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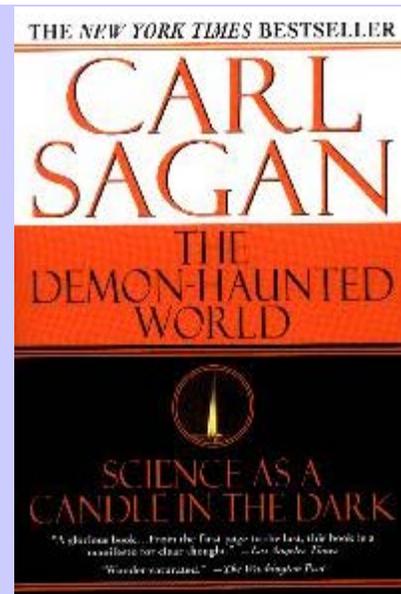
The Demon-Haunted World

Science as a Candle in the Dark

By [Carl Sagan](#)
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Our Review

Opinion of the webmaster, subject to debate

The good Dr. Sagan takes on all sort of New Age gobbledygook with this book. Fully half the book deals with UFOs, aliens and abductions (which he feels are connected, in an inverse sort of way). It certainly is current, even including Fox's "Alien Autopsy". As would be expected, most is dismissed, but at least it's done in his usual eloquent way. Actually, it's quite a thoughtful work, sure to provoke thought amongst the believers, or at least those believers open minded enough to give the book a look. Groom Lake is given a passing mention, in conjunction with the Aurora program, something which Sagan suggests there may be something to. He caps off the book by detailing how dismal the science programs have become in this country, and how we're all doomed to ignorance. Maybe we are. -- *tm*

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Information from the Publisher

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From the Book Cover

"POWERFUL...A stirring defense of informed rationality...Rich in surprising information and beautiful writing."

--*The Washington Post Book World*

How can we make intelligent decisions about our increasingly technology-driven lives if we don't understand the difference between the myths of pseudoscience, New Age thinking, and fundamentalist zealotry and the testable hypotheses of science?

Casting a wide net through history and culture, Sagan examines and authoritatively debunks such celebrated fallacies as witchcraft, faith healings, demons, and UFOs. And yet, disturbingly, in today's so-called information age, pseudoscience

is burgeoning, with stories of alien abduction, "channeling" past lives, and communal hallucinations commanding growing attention and respect. As Sagan demonstrates with lucid eloquence, the siren song of unreason is not just a cultural wrong turn but a dangerous plunge into darkness that threatens our most basic freedoms.

"A clear vision of what good science means and why it makes a difference...A testimonial to the power of science and a warning of the dangers of unrestrained credulity."

--*The Sciences*

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About the Author

DR. CARL SAGAN is a recent recipient of the Public Welfare Medal, the highest award of the National Academy of Sciences (for "distinguished contributions in the application of science to the public welfare ... No one has ever succeeded in conveying the wonder, excitement and joy of science as widely as Carl Sagan and few as well. His ability to capture the imagination of millions and to explain difficult concepts in understandable terms is a magnificent achievement").

A Pulitzer Prize winner, Dr. Sagan is the author of many bestsellers, including *Cosmos*, which became the most widely read science book ever published in the English language. The accompanying Emmy and Peabody award-winning television series became the most widely watched series in the history of public television until then, and has now been seen by 500 million people in 60 countries. He is currently the David Duncan Professor of Astronomy and Space Sciences at Cornell University; Distinguished Visiting Scientist at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology; and co-founder and president of The Planetary Society, the largest space-interest group in the world.

Dr. Sagan has played a leading role in the American space program since its inception, and in solving many enigmas about the planets.

The American Association of Physics Teachers, in giving him its Oersted Medal, included the following citation: "Carl Sagan has . . . acknowledged the responsibility of the scientist to call to the public's attention important and difficult national policy issues related to science such as the arms race, nuclear proliferation, and environmental concerns like the greenhouse effect and the ozone layer. As a debater who acted always in a thoughtful manner towards those with contrary views, he has sought to raise the intellectual and moral level of the discussion and greatly increased the public's awareness of these vital issues.... The Oersted Medal, given for notable contributions to the teaching of physics, is the highest honor the AAPT can bestow on an individual. Carl Sagan, master communicator and teacher in the broadest and deepest sense of the word, brings honor to the award."

Canada's Queens University, in presenting Dr. Sagan with one of his twenty-two honorary degrees, commented: "[Carl Sagan is an] awesomely gifted astrophysicist and arguably science's best living literary stylist.... As readers, we appreciate his implicit confidence in our intelligence and interest, his illuminating insights and his playful wit. As a community of scholars, we acknowledge with admiration his relentless pursuit of the really big question ... and the twin philosophies by which he lives and teaches: that 'Science is never finished' and that 'We make our world significant by the courage of our questions and the depth of our answers.' "

-- *From the Publisher*

Promotional Material from the Publisher

More praise for *The Demon-Haunted World*

"As I close this eloquent and fascinating book, I recall the final chapter title from one of Carl Sagan's earlier works, *Cosmos*. 'Who Speaks for Earth!' is a rhetorical question, but I presume to answer it. My candidate for planetary ambassador can be none other than Carl Sagan himself. He is wise, humane, witty, well read, and incapable of composing a dull sentence.... I wish I had written *The Demon-Haunted World*. Having failed to do so the least I can do is press it upon my friends. Please read this book."

-- -Richard Dawkins
The Times (London)

"Sagan takes no prisoners.... Unfailingly respectful of religion in general, he decries the love of ignorance at the heart of fundamentalism Closely argued ... Entertaining ... A major salve in the battle against irrationality and superstition."

--*Albany Times Union*

"In Sagan's characteristically elegant prose style, it offers a heady dose of common sense.... Every parent, teacher, clergyman, politician, and high school student should read it immediately."

--*Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*

"Skeptical books are . . . comparatively rare. Rarer still are those of the caliber of Carl Sagan's new work.... Impressive ... Persuasive ... Brave."

--*Scientific American*

"Lithe, well-supported, sometimes quite wry, and altogether refreshing."

--*Booklist*

"One man is not content to go gently into the dark night of irrationality, and his lucid and lyrical voice fills the pages of an important new book, *The Demon-Haunted World*.... A personal statement of one man's moving belief, wonderfully written."

--*Hackensack Sunday Record*

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