

Change and no-change

The subject is a further examination of the concept of "change/no-change."

The question of change arises on, immediately, two levels.

First, there is simple change in experience. On this level, any event, or the lack of an event when it is to be expected, is a change. What we are looking at, at a higher level, is changes in the way we think.

This is most simply illustrated, from a deductive standpoint, by the fact that a logically consistent, deductive form of thinking, is always based upon a set of underlying axioms and postulates, both stated and conscious and implicit, as well as stated or conscious. Thus, the events which are of significance, as in the case of scientific discovery, are events which are not consistent with a theorem which might be derived from a given set of axioms and postulates.



French philosopher René Descartes, in a 17th century engraving "Descartes simply takes everything which is disagreeable to a radically reductionist standpoint, and relegates it to the mystical domain of deus ex machina."



Brunelleschi's solution to the construction of the dome of Florence Cathedral (1420-36) was at the same time an astonishing engineering feat, a work of surpassing beauty, and a demonstration of the Western conception of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, which stressed the necessity of progress. It set into motion changes in society that increased the per capita power of mankind over nature, and the increasing security of the society.

So the practice of science and serious statecraft, i.e., something higher than the politics practiced in Washington, are ordered.

In both science and politics, the object is to increase the per capita power of society to exist and develop. This is the proper object of science. The essential difference between one set of underlying beliefs about science and another, from a practical standpoint, is which set of implicit axioms and postulates guide us to greater practical power over nature, per capita.

The same thing is true in politics: Which set of underlying political principles, notions of the nature of God, man, and nature in general, guide us to form some practice which corresponds to an increasing power of mankind over nature, and the increasing security of a society.

So, it is on the second level, of changes in axioms and postulates, at least implicitly, to the purpose of increasing the per capita power of man and society, that our attention ought to be primarily focused, rather than on the inferior level of the simple response to judging of simple experience. Hence, those aspects of experience, which do not challenge the existing set of axioms and postulates, belong to the area

of no-change, even though there may be change involved, of course.

This involves also, as we have already indicated, the case in which an event has occurred, which is anomalous, and which thereby would tend to require an overthrowing of existing sets of axioms and postulates, at least implicitly so. But, we refuse to recognize that event; or, we refuse to recognize the aspect of the event which represents this challenge. We do so in order to defend the system of axioms and postulates in use, against the threat which is represented by this anomalous event, or the anomalous aspect of an event (which is otherwise tolerated). So, *even though a change might seem to be required by the anomalous event, no-change occurs*, because the mind refuses to acknowledge the anomalous aspect of the occurrence, or, relegates it to some mystical realm, for which the conflict between the event and the axiomatic assumptions is reduced, as in the case of Descartes, who simply takes everything which is disagreeable to a radically reductionist standpoint, and relegates it to the mystical domain of *deus ex machina*. Thus, the problem is defined; and thus the importance of this subject of change/no-change in these discussions.