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6-9-2014

### June 9, 2014: "It matters what's true."

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Title: "It matters what's true."

Date: 2014-06-09T05:41:00.000-04:00

6/9/2014—We learn two things about meaning for Neil deGrasse Tyson in the last episode of the new Cosmos series. First, we learn that the breezy nihilism that I wrote about on this blog back on March 28 of this year from Episode 3--"We hunger for significance. For signs that our personal existence is of special meaning to the universe. To that end, we are all too eager to deceive ourselves and others. To discern a sacred image in a grilled cheese sandwich."—does not entirely reflect his view of the universe. Last night, in asking why it is worth doing science—by implication even if there is no economic pay off—Tyson said, "Because it matters what's true." Yes, it does. It matters. To paraphrase Tyson earlier, truth is of special meaning to the universe. And because truth matters, our efforts to discover truth are of special meaning to the universe. And because these efforts matter, we humans, and any other self-aware life that exists, are of special meaning to the universe. We very much need to wake up from the dream of nihilism. We also learn why Tyson is so earnest in claiming that we are not special. He is copying Carl Sagan. Last night, in the last episode, Tyson reframed Carl Sagan's "pale blue dot" monologue from the first Cosmos series. Tyson asked NASA to take one last picture of Earth as Voyager passed Neptune. Then, in the show, the viewer watches as Earth fades to the "pale blue dot." When Sagan says humans are not special, he is hoping that human cruelty will be lessened. But he is mistaken. Humans kill each other because of their fear that they are nothing. Not because they believe they are special. Nietzsche very agreed with both Sagan and Tyson that we are not special.