

Labor of the Idea

Writing is the labor of the idea; with writing, we can work the idea out. Thus, if one has an idea or opinion they should write it out. Just as in an opinion column of a newspaper, we can communicate our thoughts to others, and they can speak back through their writing. Even if we simply share our ideas with friends, the idea spreads through the social network as we pass around our thoughts. A more probable way of a thought network being carried out is that when we have a disagreement, then write your thoughts down. What steps, then, should you take to transcribe your idea? Begin with a notebook and pen to jot down your initial ideas and thoughts on the matter, and then I would recommend typing up an outline on a word processor on a computer. Your local library should have computers you can use if you do not own one. But the important thing here is that one starts in some fashion or another to journal one's ideas and thoughts down and find some way to share these with others.

The labor of the idea involves some degree of logic, too. But the extent that you are able to reason need not deter you from formulating your thoughts on your ideas or opinions. What follows in this essay is my example of the labor of the idea, and reading someone else's work on different subjects are further examples; whether these subjects are more general or specific will help you to understand how to approach thinking on paper.

It should be understood that writing is an extension of one's mind. Writing enables you to transcribe your thoughts into more concrete ideas and/or opinions on paper. The rudiments of writing are less important than a basic understanding that you are having a conversation through it. This concept is more easily understood in the 21st century with the advent of the cell phone and texting. It is not the electronic devices that allow one to communicate as much as it is the writing that is done through them. It should be pointed out that it seems people are much more likely to "say" things through texts and social media than they would in person. Such a thing may be undesirable with such communications as social media and texting, but with writing essays and opinions it may be the courage needed to pass on ideas and opinions; though, it may take more energy and courage to share your writings than just simply pushing "send".

Regardless, the key component here is to voice your thoughts through writing. The important thing to remember is that you put your thoughts into writing, and your writing into a digital form so it can be archived and retrieved when needed and shared with other people. That we have progressed as far as we have in modern times is due to the fact that ideas could be recorded and considered for further elaboration and use. With the tool of writing our society has grown ever more productive and awakened to the realities of our world here on Earth and our understanding of the universe.

The inexplicable nature of the absolute truth that I exist raises two questions: How and why? How do I exist, and why do I exist? Humankind is in a perpetual state of flux, as we wander about through steady change; but we age without our own notice and this forms an inkling that the way we exist now will never end; for even though we see death among other things in nature as time passes, it seems as if death merely shadows us continuously, though we will never reach our end. But let us look at just life on earth and the existence of the cosmos as a whole, which is known in our age to be so vast and interconnected that it cannot be comprehended. Hence, we might consider one of the essential laws of science discovered to us through physics that states that “neither matter nor energy can be created or destroyed.” Consequently, this scientific and practical law leads to a deeper understanding of all that exists in the universe; though, the absolute point of the universe’s origin will perhaps forever remain unknown. Whereas, the cosmos is the sum of all that subsists in the infinitude of existence that is within an eternal flux of that in which there is neither a birth nor a death of the universe; rather, it is that the universe is a timeless and everlasting paradox: it is without a beginning and without an end, as it simply morphs through time, and nothing more: terminus a quo, terminus ad quem.

Pertaining to significance, people say that things happen for a reason. If we think that “things happen for a reason,” it must then also be the case that “all things happen for a reason.” And if we act on these things, -even if we simply take action on the basis that this or that thing occurred for a particular reason, and that reason being the particular time and place of the particular event, experience, thought, etc. (these “things”), - everything happens at a particular time and place in our life, which gives each thing its significant meaning (signs); but it’s coincidence that gives meaning to a pair of incidents that occur or happen at a certain and same time in our lives. As a result, every specific thing that happens is coincidental, for it is interrelated and dependent upon a chain of incidences that link all things together in our lives; therefore, we should act upon all of these things in the same manner for all these things are of equal significance.

It is our acting upon what we see as significant that makes other things seem insignificant; but there is no meaning in these things that seem to happen for a reason unless all things happen for a reason. We cannot see significance in two things, yet not act on both of them equally, and still think one thing is a sign of something and the other is without meaning; for it is the case that if one flame is hot then all flames are hot as a result of their essential nature. As a result of the essential nature of coincidence with things, each particular thing we encounter has the same significance as all other things. There is only one way that things happen for a reason: through personal desire, which seeks out meaning in a thing as sign that it is related to oneself, but one does so only after the happening itself.

