

Kandidat 10, oppgave 1

“Worries about ...”objectivity” are characteristic of a secularized culture in which the scientist replaces the priest. The scientist is now seen as the person who keeps humanity in touch with something beyond itself.”

Mankind, at first glance, may look like a completely and utterly delusional species. Like we all are suffering from Alice in Wonderland syndrome, we seem to be under the misapprehension that we are far bigger than what we actually are. Despite needing very little to meet our basic needs and live fairly comfortably, we decided we need more. Far more. We destroy forests. Pollute the ocean with trash we simply could not be bothered to recycle or deal with. Drive formerly majestic and dominating species to extinction. Annihilate entire ecosystems. All because we can. All because we want to. All because we somehow convinced ourselves this was our right. Given to us, by us. Like giants. Stomping not only on other’s toes, but on their heads, murdering them in the process. We have, since the dawn of time done whatever we desire, whenever we desire, with no remorse or second thoughts. A seemingly fitting diagnosis would be to say that we are delusional. We do not know our own size and we do not know our place.

However, that might not be the case if you think about it one more time. Although we have massive egos and a clearly inflated sense of self-importance, we are, as all the great minds throughout history already have pointed out, rational creatures. We have a highly evolved ability to reflect and reason. Therefore, probably not delusional. At least that goes for most of us. The conclusion that can be drawn from this self-centeredness and egoism, is that we, collectively as a species, have a deeply biological rooted Napoleon complex. A complex most commonly seen in short men (and tiny dogs), who feel inferior due to their height, and compensate for what they feel they lack in centimetres, by constantly trying to assert their dominance. They might act rude or disrespectful to assert this dominance, they might show off their wealth or success, or drive top of the line race cars. The common denominator is that they put extreme effort into proving that just because they never grew past 1.70 metres, they are no less of a man. In fact, they might be more of a man than you are. It is all about compensation.

People are more alike than they seem. Things we thought were unique to one or two of us, might later turn out to be a trait that can be found in every single one. This is exactly the case with the Napoleon complex. It might seem to only be found in balding, newly divorced,

angry, short men, but we all have it. We know, although possibly deep down, exactly how small we are. How insignificant. So, we compensate by building skyscrapers and golden temples, and by destroying everything we touch, just to feel that slight rush of power. Just to compensate for how incredibly tiny we are.

However, this was not the only way we decided to cope with knowing how little we matter in the big scheme of things. Since the very beginning of humanity, faith has been absolutely vital in fighting this feeling of existential dread. We invented gods. Probably because even back in the pre-historic era of humanity, we knew that at the end of the day, nobody but ourselves cared about us. Nobody would notice a difference if we suddenly were to be wiped from the face of the earth. Our dogs and cats would not be upset that nobody was there to pet or feed them anymore. They would find a new source for food and continue living their lives as if nothing had happened. The fish would not notice, and even if they did notice, they would not care. Even the animals we hunt down and kill, would not start to wonder where the scary bald monkeys with their knives and guns went. They would not even be happy that the world was a tiny bit safer. The same goes for every single species we coexist with. The trees would keep growing, the circle of life would go on as always, Earth would keep turning, and the universe would keep expanding.

Our big brains and rational minds are often considered a blessing, but I would argue that it is nothing but a nuisance, a burden, and a literal curse that has done nothing but hurt us. We build warm houses and invent smartphones and call this comfortable success, that we thank our incredibly massive brains for. If you actually stop and weigh our superficial, physical comforts up against the toll it takes to be self-aware and able to reflect and experience the tormenting existential dread we all face, it is comparable to skinning a man and handing him a band-aid to make it better. It would have been better for everyone and everything if that one fish millions of years ago decided against growing legs, stepping out of the water, evolving into mammals, and later into humans. Not just for every other species, but for mankind too. Our brains should have been smaller, perhaps less rational or supplied with a far smaller ability to reflect over existential matters, because that very ability lead us straight to the realisation of our insignificance.

Humans have always known this, always been terrified by this, and with no other way to combat our fear, religion in many ways became our answer. By convincing ourselves that we actually *are* placed in this world for a reason, that we have a purpose and that someone or something created us and are watching our every move, made us feel important. Not just that,

but it creates an order. Humans have a need for order. It feels better to be part of an immaculate plan and system, than to believe that everything is a random chaos of atoms that just happen to bump into each other at the right time. Religion helped us with that too. It made us feel like we were in a functioning system.

