

# Re: Yet Another Roswell Thread

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- *From:* [ainarbb@xxxxxxxxxx](mailto:ainarbb@xxxxxxxxxx)
  - *Date:* Fri, 13 Jul 2007 09:39:36 -0700
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Ian Parker wrote:

On 12 Jul, 21:23, eina...@xxxxxxxxxx wrote:

Rand Simberg wrote:

On Thu, 12 Jul 2007 08:09:39 -0700, in a place far, far away, eina...@xxxxxxxxxx made the phosphor on my monitor glow in such a way as to indicate that:

<snip>

If you really want to discuss this properly I suggest you and I might set up a MODERATED discussion group. I am fed up to the back teeth with both Fred McCall and Rand Simberg. It is bad enough being called an idiot when you are wrong.

Fred McCall is priceless. I do a calculation as it would be done in Bac. What do you have in Iceland? Some version of bacculariat I'll be bound. He says "Rubbish".

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He now expects me to take  
him seriously. He  
says I take things out of  
context. He does not seem  
to expect me to  
take these things personally  
or lying down.

And yet when we're insanely accused of believing and  
writing things  
that we don't believe, and didn't write, we're supposed to  
simply  
ignore it?

When I was a kid, I experienced being  
picked on by my classmates. Let  
's say I have a thick skin. There is a lot of  
annoying people.

Yes, I suppose it is annoying to have your irrationality and  
delusions about other people pointed out. We will continue  
to defend  
ourselves anyway.

Well, I recall the time I was participating in discussions on the  
discussion forum run by Astronomy.com. This was around the time Bush  
was making up his mind about invading Iraq. I took at the time the  
stance that such an invasion was a bad idea, recalling the defence  
Bush' own father had employed when he was telling people why he had  
not chosen to oust Saddam during the first US/Iraq war. As I had  
always believed that his given reasons were sound, I argued that  
invading Iraq was likely to end in tears.

I am mentioning this due to the reactions my careful arguments, often  
written at a considerable length but after all my university degree is  
in the realm of international politics, and I had been watching  
developments in the Middle East with interest for a long time, so I  
had plenty of arguments. Mind you, as most present on that forum were  
Americans the reactions ranged from cool over to outright hostile,  
some of the hostile ones feeling as I was arguing against invasion I  
must be no less than a supporter of Saddam Hussein.

I could have employed language of anger in reply, that would have  
been the easy way, but the whole time I persisted with replying in

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what I considered to be the calm voice of reason, avoiding harsh words. A number of those were ex military, but it appears that some retired military men are interested in the field of astronomy as a hobby.

This is interesting. I think you should fill in a profile, it would help people getting to know your position. I can see where you are coming from.

My background is as described on mine. My subject of study and my thesis was in Physics. I am afraid I expect the sort of behaviour one is led to expect in scientific conferences.

There is one thing that might interest you. My interest in AI has taken me into languages. Now I spent 2 years at ESOC (not ESTEC) at Darmstadt, so I know a bit about the ESA set up and my German (and French) is fairly fluent. Spanish I have started to learn, largely because I feel that if I give my examples in Spanish they will be better understood.

Translation is a barometer of understanding.

"Le bateau est allé par une serrure" indicates that you can't discuss your holiday on the canals with Alice. To cut a long story short I was responding to threads in Google translate and I asked an Arab – He is in fact a Syrian living in Canada about whether the Arabic translation was contextual. I know that French, Spanish and German are not. There are of course rumours about high quality translation. He told me that it was no better than Spanish.

Now he also told me how distrusted the West was in the Middle East, and how every kind of conspiracy theory was believed. Now I do believe that it would be far better if all the countries of the Middle East were democratic. They cannot however be made democratic at the point of a gun.

When I was a teenager we discussed whether it was right to fight for one's country. Yes it is but where you are going into another country and fighting as a third party you have to have a deep understanding + an element of trust or you can make a bad situation even worse. The US has neither of these and it is hard to see how American military might can possibly improve the situation in the Middle East. The US is killing off Al Qaeda members but for every one killed two are taking their place. The statistics in Iraq indicate this.

The one weapon which I think is relevant in the war on terror is in fact Google. Everyone I know scoffs at this but I feel it is certainly the case. You see we will eventually be watching the television that Google finds for us. Traditional broadcast is on its way out. One can for a start have good webpages and good arguments on Islamic theology.

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On this topic I particularly cringe when they scoff. I wonder sometimes whether the CIA has secret plans to bring Google into their orbit. I think it would probably be difficult to do.

I now return to Mars. I sometimes wonder whether the desert has played its part in creating Wahhabism. You have a caravan crossing slowly and harsh memes. BTW – It is not just Dawkins that talks about memes. All sociobiologists talk about memes, Dawkins talks about religion being a virus which others tend not to. Martian memes are likely to have the hashness of Mars about them. Mars is a caravan, it is not Corduba, Damascus or Baghdad (before recent events). Do you see where I am coming from?

It could well be that the Internet will (eventually) bring about a super city, and lead to greater understanding.

I can say one thing, at a scientific conference Rand Simberg and Fred McCall would be asked to apologise or be chucked out. You rubbish theories, you don't rubbish individuals particularly when they are right on the technical points involved.

