. I just expected more. His career as Conciliator lasted for, 1 day, was it?

Still, I really enjoyed the Hierogrammates, the explication of Apu-Punchau and the re-enactment of Dr. Talos's play. To sum, I'd be willing to trade _Urth_ for an extra Latro book, but it's still Wolfe in top form.

Adrian Robert — 25 Oct 2006, 20:50 · in reply to Jack Redelfs

On Oct 25, 2006, at 4:21 PM, Jack Redelfs wrote:
who, if anyone, besides me finds BotNS more satisfying without the fifth volume?

I partly agree with you. It was an excellent book, taken on its own merits, but, although I always felt that Severian was the Conciliator somehow, I found his on-screen turn as the Conciliator to be quite underwhelming. I just expected more. His career as Conciliator lasted for, 1 day, was it?

To me UotNS stands as tall as its predecessors -- different, but intellectually delightful and emotionally satisfying in its own ways. The Yesod sequences, the cleverness of the testing on and off the ship, and the fabulous imagery throughout are second to none; the desperately aimless nature of Severian's wanderings post-apocalypse typify "anticlimax".

The "Conciliator career sequence" was a fascinating speculation on how a towering legend can grow from a small seed. Whatever your final conclusion about it is, hearty food for thought.

There are weaker points to be sure, things drag in places, but the strengths more than overwhelm them.