

Anything Asserted Must Therefore Possibly Exist

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Anything Asserted Must Therefore Possibly Exist sounds like an insane and useless thing to posit yet it prevails in many people's thinking.

The world contains curious humans seeking explanations for things. Many things are unknown, complicated and unknowable - especially at the extremes of measurement. Things can be imagined and asserted - things like miracles, witches, purple dragons, aliens, gods, spaghetti monsters and many other things. These things can also be written about and put into books and stories and many people can believe these things to be real and "exist". These ideas can become popular and enjoyed as entertainment or as some kind of explanation of how things are in the face of the constant anxiety of the unknown.

Believing things exist - belief itself - seems to be part of the lower brain functions around the [amygdala](#) around what is usually called the "flight or fight" mechanism. You don't have to prove the monster exists to be strongly motivated enough to either run away or kill it. What I call the sunk cost bias (Similarity, Safety, Distance) combined with the confirmation bias (Expediency, Experience) seem to be two of the [strongest biases](#) (shortcuts to avoid thinking) humans have, although this constantly debated. In short, we are biased towards not expending energy - especially on brain function - if we do not have to.

Overcoming belief with hypothesis, exploration and discovery seems to have started to develop strongly around the 1400's - at about the same time believers were also doubling down on inquisitions, witch trials and more dogma and violence. The little ice age had an effect for many hundreds of years - food supplies were running low, famines, plagues and wars were killing people and the various religious zealots were trying to take over the world (e.g. Ottoman Empire).

In the 1400s some people claimed they were possessed by the devil or the devil had visited them in the night as shown in the story of [Angele de la Barthe](#) (1200's wikidata Q4764309) which is now considered fictional. [Matteuccia de Francesco](#) (1428 wikidata Q4948740) confessed to selling potions, turning herself into a fly and flying to a tree on the back of a demon. The belief in the devil and witches was also used as a political weapon and for revenge and profit - [Agnes Bernauer](#) (1400's wikidata Q764443). Some people stood up to the mad monks of the time see [Helena Scheuberin](#) (1485 wikidata Q4977341) but very few people took the risk of offending the powerful "church" of believers.

If someone claimed to know the devil and be possessed by the devil - this was immediately believed by those who claim to know god and be possessed by god. Even now, doctors struggle to deal with patients who come forward with their beliefs about themselves and the world around them lest their personal rights to believe anything they like are impinged upon.

"believe in God", "believe the science", "believe the book", "believe all woman" and similar slogans are designed to remove the need to question or investigate and to cancel hypothesis, exploration and discovery. Hypothesis and Carl Popper's [falsifiability](#) are replaced with "belief" and taking the knee to tribal mob belief.

Unknown events, sickness, infertility, crop failures, miracles, magic, exorcism, prayer, potions, medicine, etc - when overlaid with the binary Good/Bad extremist schema - was the basis for an **ongoing tribal warfare** where the believers were motivated to rid the world of the evil unbelievers,

people with personal and private delusions and mentally ill people. The papal bull of 1484 [Summis desiderantes affectibus](#) gave extreme power to Monks to prosecute people. [Malleus Maleficarum](#) 1486 - "Hammer of Witches" described and encouraged various methods of torture to get "confessions" and accuse more people. Books and people were burned and mandated belief was state sanctioned and violently enforced for hundreds of years.

[Cotton Mather](#) (1663 to 1728) wrote about his zealous beliefs and uses the same themes and structures in his speech that we see in many of the zealots around us today - a binary extremist zealot's template for the passive aggressive hero fighting all evil.

"None, but, The Father who sees in Secret, knows the Heart-breaking Exercises, wherewith I have Composed what is now going to be Exposed; Lest I should in any One Thing, miss of Doing my Designed Service for His Glory, and for His People; But I am now somewhat comfortably Assured of His favourable Acceptance; and, I will not Fear; what can a Satan do unto me" .. "I have indeed set my self to Countermine the whole PLOT of the Devil, against New-England, in every Branch of it, as far as one of my Darkness, can comprehend such a Work of Darkness."

The asserted thing is simply that - unproven, untested assertion - no matter how self-righteously zealous you are, strong your belief, how popular it is or how many people believe it.

Many so called educated people, professors and scientists believe all kinds of things without evidence but also claim that they *"cannot rule anything out"*. This is a nonsense statement in logic - essentially saying - regardless of any measureable evidence - I cannot rule your assertion out - instead of saying that's a nonsense assertion and you have to prove it. It is a similar idea to people who say *"prove that god does not exist"* - or for those men who have been through court processes or been grilled by the media *"prove you did not commit the asserted crime"*. Incoherent gibberish.

Another so-called argument is - *"just because they don't exist here or you have not seen one - does not mean they do not exist"*. Then they usually say *"hah-ha"* I got you. The point missed by these people - who assert and then play the non-existence proof game - is that there is an infinity of things which can be asserted. Why would I waste time on an infinity of assertions either confirming or denying the non-existence of them? [Neil Degrasse Tyson](#) - in a recent Youtube clip discussing "aliens" - entertains an asserted thing as if it might be "real" rather than dismiss it out of hand. He fails to see the problem category - in that it applies to everything asserted.

To quote [Christopher Hitchens](#) (1949 to 2011) *"what can be asserted without evidence can also be dismissed without evidence"*

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