

3) You reveal starkly the absurdity of preachers who describe a god as "infinite & therefore unknowable," but who then go on to describe him, her or it! Christinsane preachers like to say: "My kingdom is not of this earth, so gimme your dough!" Tertullian, the 'great' churchman, proclaimed: "I believe because it is absurd!" Yahweh remains a tribal god, who acknowledges the existence of other gods, such as Dagon. Such limited or finite gods can display their limitations & their lusts within The Universe or Infinite, without pretending to be The Universe or The Infinite itself. As you say, it is absurd to do murder in the name of an infinite god who is all-knowing, all-powerful & ever-present. Cults also wage war against "error," as if Truth could be destroyed by proponents of Untruth! In reality, truth has little to do with doing murder. Usually, the quarrel is over land & wealth, not gods or truth, but people like to justify their actions. Nietzsche observed that Christinsanity was 'good,' for it taught men to be clever: its doctrine had to be interpreted to justify what men were going to do, anyway! As you say, the promoters of such absurdity state that we can only reach the "Infinite" if we become children or even sheep. "Ignorance is Strength," as Big Brother would say.

You point out our imperfections in regard to knowledge & perceptions, & your description of art being 3 times removed from reality is both platonic & accurate. Some artists argue that their portrayal of reality is 'more realistic than reality itself,' in the eyes of the beholder. Political & religious cults have used art as a vehicle for a message, rather than as a representation of reality, as in Soviet "Socialist Realism," in which the image is subordinate to the message, as in comic strips. Such cults denounce the concept of "art for art's sake." Logical positivists who believe that "to be is to be perceived" argue that there may be no 'public reality at all,' since everything is supposedly perceived on a strictly individual basis, & the world exists in "the theater of our own minds." As we are warned, such concepts may lead us into solipsism, in which we can only know ourselves, or that we are The Universe, so nothing exists outside or beyond ourselves. One professor said that we were really talking about language & how we use it, rather than reality. I pointed out the fact that an invisible image can exist on film or paper, which can be perceived if we use certain processes. Would that mean that we created something which did not exist before, or did the image exist without our perception of it? How did this invisible image invade "the theater of our minds?" Fortunately, mental health facilities are available!

Perceptions rely on definitions, such as how we perceive someone to be a genius or not. One definition of a genius would be someone who can see normally unrelated things, & can relate them so that they become beautiful or useful. When James Watt saw steam lifting his mother's teakettle lid, he did not make note of it as I did, but he asked if that force could be used to "make wheels turn." His idea became something quite useful, although not necessarily beautiful. Genius can take many forms, as in accidental discoveries & transformations of dreams into realities. Its expression can also involve lots of hard work.

When we say that we see a bird, for example, we are really seeing a combination of form & possible motion, along with hearing possible sounds. When these stimuli conform with our mental imagery, we say that we see a bird. Usually, others with normal senses agree that they also see a bird, & since we count only one bird, we may agree that we see the same one! Of course, a solipsist would say that the bird & the fellow bird-watcher exist only in the solipsist's own mind. Oh well! If it is difficult or impossible for an ignoramus to know he is ignorant, is it also difficult or impossible for a person born blind to know he is blind? How would such a person distinguish colors? Some ancient Greeks echoed the solipsists in claiming that "man is the measure of all things." I understand that to mean that man can only measure that which he can perceive, so what he cannot perceive he cannot measure. It is another way of saying that man cannot exceed his abilities, just as horses do not normally fly. You point out the weasel-way in which preachers for power & profit exploit those they deem inferior to themselves, by calling them "the salt of the earth," &c. So we are to believe that the divinely stupid are just as divine as the wise. This would be as if we were to deem all people as "athletes," while we pretended to ignore their abilities or lack thereof in sports. As the great psychologist, P.T. Barnum, would say: "There's a sucker born every minute."

Indeed, how do we assess our 'achievements' apart from our own standards & the standards of our society? Man does not exist totally apart from others, for even a solipsist's mind is peopled, (I think), by other entities resembling humans. I came into a world not of my own making (to my knowledge), so I have taken my standards from my environment.

4) People have their own standards of achievement, based on what they do, no matter how insignificant their deeds, in their eyes & in the eyes of others. An athlete may be proud that he has increased the number of pushups he can perform within a given time; a bankster may enjoy his squeezing of an additional % of compound interest from his victim. Are we all insignificant? If we are part of The Universe, then we are as significant as any part, no matter how tiny, of a vast mechanism or great being. "For want of a nail... the war was lost." A tiny part is no less important in the Big Picture or the great scheme of things. This does not mean that we should exaggerate our importance, any more than we should entirely discount it. Since The Infinite encompasses all, that includes us.

As our knowledge increases, we see more & more similarities between the parts & the whole. I noticed the obvious similarity between our solar system & atomic structures: the sun is our atomic nucleus, & its planets are the electrons which encircle it. We see galaxies which are parts of something even greater, of which we are a part! This is truly magnificent.

If The Universe or The Infinite is a great being, or was a great being which died & is decomposing, as some think, are its parts still alive, as are one's cells when his body dies? If The Great Being exists in whole or in parts, we may guess that it would be sentient, that the parts would be in communication with one another, at least to the degree that our cells are in communication with our bodies.

As you say, we need new paradigms, which would be best achieved by keeping our minds open to new discoveries, instead of using paradigms which 'explain' things to our satisfaction, merely on behalf of personal power & profit, at the expense of those we can dupe. We must avoid Hilbergism, in which all facts outside his paradigm are rejected.

In regard to knowledge, our rule of acceptance should be based on "Cui bono?" Whom does such 'knowledge' benefit? If we know that such knowledge benefits us, & does not set us up for exploitation, then we may welcome such knowledge, on behalf of our own understanding & our own survival.

What is "absolute?" Have we ever discovered anything absolute, if it is subject to interpretation? My relative, William Thomson alias Lord Kelvin, derived Absolute Zero from experimentation. As temperature was lowered, he noted the slowing of molecular motion by degrees. He deduced that the reduction of velocity seemed proportional to the reduction in temperature, so he theorized that molecular motion would stop at -273.1°C . As I recall, the technology of his time (the 19th century) was incapable of lowering the temperature sufficiently to achieve Absolute Zero, but I've heard it was eventually achieved, without stopping molecular motion. In nature, facts often do not agree with paradigms, as occurred with the discovery of X-rays, which displaced the atom as the smallest thing in the universe. If molecular motion could be stopped by temperature reduction, it would seem likely that we could split atoms in refrigeration chambers. People might be warned not to turn their freezers down "too low." Remember the "Cold Fusion" scam? In my opinion, it's just as well that neither Absolute Zero nor Cold Fusion turned out in the way theorized. Imagine some sloppy chef triggering a nuclear reaction in his kitchen! It's too bad that the idiots who triggered The Chernobyl Disaster were ever allowed outside a kitchen. I wonder if any of them survived their avoidable folly.

People have noted that man's study of The Universe includes the study of man, himself. The observer is not apart from the object he observes, as we know from our thoughts on perception. Can we say that man is projecting himself into The Universe, rather than obtaining knowledge FROM The Universe? I suspect that the paradigm of The Universe is quite different from man's paradigm thereof. That is for us to find out.

Many thanks for your cogent thoughts on this Great Subject. New views of old things can & do confer new knowledge, which may lead us to new discoveries & new paradigms. I shall forward your great essay to Ron McVan who is an adept of the esoteric, & best able to appreciate your work, in my opinion. All the best & ORION!

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