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Midterm Exam

Of the texts *Scipio's Dream* and *Myth of Er* the latter is free will oriented and the former is representative of the American way of life. *Myth of Er* tells of the after life and choices involved in reincarnation. *Scipio's Dream* is a story of one's actions on earth and the rewards those actions will warrant. *Myth of Er* allows the individual more freedom. *Scipio's Dream* is a better representation of the present American society.

Myth of Er gives more freedom to the individual to make decisions. When "in every situation" is added is where it gets shady. *Myth of Er* allows one to make all of the decisions one is going to make throughout their life in one single decision. When one dies they pay for their time on earth, be it a reward for deeds to others or punishment for pain brought on to others, then cast lots for their turn to choose their next life. When one picks what life they are going to live they pick the whole predetermined life. They pick a whole package of decisions that will be made throughout that life. As far as *Scipio's Dream* is concerned it never really speaks about who makes the decisions. At one point in the story Scipio tells of his grandfather saying, "at this time too I see destiny opening before you." This indicates that *Scipio's Dream* tells of a predetermined fate. It does not however say who it is that determines the fate.

Myth of Er states clearly that it is your spiritual self that decides what course you will take on your next life. By choosing your next existence you are making all of your decisions at once. You are choosing one of many predetermined lives. In *Scipio's Dream*

it states that there is a predetermined life but never states who or what it is that determines this existence. *Scipio's Dream* leaves the question open as to who determines this life.

It is possible however that the *Scipio's Dream* predestination allows one to decide from an innumerable amount of probabilities. It could be that when you decide on the *Myth of Er* predestination you are choosing a set of probabilities from a set of probabilities. Whereas in *Scipio's Dream* you are encountering the probabilities as single decisions one at a time as you live your life. Each of the decisions that you face throughout your life has many answers and there is a probability that you will pick each one. Which is pretty much leaving life up to a mathematical equation.

Scipio's Dream is a better account of the American way of life. The values of *Scipio's Dream* were displayed through former President Kennedy's statement, "ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." *Scipio's Dream* tells of the rewards one will receive by being loyal to their country. *Scipio's Dream* tells of the rewards of patriotism and conservatism. It states that good conservatives will receive eternal life and that the true life is the life after death. It also states that the only way to achieve the after life is through devotion to the conservative cause not by suicide. These are all values that Americans hold dear to this day.

Americans are supposed to be loyal to their country. One can actually be put to death for treason by not being patriotic. Suicide is not a respectable way out of this world according to American beliefs. *Scipio's Dream* is a very good depiction of American standards and values. *Scipio's Dream* and the American standards are one in the same.

Patriotism, conservatism, and loyalty are the ways to the heavens. Serve your country and the rewards of eternal bliss will be brought unto you.

Myth of Er only states that the after life is given to all based on their actions to others, not just their country. Also that the after life is part of a life as a whole. The after life is a section of time between lives. Only by causing pain and suffering for others will you be punished and by bringing good and happiness will you be rewarded. *Myth of Er* is more of a representation of eastern philosophies. It is a representation that life is cyclical, each time you go through the dying and living process you are a bit wiser about the decisions you should make when choosing your life. Finally, like with Hinduism, you will be wise enough so that every time you go through you will not drink as much from the river and you will be happy and one with the “life”.

Scipio's Dream and *Myth of Er* are representations of separate religions, values, and beliefs. *Scipio's Dream* is like Christianity in that what you do for God or country is what will bring you rewards. *Myth of Er* is more like Eastern philosophies in that it tells that what you do for yourself and others is what will bring you to the heavens. Both do have morals and values that are similar but represent two very different systems of belief. The American way is modeled after *Scipio's Dream* devoting yourself to your country. *Myth of Er* is more oriented towards the pursuit of happiness and fulfillment a more communal outlook on life.