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January 15, 2019: What's Wrong?

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Title: What's Wrong?

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Came back to more bleakness. (But had a great trip)
1/15/2018—The answer, it seems, is everything. Political systems are obviously failing. See Trump, Brexit, Europe, China, Russia, etc. Economic systems are failing—see the frustration of ordinary people with the fruits of economies going to the wealthy while ordinary jobs disappear. At the same time, debt is growing—I heard last night \$254 trillion worldwide. That is not sustainable. And, on top of all that, as David Brooks pointed out in today's New York Times, people are increasingly cruel toward each other. Not just hatred toward immigrants but the call-out culture about everybody. This is why the-world-is-getting-better crowd is having so little impact. See Steven Pinker. It doesn't feel better. And then there is global warming, which threatens to end civilization. See Florida flooded and Las Vegas abandoned. (If that is the end of civilization) But of course all of this really is exaggerated. The world does always have problems and compared with WWII and the threat of nuclear annihilation, things have gotten better. The reason it feels so much worse is the absence of a beneficent myth. Materialism and positivism are just not sufficient to sustain human life. Neither is science per se. Humans need to live in a meaningful universe. We evolved to believe that and now, with the death of God, we don't. I know most of the world is composed of believers, but somehow even their beliefs have been undercut. Religion is now itself a source of hatred, rather than love. So, all we need is a new understanding of reality. One that combines meaning with nature. Not impossible, but more on how later.