

Sufficiently Advanced Technology?

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 09 Dec 1999

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Mitchell A. Bailey — 09 Dec 1999, 23:05

You know, during all this recent discussion of Wofean science and the degree of “hardness” we should expect to find in it (speaking as one of the hardline nitpickers), I’m surprised no one has trotted out that quote from Arthur C. Clarke, or better yet, paraphrased it:

“Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from theurgy”

We are left wondering particularly if the Hieros attained the stature of divinity and the Hierogrammates are celestial beings, or if the Hieros simply advanced so far in their mastery of physics and engineering as to leave the Urthlings blinking in bemused awe. An awe of unfathomable technology which is rather like Babbie the Hus contemplating the mighty slug-gun-wielding sailor Horn (just got Blue’s, BTW - and I think that passage was indeed intended to signal an idea of this sort!).

Or, perhaps, both, the two being indistinguishable. The science of the vanished stellar empires even would qualify, with Cyriaca plainly stating that the “machines” were regarded as deities by their own people, never mind the Urthlings of eons later. As Master Ash said, the less advanced knowledge of which he partakes could be expressed either in scientific terms for such as Sev, or in mystical or religious terms for the Pelerines. Another Wofean puzzle for us mortals to chew on.