

SPACE ETC

1

We know the universe is a rock cloud lit by stars. We presume it is largely or wholly inanimate but for the life on our blue planet. Life on earth is the universe's most extraordinary fact – we suspect it.

We account, more or less comprehensively, for the more immediate world around us. But how did the universe have its start and set in train the laws of physics we know? Here, while deserving merit for the far-reaching question, we flounder for an answer. Earth: the only address in space where you can get a decent discussion on Cosmology.

A short time ago (relatively speaking) the sun and the stars were supposed to revolve around the earth. There was a creator (wisdom, virility and power in his beard), who favoured the human race (particularly the Semites) and put us at centre of the whole cosmic show. Now our space telescopes and what-not give us no indication of an interventionist entity concerned with human beings. We are not medieval desert star gazers anymore and in the future, if our vantage point becomes, for instance, an ecosphere on Mars, will we really drag the doctrines of the Holy Land with us?

As we keep on discovering wonderful new talents in the animal kingdom the pre-eminence of the human race becomes less compelling.

2

Laboratory virtuosos, mini-break tourists to the Moon though we may be, we are not yet quite sure there wasn't a man carrying his own head roaming the church graveyard after

dark. When will this area be cleared up once and for all to the satisfaction of Science?

Proving something's existence, if just once, does well for showing it is of the universe. Disproof of the churchyard ghost, in every cemetery in the land, still does not do for a universe-wide law – so never.

By the way, once something has been given a name it seems to have half the trappings of life. Ectoplasm for instance.

Of course where the weird is concerned there is no substitute for personal experience and our short span on earth invites each of us to take life as we find it.

According to galactic time, any day now our planet may be road-kill on the cosmic highway, to a meteor, a black-hole, a galactic blizzard of radiation, and life on earth will be expunged after its negligible moment of existence.

In the meantime we are grateful creatures, we well up with thanks to the sunshine, anthropomorphising as we go.