Renounce. In this sense of the word, I mean to give up a belief with a formal public statement. Now there are pros and cons to everything, but in the case of religion the con of bigotry far outweighs the pro of spiritual refinement of thoughts and feelings; yet, if it's not enough that one believe that bigotry outweighs spiritual growth in Christianity, the superstitious aspect of religion should be enough for any rational human being to reject the popular idea of a supernatural entity with its anthropomorphic mind watching over us and guiding us with a metaphorical hand on our shoulder. And while the fantasy of a supernatural all-knowing, all-seeing, and all-powerful being may comfort us, the belief that God guided the writing of the Bible as a justification for holding to established belief then becomes not only untrue and false, but also harmful. Now I believed as much as to the extent of being a mere superstitious fellow that God and Jesus could save me from my addictions and wayward habits, but now I have seen the error in my judgment. To put it simply, I was led through fear to believe that Jesus could save me from the fear of being alone, the addiction I had to drugs and alcohol, and my other impulsive decision making when it came to money. I tried to turn to religion to solve my problems I had in these areas, but it wasn't until then that I knew I had to summon the will power within myself to overcome these bad habits that I refrained from them. I was baptized once and I summoned the courage to do so in front of a church full of people by getting intoxicated. I quit that particular drug and was baptized a second time at a different church sometime later out of fear of damnation from the first baptism. But soon after the second church I was attending part time did a sermon over "gematria" and it was then that I realized I didn't need to attend a place that taught such superstition. Gematria is the belief that numbers and their occurrence have some significant meaning, and that such a thing is the manifestation of God and proof he exists. I saw that a belief in a supernatural being (God) who controls things in our natural world to be superstition as well. Thus, I renounce religion now on the grounds that it is untrue and harmful. I do feel religion helps heal the thoughts and feelings of its believers; but as for me and what I believe, I am an "unbeliever."

Who would want to subscribe to such a thing? Well, I know good people who are religious, and I know bad people who are religious; though; as with my habits, it is a matter of good and bad, rather than good and evil. Evil is a misnomer. Things that are bad in this world are not the result of a malevolent entity; and things that are good in this world are not the result of a benevolent entity. Things are the way they are in this world because of the choices each individual makes combined with random coincidence and the general predictable probability of everyday occurrence. And just because there is a general tendency of the universe to be in chaos doesn't mean we need to ascribe to a philosophy of "gloom and doom" as it is referred to. If we cannot question what we believe, we are slaves to our prejudices and superstitions.

Zeitgeist, the “time spirit” or spirit of the age, changes rapidly and is quite subjective to the place and people who define it. But we can look at those historical landmarks that have occurred in our lifetimes to give us some idea of what was and is significant to each generation. Though, there is no agreed upon length of time that makes up a generation, but we will say here 40 years. And within the framework of 40 years a lot happens that shapes the feeling of that generation. What has happened in the 40 years I have been alive that shapes the zeitgeist of my age? Well, politically the Cold War supposedly ended, though America and Russia are still at odds. In science, the theory of evolution is seen now by the scientific community to be as evident as the theory of gravity, and this has created friction between science and religion, which is really nothing new. Also, the idea of pluralism (where smaller groups within our society maintain their own identities), as well as multiculturalism (where multiple cultural traditions exist and are accepted and promoted within our single society), -both of these ideas also conflict with conservative Christians here in America. Though, the trend toward cultural pluralism and multiculturalism here in our society should be seen as a sign of hope; a trend toward cultural equality in a world divided by a strict adherence to its nostalgic attachment to a negative past. But we cannot cling to a negative past in the hope of a positive tomorrow; instead, we must renounce our old ways and learn from the mistakes of our past masters.

