

Review of: "Enlightenment, Meaning, and the Religion Versus Science-Academia Divide: Waking Up versus Waking Up"

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I will omit the usual formal statements typically part of a standard review. At the outset, I emphasize that I am aware that the author is primarily interested in dualism within the context of transcendent experiences and enlightenment conclusions. The author attempts to present arguments for the existence of the soul and the value of spiritual experiences, using examples from Buddhism and Western interpretations of spiritual practices. The author has formulated his article out of concern and a desire to highlight the meaning of human life.

Children are genetically predisposed to believe in supernatural beings such as spirits, angels, devils, and gods.

The author's original contribution to such discussions is the intensive emphasis on the necessity of considering the fact that research on young children has shown that we are born with stark dualistic beliefs. The author writes, quoting excerpts:

["As one researcher, Justin Barrett, put it: 'Children are prone to believe in supernatural beings such as spirits, ghosts, angels, devils, and gods during the first four years of life'... Barrett also added: 'Exactly why believing in souls or spirits that survive death is so natural for children (and adults) is an area of active research and debate. A consensus has emerged that children are born believers in some kind of afterlife, but not why this is so'... This situation was also considered by Olivera Petrovich, a psychologist at the University of Oxford, who conducted a survey of several international studies of children aged 4 to 7 and found that belief in God as a 'creator' is 'hardwired' in children and that 'atheism is definitely an acquired position'... Paul Bloom, a professor of psychology and director of the Mind and Development Lab at Yale University, writes: 'The universal themes of religion are not learned... They are part of human nature... Creationism - and belief in God - is bred in the bone'..."]

The fact that such beliefs are innate implies they should be encoded by DNA and that they had evolutionary origins... I suggest here that no one really has a clue how this could have fallen out of evolution, and this conundrum is clearly multiplied in light of... the inability to find the DNA origins for many individual characteristics... Furthermore, I have seen no evidence that this significant finding is for science 'an area of active research and debate.' Dualism/religion-consistent phenomena - and an alternative door to meaning - appear to be essentially out of bounds for academics..."]

However, in his article, the author primarily focuses on what he calls "profound transformational spiritual/religious experiences." Most of the article's text is devoted to considerations of these subjective, spiritual transcendental experiences viewed through the author's knowledge of Buddhism and Hinduism.

Comments from a slightly different perspective.

Therefore, instead of a detailed assessment of these extensive reflections by the author, I will attempt to present some observations concerning the relationship between science and religion formulated from a slightly different perspective.

The starting point for presenting these observations is the assertion that, unfortunately, neither science nor religion is capable of providing such answers to the greatest human dilemmas as: the meaning of human life, the origin and structure of the universe (proven constructive outline), a deep understanding of the nature of consciousness and the definition of identity, a convincing explanation of the concept of the soul, the question of the fate of our consciousness after death, the nature of incarnation, the emergence (argumentation) of positive ethics and morality, Job's dilemma, i.e., the need to explain the sense of unearned suffering.

In this situation, a convincing proposal is Clemat Vidal's, which I briefly present on the site titled "Central Christian dogma integrated with the concept of a cyclic Universe" [<https://basiclearning.angelfire.com/dogma-2.htm>]. However, I will repeat this reasoning here, which can be summarized under the title: "Integrating Central Christian Dogma with a Cyclic Universe Concept".

How to assess different worldviews and evaluate the weaknesses and strengths of scientific, religious, or philosophical worldviews?

Some intellectuals have recently argued that scientific and religious worldviews have specific weaknesses and strengths. They maintain that people need a worldview to cooperate with the people surrounding us and to experience the feeling of meaning in our lives. It is therefore necessary to establish a set of criteria and a battery of tests that allow us to assess a particular worldview.

Clement Vidal proposed three kinds of such criteria to evaluate worldviews: objective (consistency, in accordance with science, scope), subjective (subjective consistency, personal utility, emotionality), and intersubjective (intersubjective consistency, collective utility, narrativity).

Subjective consistency exists when the worldview is in accordance with our knowledge and experiences. Personal utility is assured when the worldview promises beneficial personal events. Emotionality happens when the worldview evokes favorably felt emotions. Intersubjective consistency happens when the worldview reduces conflicts between individuals. Collective utility occurs when the worldview facilitates a positive view of one's own life and mobilizes individuals to do what is socially beneficial. The worldview is narrative when it presents its messages in the form of stories.

