



A Literacy Narrative: What Color are the Sky and Clouds? Weixuan Sun

1. Lying on the grass, taking a shower of sunlight, squinting at the blue sky, I think what a wonderful world. The sky is blue, clouds are white, that's obvious. Isn't it?



Figure 1. Blacksburg's Sky

2. *The sky is blue, and the clouds are white.*
3. When I was a kid, I enjoyed reading books. Fairy tales were my

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favorite: how brave the prince is, how beautiful the princess is. I was drowning in books and believed this world was full of magic, and justice could finally beat evil. Even sometimes, I made connections from books to reality. I thought I was also a prince who had his fate: defeat the dragon, save the princess and own his kingdom. I trusted this world could separate itself from black and white. That time was the best years of my 19-year life.

4. *The sky cannot be blue, and clouds cannot be white.*
5. As I grew up, fairy tales could not satisfy my thirst for reading. I needed some stories that were more glorious, exciting, even dark. At this time, *A Song of Ice and Fire* showed up. This is the most exciting novel I have ever read. The distortion of human nature and kindness in the book is vividly reflected. Daenerys, who is the avenger, is taking back the glory of her family. A question emerges. On her way of revenge, which is just? Daenerys takes responsibility for something that wasn't hers when she was a kid. She has to take something back, but the price of her revenge is the people's suffering. She breaks the peace of people. However, in real life, would normal people care about her glory? I don't think so. What she did was hard to judge as black or white. It is more like a gray zone, which was a new concept to me at that time. It was my first time to realize the world is not a place that can be measured in black and white. Nothing is superficial. Everything, especially humanity, is complex and undefined.
6. *The sky is not blue, and the clouds are not white.*
7. When I was in high school, I had no time to read other things besides textbooks. I was like a balloon but my inside was not gas, but science. When I was learning Physics, I learned we see colors when a substance absorbs electromagnetic waves of the same energy as visible light. The substance takes on a color that the human eye can detect. The matter has different colors because it selectively absorbs visible light at different wavelengths. This means an object absorbs every color except the color which is definite itself. Like, why are hearts red? Because the heart absorbs every color, such as yellow, green, blue, and so on. Red is the only color it cannot absorb. The heart reflexes red and makes itself.

8. Humans distinguish one another by marking their differences, not similarities, as we distinguish color that is reflected back. Comparing things we both have causes too much attention, so we highlight the obvious. However, it is not who we are. Using these bad habits will only increase misunderstanding between you and me. Science taught me philosophy and helped me to question how to see the world.
9. *The sky is blue, and the clouds are white.*
10. For a long time, I believed that science was the only way to explain the world. However, with knowledge, I had more and more uneasy feelings showing up. What is the principle of science? In creationism, the principle is that only one true god by unknowable reason creates the world. In science, everything is based on Laws, like Hooke's Law of Elasticity, Archimedes' Principle of Buoyancy, Dalton's Law of Partial Pressures, Bernoulli's Law of Fluid Dynamics, and Newton's Laws of Motion. But these are only summaries of objective nature. They cannot be used to interpret the world. Take Lego bricks as an example. We all know Lego bricks are made of plastics. Thereby, we can use Lego bricks to build solid buildings, because we know the plastic structure. We would not let it exceed its carrying capacity. However, in science, we only know what science looks like, but we don't know what science is made of, and we don't know the carrying capacity of science. Therefore, these ideas were like a ghost haunting me over and over again: if science is like Lego bricks, what is the point?
11. Is Science just creationism in which the world is created by science instead of god? The difference between these two is the different belief ways, unbreakable belief or mathematical proof. These two are pretty similar. One uses the preacher, another one uses the professor. I realized if I trust science, I have to give up this question. I could ignore that millions of people followed science for thousands of years, but I could not accept that I wasted 18 years studying science. I was stagnated in Nihilism.
12. Why do I choose sky and clouds as my metaphors? The sky is our most intuitive sense of the universe. The possibilities of the universe are endless. Also, the clouds are white. The color white is the reflection of all light rays that can be detected by the eye. Therefore,

the question of the sky and clouds actually is what I am trying to use as the broadest possible thinking like clouds to understand what the truth is, like what the universe is made of. The true reason is, for thousands of years, humans have connected the sky and clouds at the same level. However, with the development of technology, humans realized the sky and clouds are not at the same level. In fact, they are two totally different things that have nothing in common. Science says that. Thereby, the ancients used celestial phenomena to explain God's will. Are we using science to explain nature's will? I do not know, and I will never know.

13. I was depressed when I got into the loop of Nihilism and spent a long time muddling through. I could not find the fate which I believed when I was a kid. I read many books of different types. I was reading literature of Japanese writers caught in cynicism, texts by some stream-of-consciousness writers, and koans in buddhism. I even read some occult readings related to tarot, divination and constellations to find the answer. But asking for help from these books did not help me. They are just explaining things they can explain, hiding things they cannot figure out, the same thing happening in science. I could not find a convincing answer for me. Until an old friend found me.
14. That old friend is Grimm's Fairy Tales. On the day I took out Grimm's Fairy Tales again, that kid I was came back to my soul. I enjoy the pureness of naivety and the taste of being simple. This is life that should be. Buddhism beliefs thinking is a bad habit, which should be abandoned. However, this belief is thought by thinking which already violates the principle of buddhism. Therefore, I would like to offer a better opinion: Thinking easily, would not let obsession occupy your brain. This world is not covered by mist. We just cannot see the truth even though it is just under our noise. Sky is blue because it is blue, clouds are white because they are white. As long as it is blue to you that will be the best answer of why it is blue. The world in your eyes is unique; only you are qualified to tell others what the world is like in your eyes. Science and creationism have the same state of explanation of your world. There shouldn't be any point of view that is completely opposed, and accepting a new point of view may bring unexpected results. No opinion is completely contradictory. Wouldn't this be better than living in a world full of differences?

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