

## Re: On Religion, confessions of a deist

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**From:** pseudonymicus (*who\_at\_what.where*)

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On 2004-12-04, Mike Helland <mobydikc@gmail.com> wrote:  
> *On Religion*

In a physics news group? What is your purpose here?

> 1. *God*

<snip>

Common and institutionalized misrepresentation of science, offered for reasons only known to the poster. Central argument seems to be that there are some things mankind was never meant to know.

For what its worth, here is a possible scientific scenario:

A science group is funded to investigate religion. After some amount of time and effort to get a handle on the matter in terms of the work of others, it is decided that religion can be initially divided into a couple common issues: 1) The existence of deities. 2) The existence of a non physical realm open to human experience (under certain conditions).

This roughly reflects the OP's presentation.

1) What is the evidence for the existence of deities? The answer is obvious: written records purporting to chronicle and describe them and their presence, though of what nature they are is difficult to determine. So far as I know, no other evidence is known to exist, so let us address these writings.

What is described is the existence of what can only be regarded as human beings with unknown technology and an indeterminate life span. It appears that they have some common background, some common progenitor and/or place of origin. Their historical presence appears to have ended at some point in the first millennium BC; their origin or arrival is said to have predated the rise of humanity as a "civilized" primate.

An important aspect of their technology was the ability to observe from some unknown distance, thus presumably acquiring real time knowledge of affairs and events without being observably present. Also strongly implied is a capability to act at a distance, to participate non-locally. No coherent explanation of this technology is offered, so far as we can now discern.

More can be said, but this is enough for the moment.

The question is now how to proceed. We cannot establish the validity of these records, though we can establish their antiquity. To some extent we can validate some of the specifics of these writings archaeologically, and so far as I know, little of these writings have been positively invalidated, shown to be in error in those matters we can check, though discrepancies in details abound. While we cannot authenticate any particular writing, chronicle, and/or account, we can apply some first level checks.

We can discern that, with regard matters we can understand, very little evidence exists to support the rejection of these writings as being necessarily fanciful. The authors appear to be quite as intelligent and perceptive of the reality of themselves and their environment as any given common man in today's street. What they don't understand, they describe as best they can. Therefore the assumption that these writings are the work of primitive and unintelligent people has little basis.

So if we apply the usual principles, we are led to posit our first protohypotheses on the basis that we're looking at factual accounts, probably reliable in general if not in specifics. No other approach is possible without assumptions that must require their own foundation and validation.

As we regard this evidence, we are struck by the fact that we are indeed looking at nothing we cannot even comprehend: a small remnant of a human society possessing unknown technology. We can even imagine a post-apocalyptic future that leaves our descendents severely diminished but still in possession of a technology that cannot be sustained by those who do not understand same. The part about the indeterminate lifespan is probably trivial, given what we already know about the mechanics of these matters.

So, our group of scientists, having inspected the primary evidence and ignored the subsequent flood of commentary, analysis and interpretation, arrive at their first tentative take on the matter of the deities. They are arguably human, and are in no way beyond the possibility of human comprehension.

What our group of scientists has not done is to take up as relevant any material not of primary nature, and has thus avoided involvement with the humungous mass of supposition and assumption that forms the basis of modern religions. Accordingly, our group has established that the first

of the two relevant matters lies well within the scope of investigation.

> 2. *Afterlife*

This approximates the second fundamental matter of religion: the existence of a non-physical reality that is open to human experience. Our group of scientists can dispose of this matter with dispatch.

One of the traditional articles of faith that scientists have held, and have carried forth as a matter of first test in any new realm of investigation, is that matter as we know it is present everywhere. And so far, this has proven to be the case. In fact, it would appear that much about our universe is consistent with Physics as we now know it.

That said, it is not the continuing validation of this article of faith that occupies current science at the bleeding edge. It is where our current model of Physics as it explains that article of faith breaks down. Thus, the most dramatic modern science addresses the unknown with but a single assumption: what we don't know must be consistent with what we do know, though how so is a matter to be determined. It is an assumption that underlies all science, because it is on that basis that we further our comprehension and understanding of ourselves and our environment.

Where our understanding breaks down, we patch and adjust until our notion, our "standard model", crumbles, having lost any hope of consistency and integrity. When that happens, we strive to discover from the evidence of what is real what the nature and essence of that reality actually is. And we fiddle with it until our preceding understanding is subsumed in a new model that continues to satisfy the two fundamental requirements, sufficiency and necessity.