Vidal remarks that "a worldview is more friendly when it fulfills more objective, subjective, and intersubjective criteria".

The presently circulating scientific worldviews often do not meet the criteria of personal utility and emotionality. They often do not prevent conflicts between people and do not encourage them to do activities that are socially beneficial.

Vidal and Carvalho argue that it is possible to improve a religious worldview in such a way that it becomes more consistent with scientific findings or to develop a scientific worldview in such a manner that it will be completed with subjective and intersubjective perspectives.

Vidal and Carvalho are convinced that both possible directions of the indicated ameliorations aim at constructing more comprehensive and coherent worldviews. This leads to two kinds of synthetic worldviews: the “comprehensive theological worldview” and the “comprehensive philosophical worldview.”

These two kinds of transformations have a similar aim; however, they use different starting points and a slightly different emphasis on the mentioned criteria. Both kinds of “comprehensive worldviews,” however, do not have features of scientific theories. To cover a wide range of issues, they must be speculative; nevertheless, the proposed speculations should be reasonable. They cannot contradict existing scientific knowledge and must constitute a coherent logical inference.

Clement Vidal illustrates his inference by proposing his very specific “comprehensive philosophical worldview. This worldview is in harmony with the contemporary point of view of cosmologists and philosophers who believe that the appearance of human life and consciousness on the cosmic plane was not accidental. Such an assumption leads some contemporary intellectuals to formulate the thesis that, as James Gardner writes, “intelligent life is the architect of the universe.”

It just happens that I, the undersigned, published a similar theory presenting the same message. [<https://ispub.com/IJWH/5/2/5091>] It can also serve as an example of a “comprehensive philosophical worldview.”

Clement Vidal does not attempt to formulate a “comprehensive theological worldview.” He only specifies the known trials of formulating the incipencies of such theological systems. He mentions the works of Teilhard de Chardin (1959), Whitehead (1930), Dowd (2007), as well as Murphy and Ellis (1996).

Locality of religious concepts

The above discourse highlighted the main difficulties faced by all scientific theories that attempt to answer the aforementioned “big, important questions.” I will devote, however, a few more sentences here to the main difficulties encountered by religious arguments. These difficulties can be summarized as the “locality of religious concepts resulting from the development of humanity.”

The “sets of beliefs of individual religions” are “certain kinds of stories.” In other words, they can be called legends that constitute local attempts to explain the world. However, these ‘explanatory attempts’ (these legends) must be treated equivalently because there is no way to prove that one is more true than the others. Often these legends are (at least

seemingly) contradictory, opposing, or of such a nature that it is impossible to determine that one, the other, or the third is true in reality. To put it more clearly, such is the relationship of all three monotheistic religions to Hinduism, Buddhism, and Shintoism. However, all these four "stories" are useful as propositions (models) for explaining reality. I can even say that the Christian concept has the qualities of a good 'philosophical speculation' or 'sci-fi story' and could be improved, as attempted e.g. by Frank Tipler. In considering such different "explanatory approaches" to the world, one can even make some observations about the progress of understanding. An example of such useful reflections can be found in the recently published book by Sabine Hossenfelder titled "Existential Physics," from which it follows that, according to her, a recognized physicist... the past still exists. It is important to acknowledge that there are no logical-systemic obstacles to some advanced civilization implementing some form of resurrection of the dead.

In the aforementioned article of mine titled "Central Christian dogma integrated with the concept of a cyclic Universe" [<https://basiclearning.angelfire.com/dogma-2.htm>], I try to present the possibilities of making the "Christian legend" a story justified by contemporary cosmological theories. This is not a presentation of a complete system of views, but only an offering of the idea attempting to integrate central Christian dogma with the currently widespread cosmological model of the cyclical Universe. It should be noted that the assumption that the existence of the Universe occurs cyclically is also necessary to propagate Vidal's above-mentioned and briefly discussed "comprehensive philosophical worldview." Therefore, according to the above discourse, this is a certain contribution to the formulation of a "comprehensive theological worldview."