A program I happened to hear on the radio spoke on how that the behavioral sciences had “invented” the idea of a disorder; in general the American Family Radio (AFR) guest claimed that the mental disorder was just an excuse for individuals with mental health disease to be irresponsible. This kind of denial among conservative Christians has marked four decades of ignorance in my own lifetime, and again this is nothing new; but there is hope that these sort of shallow beliefs will die sooner than later in the world. Though, the key to alleviating the world of such ignorance and superstition is to speak up and disagree, even if it is just saying: “I disagree.” Now the train of illogic and irrational beliefs that follow such a verbal dissent are far more difficult to contend with, seeing how these beliefs are the result of centuries of prejudices; the important thing is to first disagree, even if we must only “agree to disagree” for now.

Another view that conservative Christians hold is that climate change is a myth, and humankind hasn’t done anything to harm the environment or affect something as drastic as “global warming.” I feel that it is a sense of guilt that leads people such as those who “don’t believe” in things like climate change to hold these views within their beliefs. Look at the amount of garbage that we go through in a week’s time and it is easier to see how an island of garbage, or even an entire state full of garbage, is not only possible but a reality. So how is it so difficult to believe in billions of tons of carbon dioxide polluting our atmosphere, just as garbage does our ground? It’s now in our age to hold to the idea of what I shall term “human exceptionalism.” Human exceptionalism is the belief that mankind is beyond reproach when it comes to its exploitation of Earth’s resources.

There is the belief that climate change is a result of the “end times,” and this belief further fuels the apathy of not changing our habits to promote a cleaner and more sustainable Earth. When I hear this attitude reflected in the voice of “believers,” I think of the Thomas Theorem, which states: “what is perceived as real, is real in its consequences.” The consequences in this case are the loss of nature.

The trend toward a secular society is one of the positive things to occur in the last 40 years. Secularism in America began with founders who were for separation of church and state, which is America’s attempt to be free of religious rule. We see other nonspecific attempts to separate ourselves from religion in America with the move to abolish the Ten Commandments images from state property. Now these tactics seem to strengthen conservatives temporarily, but in the long run secularism will, as a matter of historical trends, rise above religion and superstition. But if people want to be thankful for something: Thank God for Science. After all, science is why we live in such comfort and have so many electronic gadgets, while making the inventions of artisans better such as the progression of rocket science from early airplanes. The Internet is a global trend, and yet another product of science. So too do we have science to be thankful for the cell phone.

Another trend in America is the liberation of gay and lesbian individuals and couples from the conservative masses, especially conservative Christians. Everyone has the right to make a choice who they want to love and be with; and it’s not the right of Christians to say those who are gay and lesbian shouldn’t have the freedom to be homosexual and that their lifestyle is a sin. I’ve heard Christians on AFR say that they are not being bigots because they are basing their judgments on a two-thousand year text, but a bigot is just that: “a person who holds blindly and intolerantly to a belief; a narrow-minded, prejudiced person.” These same people say that to discern is the same as discriminate, and that there is nothing wrong with discerning because “that’s what the Bible says to do.” Well, if that’s the case the Bible is guilty of discrimination. Now it’s important for these bigots to know that what they are doing is the same as was done to the Hebrew slaves in Egypt. Thus, we end up with conservative religious people who use their power toward intolerance and the subjugation of smaller groups of people who hold different views... This is also nothing new.

There are several Christian organizations who help the poor, homeless, etc. but it seems we need more volunteers and government organizations that can help these destitute individuals. The American government has set up programs, such as food stamps, to help the poor, yet conservatives and conservative Christians oppose the idea of government funded programs to help America’s poor.

There is free thought, and there is slave thought... Is there a middle ground? I would like to think that I'm a freethinker, and to a certain extent I am. But everyone is influenced by social pressures, and the degree to which one resists or is compliant when it comes to a "forming ideas and opinions about religion, politics, morals, etc." is the degree to which one is a freethinker. And the freethinker forms these ideas and opinions "independent of tradition, authority, or established belief." When we deviate from convention, we will always face some resistance, as history teaches us; and we can also learn from history that good things come from standing up for our ideas when they are not in fashion. But to hold on to something that has proven itself in the past to be detrimental to humankind is to be a slave-thinker. And that is what those who hold to religion and established belief, while they criticize, censure, and condemn... This is just what the believer becomes, a slave-thinker, with his or her thoughts subjugated by the need for approval rather than feeling right by way of logic. But even logic must be true, as slave-thought is reinforced by a false logic.