



The Dawning of the Age of Awakening

Section A - The Scientific Method

The greatest gift of science is its methodology, which, basically, consists of the following steps:

1. Immerse yourself in the data of a particular topic
2. Begin to see a possible pattern
3. Form a hypothesis to explain the possible pattern
4. Set up an experiment to test the hypothesis
5. If your hypothesis proves correct, have other scientists replicate the experiment
6. If they all get the same result, you have a new scientific principle
7. A group of such principles forms a new model
8. Eventually, new anomalous data will arise; then the model has to be tweaked to accommodate the new data
9. At some stage so much anomalous data arise that, no matter how much tweaking you do, the model can't hold them - so you have to create a brand new model that can handle all the data, old and new. This happened twice in the 20th century, when the old Newtonian model had to give way to Relativity Theory and Quantum Mechanics - and hold all three of them

This scientific method needs to be applied to all facets of life. But we have to realize that all models are merely *interpretations* of the data; none of them is Truth. The very same collection of data may be capable of several very different interpretations. For anybody to claim that any one interpretation is ultimate Truth, is to reduce science to scientism, and the awe-filled pursuit of knowledge to dogmatic fundamentalism - whether one is interpreting the data of religion or politics, mathematics or archeology.

Theories are *always* just interpretations of the data, even if the authorities have the ability to jail or execute you for refusing to believe *their* interpretations e.g., question the Patriot Act and go to Guantanamo; question "Outside the Catholic Church there is no salvation" and go to hell - literally.

Suppose I show you a 5x5 matrix of dots (five rows of five dots per row) and ask you if you can detect any pattern in them. One person may exclaim, "Oh, yes, I see a straight line!" That is a correct but not very complete interpretation since it only uses five of the 25 dots (data points). Another may say, "I see a large square." This is also a correct but not complete interpretation, since it only factors in 16 of the dots. A third person may shout, "I see *two* concentric squares!" This is correct but yet not complete since it accounts for 24 of the 25 data points. Finally, somebody shouts, "I see a squared spiral." Since this one is both correct *and* factors in all 25 data points it is the best interpretation. In general, then, among possible interpretations of the same data set, the best ones are those that use *all* of the data points.

Occasionally, however, there may be several interpretations, each of which utilizes all of the data (this happened in the evolution of String Theory, where, at one time, there were five complete models!) What do you do then? Here is when it

becomes necessary to complement reason with intuition, “feeling” (heart and soul impressions), elegance and Occam. If there are two ways to interpret the data set, one of which is messy and the other elegant, choose the elegant one. And elegance is not the same as Occam’s Razor - which says that among possible interpretations always choose the simplest one. “Simple” does not always mean “elegant” and it does not always mean “correct.” In my opinion, elegant always trumps Occam. For example, in biology it is claimed that Occam favors the proposal that “mind is merely an epiphenomenon of brain” i.e. consciousness is an illusion created by the interactions of neurons. As far as I am concerned, Occam can take a hike on that one. Far more elegant is the interpretation that the brain is a *medium* for the reception of consciousness; it’s a *transducer* which, itself, is a creation of consciousness. Or a second example: Some practitioners of scientism aver that humans are merely taxicabs for the dominator agenda of genes - it’s called the Selfish Gene theory of evolution. In this interpretation, even altruism is suspect; it is merely genes deferring immediate gratification for future advantage. An elegant interpretation of the same data says that compassion comes from the soul, our true essence.

Section B - Broken Systems

We have reached a tipping point, a chaos point, a point-of-no-return in human affairs. We don't merely face a few unrelated problems, the entire system has outlived its shelf life; it is dysfunctional to the core; it is leaking in so many places that only a brand new paradigm is going to work. Let me give you a few examples.

1. **Agriculture** - Big corporations, like Monsanto, regularly encourage top executives to resign in order to take up cabinet positions in the Department of Agriculture, in order to promote policies on GM food stuffs and the patenting of seeds etc, that favor agribusiness and abolish small farmers. Mission accomplished, they then resign their government positions and are welcomed back to the grateful, and now much richer, parent corporation. It is known in Washington as the "revolving door."

2. **Education** - The Rockefellers et al have spent billions of dollars over the last century to create compulsory education, where the Pavlovian system of bells and buzzers provides a docile workforce for the corporations. The US Commissioner of Education from 1889 to 1906 was William Torrey Harris. He stated in his book, "*The Philosophy of Education*" that the purpose of schooling was to cultivate self-alienation in the students, the better to serve the masters of the workplace.

3. **Finance** - It's almost incredible to witness the intransigence of the 1% (and their fawning devotees) as they refuse to be taxed while they attempt to ax social services for the very young, the very needy and the very old.

4. **Justice** - 25% of all humans who are imprisoned are incarcerated in the USA. Steal \$100 get jail, steal \$110 billion get bailed out. The once sacrosanct "Rule of Law" administered by a blindfolded (to indicate her total impartiality) Lady Justice is now a

multi-tiered system that is weighted by skin color, socio-economic status and patronage, and administered by a figure who has long since discarded her blindfold.

5. **The Media** - It was set up as the “Fourth Estate” to balance out the powers of king, parliament and church and so represent the people. It has become merely a mouthpiece and a puppet for the propaganda of the power brokers.

