

(no subject)

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 05 Apr 1999

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Dan Parmenter — 05 Apr 1999, 07:52

From: "Mitchell A. Bailey" <MAB at lindau.net>

I think that Wolfe conceived of Ascia as Orwell's Oceania from _1984_ carried to the ultimate degree. The Ascians do not merely speak Newspeak, but are limited to quotes from "The Group of Seventeen's Little Red Book". Yet the boot stamping on the human face has failed after millenia to totally stamp out the humanity. Wolfe is much more optimistic than Orwell was. In my view, to postulate that Ascians are from another planet detracts from that idea.

I agree completely. To my mind, Severian's conclusion that there is no thought that LTTGO17 could not express is essentially Severian's (and Wolfe's) rejection of the simplified version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, that the structure of language delimits thought (I know, way oversimplified, but I don't want to start a S-W thread!). And furthermore, it demonstrates that despite their 4th world (not in the Kirby sense :-) living conditions, they too have stories and folklore. Finally, it allows Wolfe to pull yet another bit of Borgesian abstraction: Foila herself having to "translate" LTTGO17's story. The "story competition" is one of my favorite parts of the whole series.

Lex Shellac