

ALL LIFE ADVANCES ALL LIFE IN THAT DATA IS PROCESSED THROUGH THE ACT OF OBSERVATION

BY JOE MARCHIA

WHY WE LIKE IT: *We were instantly taken with this intellectual construct that, to quote from the author, is 'essentially about metacognition'. It's something that could easily cross the floor to CNF but what keeps it fiction specific is the omnipresent and rampant power of imagination. We like the way thought links thought, the subliminal consorts with the conscious and ideas, tumbling like mind clouds, pupate into something new and different from their former selves. Urbane prose and a dry, ironic voice only heighten our infatuation. Quote: I still have never seen a tornado with the exception of movies about tornadoes. If you have seen a movie about a tornado you can pretend to have seen a tornado (party rules, etc).*

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I saw my dentist at a party on 51st street. It is impossible to get used to seeing people in contexts you do not expect them because the human brain is designed to organize. His wife was between ten and twenty years older than him. Statistically this is rare as compared to other age distances relative to gender. I do not know how rare because you cannot ask someone's age once you are past thirty, even to discern standard deviations from data. This is because time is a secret and at a party there are only two remarks you can make about time: "It is early!" and "It's getting late." You do not say it *is* late unless you are causing conflict. Ie: your dentist brings up a controversial study about fluoride. You respond: "boy, its late."

At the party there were crackers and meats. At the party a friend of a friend asked if I had seen a new movie, but I had not. At parties it is a gamble to talk to people because there are differences in how

interesting people are- such that sometimes people are trapped in conversation with people who are less interesting than them. Alternatively, sometimes you are less interesting than who you are talking to. This is when you must trap them and savor the interaction. These are the rules of parties, I didn't make them up.

The party was in 2011. In 2011 a tornado killed 161 people in Joplin, Missouri. This is what I remember because I had never seen a tornado and never heard of Joplin, Missouri, so it was a topic of conversation in which I pretended: *Oh no, Joplin. Or, oh no, tornado.* I still have never seen a tornado with the exception of movies about tornadoes. If you have seen a movie about a tornado you can pretend to have seen a tornado (party rules, etc).

When it was getting late, I left the party, and in subsequent years the memory has become flattened and squashed, such that it can mix with other memories, which is how memory works. We then labor under particular delusions; like maybe I didn't see my dentist, or it was 52nd street. I sometimes remember a tornado but it is just from a movie, I think.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: "All Life Advances All Life in that Data is Processed Through The Act of Observation" *is essentially about metacognition. I find people's process of interpreting information and discerning appropriate responses that reveal subconscious influences to be interesting. It's also about parties, which enhance this awareness for people who are socially awkward. It's influenced by Lorrie Moore's humor and Henry James' ability to over explain, which I find amusing.*

AUTHOR'S BIO: *Joe Marchia is the author of two poetry collections, i will sit on the sidewalk i am not joking, and Like Movies.*