

Flying By: My Experience of 2018

It's that time of year again! The time when the planet Earth is at that one particular spot in its orbit around the sun where a lot of us like to pause, reflect on our lives and the world we live in, and get wasted. So here are my own reflections on the year-that-was, 2018, and my experience of it.

In a number of regards my experience of this year was a boring repetition of the same-old same-old. I lived in the same apartment, worked the same job at the same location, drove the same car, and had the same friends, the same family situation and the same coworkers as the year prior. I don't view that as being a necessarily "bad" or "good" thing, it just is. It is/was the bedrock of stability from which I can look at everything else.

Traveling-wise, this year I traveled out to Las Vegas, New York City, West Virginia, Michigan, South Dakota and Chicago. So I was able to get some traveling in this year, albeit each one of these trips was a little short trip. I had the most fun in Las Vegas, which is kind of what the city is designed for. But going to New York City was my favorite of them all, simply because: I ♥ NYC.

My time in NYC this year was also probably the most eventful time for me, as far as different big events crammed into a small period of time goes. During my time there I saw a few long-time friends of mine, I ended the friendship with one of those friends, I narrowly missed meeting up with some new friends of mine, I met up with someone who was once a member of a cult that I was once tangentially involved with that nevertheless had a huge impact on my life, I became disillusioned with NVC (which some people also call a cult), and I realized there that going to public anarchist events is a waste of my time. Oh, and I also saw the remains of real-life dinosaurs!

This year I got involved with a bunch of different things/groups that go by Three Letter Acronyms: PCT, NVC, NFP, DSA, LSC. With each of these I went through cycles of thinking that they were quite interesting and that I had a bright future with them, to eventually thinking that they were quite boring and overblown. My thoughts on all of these things now is that they each have their place in life and the world at large, but also that putting too much faith or importance in them is best described with a Two Letter Acronym: BS.

Belief-system-wise, my heart is still with The Beautiful Idea of anarchy/anarchism. There is no particular hyphenated ideology of anarchism that I am tied to, I am more interested in the whole thing in general. Yes, the whole social scene/subculture that surrounds anarchism is total shit, but I am lucky to have some friends who are anarchists as well as a body of thought that speaks to how I see life and the world at large.

Speaking of the world at large, 2018 has been a big year for Politics! I spent a lot of time paying attention to mainstream politics this year, mainly in the U.S., but also in some other countries as well. I view mainstream politics, particularly in the U.S., as being a kind of team sport, and this year I treated it as such. My team that I root for is the Democrats, and so as the scandals, investigations, testimonies and elections wore on, I cheered as my team scored points, booed when the opposing team scored points, and strategized as to how the next few moves can and should play out. I have no illusions that the Democrats, nor any other political party or politician, will ever bring us freedom, meaning, a brave new future, or anything else worthwhile. The whole system is based on deception, death, destruction and despair, it is all propped up with outright violence and the threat thereof, and while it all plays out the Sixth Mass Extinction Event for this planet is continuing on unabated. But team sports, be it political or otherwise, can be a fun way to pass the time, and so that was a game that I partook in this year as well.

Speaking of entertainment, in the world of science fiction Star Trek and Star Wars surprisingly were not that big on my mind this year. 2017 was a big year for me for both of those franchises, but **not** 2018. This year I would say that my favorite sci-fi TV show was The Expanse, my favorite new sci- movie was Prospect and my favorite new publishing sci-fi author was the wonderful Kim Stanley Robinson. Yes, I acknowledge that there are other genres out there besides science fiction, I just don't see them as being interesting enough for me to write about here. □

Real-life science had an interesting year this year as well, what with SpaceX doing some cool things, a robotic lander successfully touching down on the surface of Mars, the first genetically engineered humans being born, and the details of our impending doom being laid out for all to see and ignore.

Speaking personally, one notable thing for me this year was that 2018 was the year that I turned 40. **40!** There is no more pretending that I am a youngling anymore! Ten years ago, when I turned 30, I went through a huge existential moment of trying to figure out who I am and what I am doing in the world. Turning 40 was far less dramatic, more subdued, more accepting of my place in life. I wonder if turning 50 will be similar?

Happy New Year to all! And good luck to New Horizons as it flies by Ultima Thule!