– Ian Parker

I don't really like the theory about 'memes.' It's quite well known that people can be very powerfully attached to an idea, and that basigly just about any idea. For some, it may be interesting to think about eccentric people. However, the thing about humans is really that we are capable of reason, not that we nearly allways do practice it. Islam did yes spread often enough along the caravan trails, but while some may have become enchanted so to speak in many cases people appear to have adopted Islam for higly practical reasons, basigly it reduced friction with your customers if many of them had become muslims on one hand, and there was another, tax reasons – but literally anyone who was not a muslims had to pay an extra tax wherever muslim rulers had taken over an area. You were also restricted from some activities. Thus, societies taken over became muslim in time in many cases. In ancient times it appears that spread of ideas wasn't really were efficient. If ideas were a virus, then people were a way lot less likelly to be infected in ancient times. Many ancient ideas took a very long time to spread. Nowadays ideas spread very quickly. The difference is not simply due to difference in travelling time, it took the knowledge of making paper close to 2000 years to spread from China to Europe. Ancient societies were traditional and very, very reluctant to change in comparison with today.

One of the problems with people arguing philosophies and peoples behavior, is that we often tend to forget that we are after all animals. Think about it, compare group animal behavior to human group

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behavior and you'll find really a great number of parallels.

As long as humans can remember groups of humans, no matter the scale, have competed about control of resources, land, etc. At the smallest scales the resemblance to animal behavior is complete, like when human hunting and gathering groups sometimes fought with another such groups on the control of territory – the comparison being to name an example competition between groups of wolves or lions, if one group temporarily is stronger it may push the other off their land. Later at larger scales, we were calling these conflicts wars. In ancient times, different states attacked, invaded others, sometimes formed empires until the next group came along and either destroyed that empire, formed an empire of their own. Sometimes some of the conquered folks were able to oust the foreign rule once the empire weakened for one reason or another.

Like I said, we tend to be quite unaware that our behavior is basically in number of respects quite similar to animal behavior. For most old and ancient wars it appears to me that basically the same fundamental forces were at work as for when group animals compete.

Our struggles have tended though to be rather more vicious, due to our superior killing capabilities at least in part. For whatever it's worth the wars changed after the peace of Westphalia which ended the 30 years war. That at least was the case about European wars.

It appears that along with the rise of our intelligence in our deep past, we began to think about the world, wonder about it. It appears that in ancient times the different groups of humanity had all some sort of a religion. Invariably there was some sort of a creation myth, which gave an explanation why everything existed. In ancient times, the idea of separation of religion from other activities would have been a totally alien line of thought. If we, to name an example pick the inhabitants of ancient Babylon as an example, then they had a hierarchy of gods, and there was a god or a deity for every major type of activity, and it was simply part of normal activity to ask them for favour, whether it was the god of merchants or some other. The basic idea appears to have been that we should thank the gods at all times for good fortune in all endeavours, as after all they believe everywhere appears to have been that gods ran all things. The idea that nobody can run from his destiny dates from this time.

For whatever it's worth, when christianity came along, and swept the ancient gods aside, it introduced the idea about the separation of religion and other activities, meaning the idea that there were worldly activities and religious activities, before that time all activities had been tied with religion. Now I'm most familiar with the history of the Roman church. The ancient Roman church adopted many of the ideas of the ancient Greek philosophers, there was a thriving philosophical discussion among the rank and file right from the first of times. It was naturally watched and censored by the church

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authorities and sometimes overstepping the line could lead to a banishment, which usually meant that the person involved had to abase himself and literally come crawling to Rome to beg the pope for forgiveness, which often was granted. Burning of people wasn't much practiced until after the protestant revolt, after which the old church became in many ways a far more dangerous organization than before.

Since Tomas Aquinas Roman Church philosophy appears not to have evolved a great deal:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_Aquinas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Aquinas)

But according to him, humans are capable of reason, can solve matter through reason, there are events that occur to us that are genuinely due to chance, yet in order to know absolute truths humans need divine influence.

If we consider the difference between our traditions and those of the Islamic world, they lack in the first instance the thought of the separation of realms, that's basic difference no. 1. That is perhaps the most important single difference, as it implies that the idea that something can be due to solely ourselves is lacking. In other words, somewhat similar to the idea of the ancient world, when everything was due to the gods, everything is due to God. To devout muslims the modern secular state as a result is a very unholy creation, basically a wrong.

As I understand it, according to the particular extremist muslim sect which lies at the core of al-Qaeda, the idea that secularity is a wrong is championed. That is one of the greatest single wrongs being practiced by the modern societies according to them. They champion the return of the rule of god, naturally through those who are closest to the god athledgely, i.e. those who have made their lifework the study of scripture.

What needs to happen within Islam, is some sort of a reasonably open philosophical discussion that long was ongoing within christianity, in which the idea of the separation of realms comes to be finally accepted. Then the major religious schools of Islam will need to champion that idea and explain to their flocks why it is OK.

If something like this doesn't take place the struggle between the religious among Islam and the modern world will persist.

About Darfur, I really can't see what can be done. Clearly if a western army would be sent in order to guard and secure the operations of those trying to aid the needy it would soon face similar kind of attacks as those US forces are facing today in Iraq. I think it likely that the European governments strongly suspect that to be the

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case hence theyr reluctance to become deebly involved. But it is clear that an army needs to be in plase to secure these operations. This is something for the muslim world, as it appears to me that only a muslim army could along with the African forces stay in the area in reasonable peace with the local people.

Regards, Einar

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