



We can blame it all on Galileo . . . and Copernicus too for that matter. Before they started thinking about things — and proving them — we had stability. The earth was the center of the universe and everyone knew it. We were cosmologically stable. We weren't on some small, wet, spinning rock, orbiting a huge fireball

No.

We had it figured out.

God created us. He took some clay and made a life-size man. He took one of his ribs (?), made a woman out of it, kicked both of them out of Paradise, and said they should flourish. And they did. That was easy enough to deal with.

Then along came Darwin. Oy vey. He said, "Well, er, no. . . ." Now, we have to cope with the idea that we're the product of billions of years of bio-ooze squiggling around, combining with other tiny Oozites, getting bigger, swimming, crawling, climbing, walking, and then advancing to the peak of Earth's creation: a brain-dominated humanoid that makes bombs capable of killing all Earth life (except cockroaches) with the push of a shiny red button. Now that's progress.

OK, OK: it's probably not Galileo's fault. All that he and his buddies did was to bring the West up to date with what Buddha said a couple millennia ago: Everything is in motion; all forms change; everything is temporary. OK, so if we can't pin it on those guys, then who — or *what* — do we blame?

Le Brain

The brain likes to know what's happening. That's its job. This requires a universe of patterns. Nice, neat, stable patterns, like something you'd find in a nice, neat, fictitious universe. Without those patterns, life becomes chaotic. Oh, and hats off to Edward Lorentz, for stumbling headlong into chaos TheORY (as if Relativity wasn't bad enough), which led to a *science* of the unfathomable.

Intense happenings also convince the poor brain to discern patterns. When something impressive happens, it thinks, "Whoa! Intense! Yikes! Real!" It will continue applying that pattern, even in circumstances different from the original experience. Psychiatrists deal with this daily. They try to steer their patients to the understanding that their boss or spouse is not their mommy, daddy, or the ice cream man. Although time-related patterns exist "out there," many exist solely "in here," and Le Brain hallucinates and thinks they reflect "out there" reality. That's why change is so hard: "It is what it is" — even when Le Brain just *knows* it's something else.



Cha, Cha Changes

Buddha said that everything changes and is temporary. This is bad news, as humans seek security — some would rather die than change. It's no coincidence that many vision/versions of Heaven are built on the ideals of permanence and stability.

So, we find ourselves alive on a planet, equipped with a brain that wants something that doesn't exist, and wondering, "What the . . . ?" Our old time religion had provided a decent story, the assurance that the universe was stable and permanent, even if our little lives weren't. Unfortunately, the story was demonstrably wrong. Stupid Galileo. So, what to do? WHAT TO DO?

Accepting the reality in which we live is a start, even if our brains don't like it. (Who's serving whom anyway? Are we the slaves of our brain, or are we its master? Or worse, Are we our brains? Thank you very much Jean-Paul Sarte and associates.) To live in a reality where everything is temporary requires that we accept the truth about forms: they change.

Galaxies, stars, sun moon earth
Continents, creatures, all things of birth
We want them to stay
but they just won't:
Now you see them, now you don't.

Sentimentally, this is totally depressing. But on the sort-of upside, *everything* in the universe is subject to this law, even the gods. It's not personal. It's probably not even impersonal! And unless the universe is innately cruel — or even more stupid than Galileo — then there's probably a glimmer of hope.

Analogy

Imagine a Great Ocean as big as the universe. Imagine a Meta Sun, lighting the sea from within and without. Imagine the tips of waves reflecting its light. Each tip shimmers — for the briefest of moments — and then recedes back into the vast oceanness of it all . . . again and again.

Brother and Sisters
wet of faith,
Wave Tips vast and free
Our Heart Eyes rise —
a shining moment —
from the same supernatural Sea.



Brain Polish Remover

Even if this analogy reflects only a few droplets of truth about what's *really* happening, our brains continue telling us a different story: Usually, it says that other people are, well, just that: other people. Electromagnetic wave-thingies ("light") indiscriminately bounce off them, enter our eyes, and then scurry along neural pathways to reach the Central Command Center ("Le Brain"). Once there, this magnificent organ paints a Light picture on our reality-textured mind canvas. As an obsessive art critic, Le Brain instantly analyzes its creation, typically singling out some trait — sometimes an outstanding physical characteristic or something that reminds it of a past experience and judges it. "Hmm, a fat person. A fat person is. . . ." And this conclusion often emotes a familiar, patterned response.

Or maybe it was that volleyball coach, the one who had those menacingly overgrown eyebrows that jutted out in strange, rebellious ways as if to defy natural law. Remember? He kicked you off the high school team *for no reason!* The rat! Now, any time you see someone with those cruel, steel eyebrows you feel resentful.

These out-of-context associations release a torrent of emotion-producing brain-chemicals that make us react in predetermined ways. Jaws clench. Attitudes gain weight. Why, jeez: we're no better off than a dog hearing a bell, salivating, and expecting to be fed. ("Who asked you anyway, Dr. Pavlov.") But we're not dogs. Dogs have a better sense of smell than we do — and hearing too for that matter. However, we can learn to watch our brain acting habitually and then casually disregard what it concludes. Stupid brain

For example, say a young man sees a young woman with very large breasts. He will naturally think, "Hmm, I bet she'd like to discuss Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with me." So, after noting that initial cerebral comment, he could "get real" and consciously think, "She's another person whom I know nothing about. Maybe she likes Beethoven, maybe she doesn't." Real thinking reduces the Expectation Distortion Ratio (EDR) — the difference between what you want (or don't want) and what existential reality has in store for you. If he wants to construe the encounter at an even higher level, he could think, "There's a divine manifestation in human form." The truth is, he can construe it however he wants. The trick is to *construe consciously*. Construe, construe, construe. Consciously, consciously, consciously. This keeps your EDR within healthy limits.

We can master the brain, sort of. We can live with the fact that everything is temporary, including . . . gulp . . . our own egos. After all, the way that it is, is the way that it is — even if we deny, disbelieve, or don't like it! But this iPodian "Life-Is-Random" reality bubble could make even the most optimistic philosopher ask, "What's the use, man? Is it worth bothering to change anything?"

To which the universe might possibly consider answering with a quasi-affirmative, "Why not?"

If we can make ourselves aware of the possibility that we can change, then we *have changed* something. Most people, including Galileo, would agree that becoming more aware is worth it — "worth it" meaning it might do some good — "some good" meaning that someone might suffer less — "suffer less" meaning And if we can do that, then why not change or at least influence other conditions? Of course we can't change others. Actually, we can: by trying to change them, we make them resist being changed. But as part of the Great Ocean of Dance (GOD), we can reflect more of Its shimmering divine light, and others will change naturally, like it or not. And what's not to like? Beneath the flimsy layer of Le Brain consciousness, deeper beyond the oil-slick droplet of subconsciousness, there exists the Great Ocean. See *Beyond the Surface*.



Beyond the Surface

"Shine on Galileo," chants Buddha.
 "Shine on oh Buddha," shouts Christ.
 "Shine on my Jesus," sings GOD happily.
 Shine on, yes, all of your Light.

Shine on, shine on,
 shine on forever,
 shine on forever,
 shine on.

And so it is,
 Forever and ever,
 Forever and ever,
 Shine on.