

OBSERVATIONS FROM OUTSIDE
an essay



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Observations from Outside - an existential essay

We will improve beyond belief, once we have the strength and courage to get over ourselves.

The only thing we can be sure of when it comes to our existence is simply that we do. We are alive and can see that; but nothing more. To assume a guided purpose or predetermined fate for ourselves is nothing more than wishful thinking. No matter how comforting it might be to believe we are special to the cosmos there's no reason to think that we are. Texts, both ancient and new, attribute a sense of privilege and immortality, but they're only concepts born in the minds of ordinary people. Again this is the only thing we know for certain. To insist that somehow a supernatural force inspired any of it is again wishful thinking.

Too many people insist that the position of the stars can predict their fate or that cards can guide them. Some believe in ghosts, psychics and in the ability to talk with the dead. A common thread is that not one can produce results under real scrutiny because they are all simply not true. To explain why people would believe, is better left to those who study the human mind and are not trapped by acceptance as well. Although insignificant in number, there are those who dedicate themselves to the pursuit of knowledge yet are somehow able to embrace the notion of a cosmic watchmaker.

But when one chooses the path of discovery, to begin with a preconceived notion of the super-natural does a disservice to all of us. Possibilities are immediately limited. For example, Francis Collins, the director of the National Human Genome Research Institute at the National Institute of Health pursues the reconciliation of the biblical account of creation with evolution. He uses his title and notoriety to advance ideas based on faulty assumptions that are completely devoid of evidence. Because of his position, people listen, and it's disappointing at the very least.

So what if the majority of people believe in the supernatural?

When we believe without question there's no need to take responsibility for our own actions. Demons are invoked when we're caught in a sticky situation. Decisions are made by reading a four sentence blurb in a local newspaper written by someone who worked in classifieds the month before. Our lives are limited.

We relinquish our responsibility for what we consume and the effects that our actions have on future generations. We believe we are privileged and this selfishness leads us to use up our resources as if they were unlimited. Radio talk show host, Rush Limbaugh, convinces a very outspoken group that it would be vain to assume we could destroy what only God has the power to. This is nothing less than dangerous ignorance spread on a large scale, and he's not the only one. He joins the ranks of other ignorant blowhards such as Sean Hannity, Mark Levin, Bill O'Reilly and Lou Dobbs.

Just as in the days of Galileo, real knowledge is still marginalized, ridiculed, disputed and postponed by dogma; keeping it from taking its rightful place in general understanding. Real science is produced by the foremost experts in their respective fields through meticulous experimentation and is supported by solid evidence. What shows true is accepted while works in progress are honestly considered to be hypothesis. Once a theory is accepted through peer review, if mistakes are discovered, there is no resistance to making corrections. Pseudo-science looks backwards with their roots in rotting ancient text and mythology.

We believe all these things at our own peril. If we can not come to grips with reality and our own mortality, it puts all of us in danger and limits any progress that can be made. It seems very strange to me that a debate continues to rage about whether we are contributing to the impending dramatic climate change when solid science shows we are. Opposition groups use no science, only threats of lawsuits if they're not given equal time to debate. And look close at who they are. They are some of the very people who fought the regulation of cigarettes, fluorocarbons, emissions causing acid rain and now regulation of fossil fuels.

We are reactive rather than proactive, because it is convenient and palatable. Although it's the most obvious, this is not the only issue our human species faces. A world perfectly suited for our existence can change rapidly as it has many times in earth's history, and for many reasons. For us to continue on this course of blind acceptance is unwise. To rely on a faith that we will be alright or say it is god's plan if we irreparably damage the earth, is absolutely foolish and unnecessary.

At times I feel as if I'm living in an alternate universe. We consume our planet on a path to human extinction. We obsess about acquiring things that we will never need. We couldn't care less about curing disease or more about marketing erections. We pay people who play children's games by profession, vast amounts of money, while a person who runs into a burning building to save a child has to work a second job on the side to make ends meet. We repeatedly watch dogma trump new scientific discoveries and advancements, not realizing that if we look back in history we can see that they had it wrong each and every time.

We dispute the most brilliant minds on the planet yet rush to a simple minded AM radio talk show host for answers. We have astrology columns in every major newspaper in America, but very few if any columns on astronomy. We have a tool in space that has been revealing the real wonders of the cosmos for decades, but most people refuse to even look. We don't prepare in even the smallest way for a major planet-wide catastrophe. We make no effort to limit population even though we are already billions over what our planet can sustain.

In fact we build on land near rivers as if they weren't in the path of what periodically but predictably become extended flood plains. Instead we fight nature by building dams, only for them to fail or accelerate the rate of flow causing the water to wipe out towns further downstream. Many of them are towns that have never flooded before. We also ignore the

regular and predictable extreme storms on our ocean shores. We need to grow up and accept responsibility for ourselves. What naive children we still are.

In the real universe, we consider ourselves to be Stewards of the planet, who strive to make conditions just a little better for future generations. Education is important to us and the sciences are embraced. We invest what is necessary to mitigate the effects of whatever the cosmos is sure to throw our way. We understand that we are not created equal, but should be treated equally. We know that we cannot control everything we are faced with, but we decide what we do about it.

In the real universe, greed is in check and we are relentless in our efforts to find cures for illnesses. Our appetite for energy is no longer the cause for countless of cases of heart disease and cancer because we understand the win/win situation of living carbon neutral. We reward those of us who choose to work in the service of others.

In the real universe there are still many views about how we came to be, but only one for how we can and should collectively create our own destiny. We understand that only we can manipulate our environment, priorities and direction. We help and guide ourselves and each other, knowing that life is neither malicious nor kind. It simply doesn't care.