Traditionally, it has been the experimentalists who have led us into unknown areas. But now, the work of the experimentalists has become so expensive that they are constrained to looking where the theorists have come to agree is most worth the resources and effort. So the theorists have now come to guide our efforts. This has had profound results.

Now we contemplate the nature of "reality" that does not fundamentally comprise traditional atom based physicality. For nearly a century, we have had both Relativity and Quantum Mechanics, neither of which are intuitively recognizable. Both are "models" from which accurate and precise predictions of experimental investigations have been produced, but they do not appear to emerge from a common meta-reality. So now we contemplate the existence of such "realities" that a) do not necessarily support the atomic model, but b) can be described as consistent in some manner with those that do.

Enter the multiple universe notions. Colliding "branes", and "worm holes", etc, are products of this new direction of work. In short, the old idea that the atomic universe must be universal has now been

accepted as at least potentially invalid. All that is asked is that whatever else exists is somehow either co-existent with our atomic reality, or that it enables us to perceive that reality as embracing more than we currently recognize.

So "non-physical realities" that are open to human experience are no longer thought to be proscribed. There is a school of thought in science that has it that what is not forbidden, must somehow exist. At the moment, such a "reality" is not known to be forbidden, and we can draw what conclusions we like.

One of those is that a "non-physical" reality probably does exist, whether or not we have a clue as to what it might be. And that is enough to satisfy the first (of many) stages of an investigation into the second attribute of religion. At least we can suppose that it does not comprise that which "mankind was never meant to know".

Note that nothing other than the attribute of non-physicality has been included here. Egyptian antiquity is probably the most coherent source of written evidence for this attribute, though no particular of that is used. We can include Egyptian antiquity here because of the compelling evidence that it is the source of our modern western religions: Mosaic Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Nothing further is accomplished here, except to determine that these matters may well emerge within the purview of science at some point.

> 3. *The Soul*

<snip>

Well, this is probably a corollary concern of non-physical reality in these investigations: how is all this immediately relevant to humanity? Is it possible that this matter emerges as well within the purview of science?

The answer, I think, may well be yes.

We are now in the process of investigating the human brain at a level that reveals to us the mechanisms involved, and we are discovering that much of "traditional" psychology comprises what must be acknowledge as astute and perceptive observations about the human psyche. But there is more.

In the last decade of the 20th century, Roger Penrose was involved in an investigation into what has been called Quantum Neurodynamics. Penrose is not one to put effort where it must be fruitless, even though there are those that speak of Penrose's "toilings". Suffice it to say that as far as we now know, the existence of a human "quantum" reality is not forbidden, or so I'm given to understand.

I would venture the opinion, however, that Tipler's efforts to popularize his Omega Theory constitute the basis of a likely premise for a science fiction theme, and does not serve its evidently intended purpose.

> 4. Conclusion

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> *Some would argue that this discourse On Religion is incomplete; I have not mentioned morality or the purpose and meaning of our lives. However I do not agree that these important discussions fall exclusively in the domain of religion and thus are covered elsewhere.*

I would argue that this discourse is not only incomplete, but without any perceivable foundation open to scientific investigation. Thus this entire post is without value in this venue.

> *I think the topics I have discussed are primarily of interest to religion and that my arguments give an adequate defense of my chosen world-view of deism.*

Well, they probably do. That is, however, of no arguable interest to science itself.

> \* <http://www.techmocracy.net/science/time.htm>

On the basis of what is posted here, I doubt this site is worth a look in any case. But then I guess I've my own notions about these things.

This has been a speculative response. I've no intention of pursuing a discussion here, and probably will not post here again. Nevertheless, it seemed to me that something other than the "drivel/idiot" thread that inevitably follows this sort of thing might be possible.

If there is any response to this at all, it's most likely to be from the "idiot" contingent, denigrating my "scientific conclusions". To that contingent, no response has value. Nevertheless, some closing comments.

No conclusions are drawn here, only a determination of the possibility of some first steps in a legitimate investigation of the material upon which western religion is based. Note that these religions themselves are not the subject of discussion, for they are well understood to be political constructs for the achievement of political agenda. Science is not concerned with human mythology, but with the nature and essence of the objective universe.

Physics and the hard sciences address the physical universe. Science itself is a methodology by which we strive to avoid fooling ourselves about matters of interest. It can be used in any investigation, and I have supposed that its use is valid here. In view of the traditional hoarwar between "science" and "religion", perhaps this response is appropriate.

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Usenet anonymity: HazMat suit!