

Hold your beliefs, toss your prejudice



The Burden of Infallibility by Wiley Robinson

I like to think of myself as an agnostic, not an atheist. It can be difficult to pinpoint the most relevant differences between the two in the context of being an American — and all of the woeful complexity that comes with. I also reject the idea that agnosticism, regarding belief and non-belief, can only describe skepticism about a person's inescapable theism or atheism, for example, that there is no "pure class" agnostic, but merely agnostic theists or agnostic atheists.

It should be common knowledge now how the two titles differ in their rejection of theism, but the distinction is something that transcends the fate of being just another compartmentalizable title in a polarizing cultural conflict. Agnosticism asks the important question: How can we assume to know anything about the actual existence of anthropomorphized or amorphous deities of any sort? We cannot, so we will say nothing more on the matter. Be it in the spirit of objectivity, or just consistency, agnostics should proudly define themselves as people altogether unconcerned with taking stands about things that, seemingly by their very nature, there cannot be evidence for.

Science cannot set its most beloved theories in stone for the simple yet absolutely critical line of reasoning which claims that the most basic conditions that make up our reality are subject to change. To me, this is perhaps the most beautiful realization a sentient species can have about its existence.

Though no longer having gravity, whatever that is, would make it difficult, if we were still alive the scientific method could still be employed to try to figure out what happened. What human law could possibly have the final say on the sun's behavior? Or could claim to predict every possible physical outcome in the universe? We can't even come to terms with the inherent unsustainability of an economy built on the same growth principles as cancer (and negatively label countries whose populations and growth are finally leveling out). We can only detect the detectable. But there can be nothing said on the matter of the value of belief and disbelief, being at once below and above anything science is physically able to concern itself with.

Sociology and history can do a bang up job finding patterns between belief and non-belief in America with

things like population movements and geography. And yet we find Richard Dawkins using metaphysical arguments to put a value on that fictitious group of people only referred to in desperation and ignorance; people who have, since birth, consciously made every (obviously binary) decision regarding who they would become. How is the prejudice of theists and atheists not as abhorrent as automatically triggered racism when you involuntarily hold someone personally accountable for every negative thing you associate their beliefs with?

And there is nothing at all in this world like intellectually validated bigotry. Apologetics is merely absurd, but atheists use the pretense of having the morality of history and politics on their side when they criticize religion. They say Christianity has caused more suffering than war, and cruelly persecutes homosexual expression, and cuts funding from Planned Parenthood which provides so many free health services (like cancer screenings) trying to look pro-life. And that religion is indeed responsible for most war (I've heard it's economics, but whatever) and that it defends child molesters and caused 9/11 and is ultimately responsible for keeping undeterred science from having made the world a technological utopia free from all violence and disease. And because of space restraints, I'll go ahead and say it doesn't matter to what degree that you're right (you are) because so many atheists use the exact same over-simplified, conflict-based, hive mind, assumption-dependent rhetoric that religion and politics employ. You guys aren't motivated by the truth. You just want to feel pissed off and justified about something with the low validation of social reinforcement (Reddit r/atheism). This is my point of contention with belief and non-belief, theist and atheist. What gets you motivated to defend your values and, I dare say, feelings, is no different whether you're reading "The God Delusion" or holding a "God Hates Fags" sign. And atheists, with the implication that they've voluntarily exposed themselves to ideas and stuff, have way less of an excuse to act out their primitive, predictable, us-versus-them impulses.

Culture is absurd. The Protestant ethic has weaseled its way into our political process and ability to buy alcohol on Sunday, and I get the resentment. But don't be intellectually threatened by things that aren't worth it — and if you can't help yourself, don't over-think it. God may not be detectable, but what is detectable about belief and non-belief? Brain activity. Last time I checked, science had all brain scanners.

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