In the greatest brevity, the proposed interpretation of the past and present Universe is as follows:

Central Christian dogma integrated with the concept of a cyclic Universe

The causes of the lack of God's reaction to undeserved suffering can be explained by a simple statment. The creator of this Universe is absent here! Therefore, it is not reasonable to hope that the Creator listens to prayers and influences the course of events. It seems to us, however, that the fanciful, three-parted concept of God preached within Christian doctrine "suits" the modern model of the cosmological cyclical Universe, which continues its development (its transformations) with the participation of people (beings living in it). Clement Vidal in chapter 8.3.3 (p. 183) of his book entitled "Six Levels of Universe Making" distinguishes possible higher levels of interventions in the properties of "child universes", calling them "Cosmic engineer" and "God player". The assumption of such higher levels of interventions would explain the possibility of a personage embodying the intentions of the Creator of an offspring universe appearing in "descendant universe".

In Christian religious terminology, this figure is the element of "Three Divine Persons". The origin and meaning of this third element of the Holy Trinity is defined within the so-called confession of faith. It is important to know and take into account the fact that the designation of the Son of God has changed somewhat over the centuries. These changes can be traced in encyclopedic entries (Creed, 2018). It is worth reading the English translation of the Nicene Creed in the section related to the Son of God (Nicene Creed, 2018).

The most recent formulation of the Creed was done by Pope Paul VI in 1968 and published as the so-called *Motu Proprio* (*Motu Proprio. Credo of the people of God*, 1968). An important formulation of this document is the statement that: "the Son of God ... is the Eternal Word, born of the Father before time began, and one in substance with the Father, homoousios to Patri".

The known non-religious analysis, as the psychoanalytic analysis of the essence of this central Christian dogma, was made by Carl Gustav Jung (Jung 1940).

To put it in a nutshell, the personage of God's Son, according to C.G. Jung, is an archetype to which the first generations of Christians appealed. This archetype has a specific property because it is based on a personage that links the Creator of the World and therefore a personage existing outside the present time and space, and someone who belongs to the present World. What is more, according to Carl Gustav Jung, this archetype also applies to the premonition of the divinity that exists within us. Hence, Jung's theory is in line with our proposal to integrate the concept of the three-person God with modern cosmological models and the feeling that someday people will play an important role in the cosmological plan. The attempt to mentally integrate the concept of God's Son, who appeared in the form of a human, with the modern cosmological model of the Cyclic Universe may be the beginning of the formulation of the mentioned "comprehensive theological worldview."

The idea "All Legends Together"

In formulating this review of Ted Christopher's work and the presented possible interpretation of the past and present Universe, I noticed that this conceptual framework might be useful in overcoming the fundamental difficulty of all religious systems, which I called the "locality of religious concepts resulting from the development of humanity." I remind - it is difficult to reconcile that the Christian legend is simultaneously true and that Hinduist, Buddhist, and Shintoist explanations are also true.

I wrote "it is difficult to reconcile," but perhaps these seemingly contradictory concepts can be reconciled based on the combined views of Spinoza and the aforementioned attempt to integrate Central Christian dogma with the concept of a cyclic Universe.

One should assume that there was no Creator of the Universe, as it has existed forever and will always exist, although it undergoes violent transformations, with participation of its inhabitants... intelligent, living beings. These violent transformations occur due to the cyclical nature of the transforming world. Thus, if we look at several such cycles, we can see periods when nothing exists but "quantum foam," which is probably close to Buddhist concepts. Hindu and Shinto polytheism can be conceptually included in the presented theory (let's call it "All Legends Together" - ALT). After all, it is easy to see that observations of the functioning of the Universe indicate the existence of intermediary forces. It would be difficult to attribute the events of 1917 in Fatima to the Supreme Being, the Creator of All Things.

In light of the presented concept "All Legends Together" - it is important and interesting to once again mention the facts

highlighted by the author of the reviewed article, Ted Christopher, namely, the arguments suggesting that children are genetically predisposed to believe in supernatural beings such as spirits, angels, devils, and gods. The genetic conditioning of such beliefs aligns with the view that the plan for the next version of the Universe is very detailed and includes the appearance of... religions, a Messiah, and the trend described by Teilhard de Chardin in humanity's striving towards the Omega Point.

Conclusion

The article "Enlightenment, Meaning, and the Religion Versus Science-Academia Divide: Waking Up versus Waking Up" is an interesting contribution to the debate on the relationship between science and religion. The author effectively emphasizes the importance of spiritual experiences and challenges the exclusivity of the materialistic approach to understanding human nature. Despite some shortcomings in empirical evidence and argument detail, this text deserves attention as a valuable voice in the discussion about the role of spirituality in human life.