

God and the Lizard People

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 02 Jun 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/1665>

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Dan Parmenter — 02 Jun 1999, 15:27

From: Michael Straight <straight at email.unc.edu>
SPOILERS for CASE OF CONSCIENCE here.

- A. There is no God.
- B. The alien race is an illusion of Satan designed to deceive humanity.
- C. God exists, but his relationship to this alien race is something we don't understand.

Everyone in the book seems to think A and B are the only two possibilities. No one even considers C. C seems so obvious and B so far-fetched that I was unable to believe in the characters or their debates.

To bring your thoughts in line with my earlier post, perhaps hypothesis "C" is essentially Lewis's Space Trilogy.

I admit that the story is somewhat contrived, but in the context of the experience of reading it, I have to say that it is compelling. It's also got some great dynamics between the priest/biologist and his "hard science" colleague with his contempt for religion and biology. I think that Blish conveys the protagonist's thought process very well (damn, I can't remember any of the characters' names!).

Which reminds me of another question I have about Wolfe's Catholicism. There's a statement of his which gets quoted frequently, something like "I'm a practicing Catholic, but that probably tells you less about what I believe than you think." I wonder if he meant that he's not entirely orthodox in his beliefs, or that most people's ideas about what orthodox Catholics believe are wrong.

I take this statement to be Wolfe's defense against those who would dismiss him and his views out of hand, simply because he's a Catholic. Maybe it's a subtle way of saying that he's pro-choice.

Lex Shellac

Michael Straight — 03 Jun 1999, 11:42 · follows Dan Parmenter

WARNING: SPOILERS for Blish's CASE OF CONSCIENCE and Lewis's SPACE TRILOGY

On Wed, 2 Jun 1999, Dan Parmenter wrote:
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I don't think that really fits. Lewis's aliens wouldn't have caused Blish's characters any problems because they were sinless and aware of and in communion with God, which is what Christians might expect of an unfallen race.

Once Ransom gets past the initial communication barrier (definitely by the time of Perelandra) he understands the aliens' relationship to God pretty well. The other characters only misunderstand because their rejection of Christianity prevents them from even considering the alien religion might be congruent with Christianity.

Blish's problem is that the aliens seem totally unaware of God, yet also show no signs of the sin which has caused a breach between us and our creator. But I can think of lots of explanations I would think would be more convincing to the characters than the Satanic Illusion theory. Maybe the aliens have no souls, and glorify God as do stars, stones, and animals. Maybe they have rejected God in some way that we don't recognize as sinful and their salvation has not yet been accomplished. Maybe their experience of God is so alien that they cannot communicate it to us.

Is there any precedent in Church history of the Church deciding that some particular bit of evidence that seemed contrary to the faith was an illusion? Has anyone ever tried exorcizing the fossil record?

-Rostrum

Alex David Groce — 03 Jun 1999, 13:34 · follows Michael Straight

On Jun 2, 3:27pm, Dan Parmenter wrote:
Subject: (urth) God and the Lizard People
From: Michael Straight <straight at email.unc.edu>

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I seem to recall somewhere else where Wolfe says almost the same thing (this quote is from the ACROSS THE WOUNDED GALAXIES interview, I think) but in such a way as to imply that he simply means most people don't know much about what Catholics think--something like "I don't think priests walk on water or anything like that."

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." - John 8:32

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