

The dogma of otherness

Literature



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My name is David Brin and I'm an author mostly on books pertaining to philanthropy. My most recent piece of work is a collection of short stories called, " Otherness". Each time I write a new book, my publisher sends me on publicity tours to promote my books. This tour was quite distinguishable from the others, except in the notion that I'd recognized something knew about people, ideas, and culture. Though I hate telling people " whoppers", I told them about what I knew pertaining to the question on porpoise (dolphin, whale) intelligence.

People all began to come up with their questionable perceptions (or rumors, for that matter) about the dolphin intelligence; they all seemed disappointed by my data. Again I try to explain using evidence from a highly reliable source in Hawaii, they didn't want to believe me. I tried to settle their turbulent protesting, but the audience continued to explain themselves with infinite ideas to the question they asked me in the beginning. I began to wonder what was driving them so much, pestering me with a question first, then trying to defend an answer with their own impractical enquiries.

After I patiently described the brilliantly simple experiments of Dr. Herman, the crowd of questioners became intrigued of the subject by implying, not asking, that there must be other varieties of intelligence. I told them at that point that most people like themselves act that way because they are nonscientists. All that time I was lecturing and defending my answers, I had been wondering why the questioners were so preposterous, but I told them that I think I figured it out. They all looked at me like I was clueless. It had occurred to me that every culture (like this one) had common assumptions.

I explained that assumptions were called zeitgeists or dogmas. After explaining how dogmas relate to our world, culture, and people they all had puzzled looks on their faces. I tried to break my concept down by relating it to how they all attacked me over one measly question. I explained that even me being the dolphin expert was not trusted for my information given. As I said all of this, I just let it flow. Hearing this from myself was all a surprise too, as it was for the audience. One man agreed with me indefinitely. I then introduced "The Dogma of Otherness".

I said that the dogma insisted that all voices deserved a hearing and that all points of view had some sort of validity. After I thought for a moment how unique "The Dogma of Otherness" was, I said that it was completely obvious to see how the societal dogma had an effect on people and how they defend otherness. One man stood and said that he thought I was being chauvinistic toward the culture of people. As this non-attentive man spoke, I cut him off and explained that he again was doing in action right what the Dogma of Otherness meant; even now he still didn't understand what I mean.

After comparing the Western American society pertaining to the Dogma of Otherness with the ideas and dogmas of China the man still didn't want to admit to his acknowledgement of the dogma. As the man tries to explain I tell him that by him expressing his views on that level that he did, indeed he is a cultural chauvinist. The man frowns and scratches his head in deliberation. One woman, however, recognizes that either way that man goes, I have him trapped. I continued to explain while saying that dogmas don't have to be logical, they just have to be functional in our lives.

By pointing out that we should be proud of America, it serves as another example of the dogma when a woman tries to argue with me again. The audience laughs as the woman finally realizes what I was trying to get at from the beginning. The publicity tour comes to an end. After the "revelation" of The Dogma of Otherness, at the publicity tour it occurred to me that if everyone believed Copernicus, then no one could say that Europe, China, or Arabia were the central places of where creation began. If the people accepted the idea proposed by Copernicus, then they would have to adjust their lives to that idea too.

I also remembered that as time progressed, we discovered the truth, mathematically, and possibly this principle is what the Dogma of Otherness is derived from. From the Principle of Mediocrity, it has come to my attention that basically it's a more reasonable and rational world we live in today at this time and place. A new principle called the Anthropic Imperative, proposed by Frank Tipler, tells us that we as people have gone too far, in saying that there really is nothing truly unique about the time and place in which we live in.

I also do believe that this also is another great example of the Dogma of Otherness. To in-depthly analyze the Anthropic Imperative, I decide to try and explain its truth by recalling the three views of Western life for "Man in Nature". The three views are: Traditional Christian, Mechanistic, and Romanistic. Each of which all have their own views pertaining to Man {and woman}, how (and why) we were brought here on Earth, and creation of other intelligence. To the latter, I concluded that each worldview has contributed to our culture in some way.

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Even though they are all different and arbitrary, I can look back and understand how some part of each view is affiliated with our ways' of life today. There is much evidence (propaganda) intended to persuade people that the Doctrine of Otherness is of truth. Saying that it not of truth would be pretty much paradoxical because a doctrine is based on general truth. As people of this society and culture, we have been told things about Man over and over (i. e. man kills its own children, wages war, hurts the environment, etc.).

As I examine the characteristics of other animals in the world, something else that I realize, is that most animals in the world do the same things we all have been told (above) about Man while we were growing up. It appears to me that the more and more we criticize humankind, the more the line dividing us from animal world disappears and becomes unclear. I also show examples of animals in the world that are evolving to be more like us as they change and become accustomed by adaptive radiations. Those animals I discuss are: Stallions, male lions, apes, mallard ducks, and elephants.

It is very ironic, though, how all of this is coming together coherently. To say simply with no problem, that humans are just a pimple on Creation (thus saying that the world would be better off without us), I hope, leaves us in an uncomfortable and discontent feeling. When we, as humans, began to look in the mirror and interpret our cultures is when we can try to move on from the Doctrine of Otherness. In closing, I think that we should all be tolerant of everybody and everyone; and all types of dogmas have some sort of validity.