

Whither ambition?

By Constance Scrafield

What did you want to be when you grew up? Did you have it all figured out by the time you were six? Big impossible ideas that made your grown-ups laugh at your naivety? Or were you still wondering yesterday? A bit of each, going through life, thinking, ?Ah, this is it. Now I know; now I have come home.? Only to find yet another path?

Lots of stories are out there about the epiphany brought about by simple coincidence - but is coincidence ever simple? And, by George, was life ever simpler or more complicated than it is now?

Never mind the despots; they have always been with us in one form, on one level or another. Each of them falls eventually, even while struggling most frantically at the end, messing with the postal system, chopping off the heads of his latest favourites ? yet, the end still comes. Somehow, all the pain and useless death gets noticed even by his blindest, greediest cohorts. When greed thinks the party's over, it moves on.

Let us agree and forever remember that no person stands at the top of anything without the total support of a huge number of people: if soldiers refuse to fight; if factory workers refuse to build; if people refuse to comply, then political, military and industrial despots could not come to power or they could not remain there.

Power is a matter of acquiescence on the part of the very people over whom that power is being wielded.

If we stand back a million, no a billion ? nope that's pocket money now too ? okay then, if we step back a trillion miles and have a look at what's the state of affairs here on earth, we could only laugh at the imbecility, the inanity. We'd find all this like a cartoon, so unbelievably chaotic and crazy that it has to be a joke ? a planet of jokes.

I was talking to Ricky Schaede this week about his upcoming art show and he was saying how to include cosmic designs into his paintings is irresistible for him. It's just who is he is ? the wonder and the magic of the stars and the universe ? for him is an endless source of inspiration. He says we are made of material from the heart of stars.

That's a pretty intense and interesting approach to humanity's love affair with the sky and all that we see into it at night.

My own take on our fascination with the cosmos is in our hopes that, someday, we will learn that we are not, as we still have some reason to believe we are, on our own in the endless and restless universe. For all our travelling mechanical explorers, pushed with mighty thrusts from earth's surface, for all our fantastically powerful telescopes, we are still barely scratching the surface of the never-ending.

For all our probing our neighbour, Mars, to ascertain whether folk ever lived there, so that we can imagine ourselves living there because those who know, admit that we have just about buggered up this perfect planet and must soon start breeding elsewhere, no matter how imperfect.

For all that, we still don't know much and we're still missing the point of it all.

Personally, I really hope, I am really sure ? statistically, we've been told ? by scientists ? that it is impossible for there not to be other lives, other beings, without any promise of what they will be like ? how they will breathe, nourish themselves, interact with each other ? I know they're out there and I speculate that they are watching us and have always been watching us.

The Chariot of the Gods researchers won my vote - that we have been being tampered with since our ancient times by beings coming from a point or points out there, too far and our space travelling robots cannot go. Yet, too bad, for if they were the mugs that set us

on the many paths of self-destruction that we have ever walked, then they're as mad as we.

Or: If this is not so, then, imagining that we can in some way compare feelings ? ours to some others: do they see us with horror ? or as the colossal joke depot? Can it be that to exist as sentient beings, we must go mad with murder and greed? There are countless fine human beings on this planet but very, very few of them are running any corner of it.

When you have thought about what you want to be ? does saving the world come into it? First, save the planet, with all that entails ? a long, very long list of ending harm; then, overall, there will be much less left to do because saving the planet will necessitate bringing to a halt all the rest of it: the wars which cause poverty; injustice which causes wars.