

book of the new sun questions

The Urth list — 5 messages, 4 voices, 03 Apr 2007

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4807>

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Bruce Hayles — 03 Apr 2007, 13:11

Urth will only receive a new sun if its epitome is found worthy. Is it necessary that the epitome of Urth is always an autarch (and a thousand man in a single body), or could Typhon (if he was willing) act as an epitome? Was the autarchy created by hierodules to produce a line of autarchs to be tried in Yesod, and also hold the Commonwealth stagnant while they were produced? (The last autarch has the conviction that humanity will return the stars as a divinity or not at all)

The coming of the New Sun results in the destruction of most of the Urth, but brings new resources and the New Sun, and a fresh start for humanity. Is the idea behind this that the epitome (if judged worthy) is proof that human kind can produce something worthwhile, and so should get a chance at reconstruction? Why will Urth, now with its new sun, progress any differently than it did with the old sun? Is it any more likely that humanity will go to the stars as a divinity now, as opposed to going to the stars and conquering worlds (like it did before)? Since all culture and technology was lost, and humanity is starting over again, I do not see how it is any more likely. Is it just another roll of the die then?

If the hierodules are behind the autarchy, why do they still do things like support Baldanders expressly so he can grow fat with knowledge and die, dispersing his knowledge to others? How could Baldanders death possibly affect the line of autarchs? Additionally, since the last autarch's conviction is that the Commonwealth stagnant while the line of autarch's march on and face trial at Yesod, why would any effort be wasted on spreading knowledge? The idea behind the hierodules sharing knowledge is that it somehow improves those they share it with, or others indirectly. Ultimately, the hope is to produce from humanity something close to divinity. If the hierodules are still working for that with the old sun, what does that mean?

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 03 Apr 2007, 20:35 · in reply to Bruce Hayles

Bruce,

I think the first thing to consider is that the Hierodules may have more than one reason for interacting with humans. Bringing the New Sun is their goal; but who says that it's their *only* goal?

On 4/3/07, Bruce Hayles <brucehayles at gmail.com> wrote:
Urth will only receive a new sun if its epitome is found worthy. Is it necessary that the epitome of Urth is always an autarch (and a thousand man in a single body), or could Typhon (if he was willing) act as an epitome? Was the autarchy created by hierodules to produce a line of autarchs to be tried in Yesod, and also hold the Commonwealth stagnant while they were produced? (The last autarch has the conviction that humanity will return the stars as a divinity or not at all)

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Bruce Hayles — 04 Apr 2007, 00:02 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

I thought that the overarching goal was to create better intelligences (though what is better is not clear to me). Severian is asked if he ever thought there was something more than good and evil, and Apheta talks about a war against entropy. The way I view this is, they will bring a sun to race if they believe that the potential of the race to become something better (a divinity, whatever) justifies the cost of creating a new sun and taking it there. They also work across time to make a race worthy of a new sun; it seems that even though they are judging whether or not a race is worth a new sun, that at the same time they are always trying to make the race worthy of it, for example, by helping Baldanders with the hope that he will die and his knowledge will spread, or by their interactions with Severian.

About entropy: the thing I think they are getting at is creation of intelligence on a local scale (for example, by evolution), creates a great deal of information and uses little energy. By making greater intelligences, they are fighting a war against entropy by creating the potential for more information on a local scale. It isn't as simple as "greater intelligences" though, because Baldanders is certainly more intelligent than Severian but is inhuman, and his path is cast as not desirable. It seems that there is a criteria beyond intelligence, also, because the quest for power and conquering stars is cast as undesirable as well. The path that Typhon would follow is not desirable. The only thing I can conclude from this is that the real goal is some sort of balance between chaos and order. The total control that a tyrant like Typhon brings to many worlds by conquering them limits information content by resulting in homogeneity. Pure intelligence that seeks only to extend its own life (Baldanders) can be viewed as limited at least in the sense that if there was a world full of people like Baldanders, perhaps the stories that they generate by existing would be less interesting than the stories of normal humans. Similarly, a world full of animals might be seen (the zoanthrops or something) as undesirable because the social organization of animals is limited, and so the stories we can tell about them without anthropomorphizing are limited. What this view says for humanity's ascension to divinity, I am not sure. I would guess that humanity has the potential to be something like hierodules, going across time and trying to create the potential for better stories.

On 4/3/07, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:
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Bob Miller — 04 Apr 2007, 10:56 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

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Well said. As anyone who has worked in a bureaucracy knows, the goal, the purpose and the function may all be at odds with each other. Granting the hierodules better coordination than some bureaucracies, it leaves us with the orientation that some things are not and will not be known. And I find Wolfe's advance to that part of the compass marked "unknown", as well as his elegant prose and evident compassion, to be a major reason to keep returning to his work.

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Hmmm. Farmers will "rotate" crops planting great fields whose purpose is not to be harvested but to stay in place and prepare the soil for the next harvest. May we reason by analogy from here as well? I wonder.

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes, writer, trainer, bon vivant

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>

<http://www.danehyoakes.com>

Soon, where Toon Town once stood will be a string of gas stations, inexpensive motels, restaurants that serve rapidly prepared food. Tire salons, automobile dealerships and wonderful, wonderful billboards reaching as far as the eye can see. My God, it'll be beautiful.

Stuart Hamm — 06 Apr 2007, 13:27 · in reply to Bruce Hayles

What about Borski's theory that the "New Sun" is a trick to get the people of Urth to believe in this Myth and willingly give themselves and their planet up not for their own good, but for that of the aliens?

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