Objectivity did not suddenly appear alongside the secularisation of societies. Religion too, gave us a sense of objectivity. A belief that there is a definitive right and a definitive wrong, there are absolute truths, and someone knows those rights, wrongs and truths. Maybe not us, but someone, God perhaps, knows. It was up to us to interpret what those truths, rules and guidelines were, but once we were sure we had figured out what God thought, we could hold this as objective facts. Objectivity is a comfort. It strengthens the belief in a system and lets us think that despite what it may seem like, the universe is more than just billions of lightyears of pure chaos. Because chaos is terrifying.

This, in addition to the threat to the hierarchy and the religious leaders' supremacy, is why the rise of science was a hard pill to swallow. Even though the priests and the bishops probably were the ones who were the most frightened when the scientists called their bluff – how on earth would they be able to control people and scam them out of their hard-earned money for a simple prayer now? – I do believe it is fair to assume that the common population were a tiny bit horrified as well. Science was questioning everything they had been taught to believe since they were children, and their comforting answers to their existential questions had been ripped away from them. They were no longer part of an immaculate plan or system, they did not have a significant place in this world, death would be their absolute end, and when their immediate family died, nobody would remember them.

I strongly believe this is why science's rise to power – once it properly started – was so quick. Millenniums of strong, rock-solid beliefs and "facts" have more or less, at least in the western world, ceased to exist over the span of just about two hundred years. That might seem like a long time but given the fact that religion and people's belief in the supernatural has been around since the first man walked the earth more than two hundred thousand years ago, that is meteoric speed. This happened because once mankind's previous answers to the Big Questions were discarded, we immediately needed to find new and better answers. Not one of us could stand the thought of leaving those questions unanswered. As science was religion's most powerful contestant, the ones who had stopped buying into religion went over to science's side.

The majority of the population of the western world has already made this switch, with new people converting to the glorious church of Einstein, Newton and Darwin every single day. It is however interesting that close to zero atheists decide not to believe in science either. There are two options, religion (or spirituality of another sort) or science, they might be mixed, but I am a hundred percent certain that most of us have never met a person who decided to put their faith in neither. And the conspiracy theorists do not count. If they are not religious, they do believe in science, even if their definition of science is based off alternative facts from self-proclaimed "scientists" on 4chan or Reddit. Nobody has made the conscious choice not to believe in science or religion. Part of the explanation to that might be that we do not have many other choices, if any at all. There is no strong third contender. Except there absolutely is. All of us have a third option.

Although you might be seen as an imbecile with a barely two-digit iq with no concept of source scepticism or common sense, it is a solid option to discard everything the church has said, everything any other spiritual movement has said, everything Stephen Hawking has said and everything Trump has said, and go solve your existential crisis on your own. Find your own truth. Go out and explore or sit down for a few days and just think until you have a viable solution or hypothesis. Nobody can stop you. Yet very few people have actually done this. Even fewer now perhaps, as we are fed answers, either scientific or religious, every single day since birth, and information is so easily available that it just makes more practical sense to google your way to the meaning of life, rather than actually doing all the work it takes to properly reflect over the matter. The absolute majority of us, and the absolute majority of every single person to ever have lived, chose to comfort themselves with either science or religion.

Humans are weak and agonizingly aware of it. Afraid. Conscious of the fact that we are replaceable, forgettable and insignificant. And we see the chaos. Experience it. Live it. So, we seek objectivity. There are answers in objectivity. Concrete answers that allow us to sleep at night. It creates a system. And where there is a system, everything has a place. Us as well. We long after the feeling of being in touch with something beyond ourselves. Whether that is Gods' wonderful creation or the astonishingly complex combination of cells and atoms that make up the universe, we strive to feel like a part of the puzzle. Religion has done its' job, and we have now employed science. Because objectivity feels safe. Trying to find a sense of objectivity on your own opens the possibility that you might never find it, so we seek out the ones who already found this objectivity. Or whoever came closest. We leave this exploration

Nr 4 i NM filosofi for vgs 2022 Leslie Berre, Foss vgs (Oslo)

of the horrifying road to objectivity to the bravest few, the ones who willingly face the challenge head on, well aware that they might lose the battle and find out that nothing matters, and the agonizing chaos is a fact. Most of us are too frightened to even try.

All because underneath our massive Napoleon complex, we are terrified, insecure and small.