6. **Medicine** - In the USA alone, 250,000 people die of medical mistakes (iatrogenesis) each year; 106,000 of them from receiving the *correct*, pharmaceutical-company prescribed dosage of medications! And the “wonder drugs” to erase mental illness have orchestrated an extraordinary leap in the number of American children on SSI due to severe mental disability. That number went from 16,200 in 1987 (before these miracle drugs arrived) to 561,569 in 2007 - a thirty-five fold increase.

7. **The Military-Industrial Complex** - The greatest capitalist country in history (the USA) borrows \$2 billion a day (that’s \$730 billion a year) from the biggest communist country (China) to keep its economy afloat; and then spends all of that and another \$270 billion on the military machine, whose job is to “soften up” third world countries so our corporations can move in and exploit them. This process is called, “promoting democracy and free trade.”

8. **Politics** - We naively believe and even get excited about “electing” our representatives, when, in fact, we are merely choosing among pre-selected candidates. In Gaelic we talk about “Romha idir dhá gabhair dall” (a choice between two blind goats) to summarize such a situation. The recent “Citizens United” (don’t you love the irony of that title?) decision by the Supreme Court was the final sellout of the American political process to big money.

9. **Religion** - With a 2,000 year legacy of crusades, inquisitions, fatwa's and conquistadores, religions have preached love and practiced sectarian violence.

Don't you agree that the entire system is corrupt? The very good news, however, is that competent, compassionate, prophetic voices are not just bashing these institutions but proposing viable alternatives. And, as has always been the case, they are, at first, ignored, then laughed at, then ridiculed, then jailed or even assassinated. This is an ancient tradition that has seen advocates of truth, beauty and evolution martyred - from Jesus to Gandhi to Martin Luther King Junior. It is alive and well in our own times. Those who benefit from the old, dysfunctional, cruel, exploitative system, and their hordes of debunker minions are fighting the future - the inevitable future - viciously. And the problem is that they have the armament, the media and the money to defend their intransigence.

Section C - Critical Thinking

If the only new theory you can accept is one that is without detractors and debunkers, then you will never accept a new theory in any discipline.

In fact, reactions to new theories lie on a spectrum beginning with naïveté - which is the simple acceptance of anything you're told or read; to gullibility - where you are easily persuaded to a different opinion after you had initially objected; to critical thinking - the ability to think, intuit, feel into the data open-mindedly; to skepticism - the position of, on principle, opposing all new theories unless overwhelming evidence is presented; to debunking - which is total close-mindedness, frequently accompanied by irrational anger and a single-minded determination to remain closed. One famous debunker averred, "this is something I still wouldn't believe even if it *were* true!"

The debunker will always resort to the weaponry of logical fallacies to shore up his position and demolish the opponent. Among those weapons are:

1. **Argumentum ad hominem** - Attack the *proponent* of the new theory rather than debate the *content* of the new idea. This, typically, begins with name-calling: If the theory involves Law, then the theorist is called, "an anarchist"; if the theory involves the Media, then the theorist is called, "an agitator"; if the theory involves Medicine, then the theorist is called, "a quack"; if the theory involves the Military, then the theorist is called, "a traitor"; if the theory involves Politics, then the theorist is called, "unpatriotic"; if the theory involves Religion, then the theorist is called, "a heretic"; and if he can't be neatly slotted into any of the above categories (e.g. the Occupy Wall Street protestors), then a simple, all-encompassing pejorative such as "a lazy-out-of-work-hippie" will do.

2. **The Straw Man fallacy** - This involves setting up a totally extraneous issue, demolishing that and then claiming victory by osmosis.
3. **Reductio ad absurdum** - Here the debunker will take an element of the new theory, exaggerate it wildly and then claim that nobody in their right mind could support that e.g., "Tax the billionaires? What a crazy idea. If you tax them they will lose heart, abandon their enterprises and close their corporations; then their workers will be let go, the economy will crash; and *everybody* will be on the breadline! No, we must *protect* our billionaires; they make the world go round."
4. **Generalization** - Another favorite is to focus on a real weakness in the new theory (any new theory is a work in progress) and by demonstrating its inadequacy, tar the entire theory with the same brush, without ever having to actually debate the very many other elements of the new theory.

In this respect, I want to mention the newly released movie, "***Thrive***" which is one of the very best efforts I've seen that correctly connect the dots. But, one critic I've read focused on a perceived weaker element in the movie and managed to create the impression that the entire thing is flakey. Far from it; in my opinion, "***Thrive***" is a prophetic wake up call to a world gone mad.

It should be obvious by now that anybody can deface the Mona Lisa but only a genius could create it. Anybody can be a debunker; just close your mind, open your mouth and get as angry as necessary to silence your opponent.

In my experience, the most common reason to reject a new theory, without a proper examination of its arguments, is not that it *feels fake*, but rather that it *raises fear* - the fear that I will have to experience the psychic earthquake of watching my

worldview go up in smoke. So, it is far easier to get angry than to get educated; to become bellicose rather than admit to my existential angst at what the new theory may do to my old, bedrock-solid belief system.

The era of armchair skepticism and vitriolic debunking is passé. We don't have time, planet Earth does not have time to persuade the un-persuade-ables. It's time to do what the Buddha did, what Jesus did, what Mohammed did. To join the EVOLUTION; wake up.

Fully!

May God continue to hold you tenderly in the hollow of Her hand.

Namasté,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Seán". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Tír na nÓg
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