

1.8 What are Worldviews?

"They are ill discoverers that think there is no land, when they can see nothing but sea." Francis Bacon

"To a hammer, all problems appear to be nails" Anonymous.

A worldview is much like a filter, of our own selection, that we use to restrict the flow of undesired information. Think of a red lens, viewing a sunset. Then think of a blue lens viewing that same sunset. Looking at the exact same thing, totally different views are obtained.

"I see NUHthing!" Sgt Shultz, Hogan's Heroes

We have mental filters, which restrict certain types of inputs. These filters allow only the information that supports our view of "what exists". This is our worldview. Worldviews filter information covering both daily existence, and abstractions. There are many concepts of that which constitutes a worldview. Here is a start:

A worldview encompasses "Life's essence and meaning". (*R. Zacharias*)

And another, this time covering the four questions that every human must answer:

1. What is real?
 2. Who is well off?
 3. Who is a really good person?
 4. How does one become a really good person?
- (*J.P. Moreland*)

And here is still another view:

Aspects of a worldview to be considered:

1. Reality and Truth (E.g., Creation Story)
2. View of the Value of Humanity
3. Intuitivity (View beyond the physical)
4. Morality (Personal Behavior Values)
5. Social Responsibility (Group Behavior Values)

And yet another view:

A worldview is that which gives meaning, purpose and truth in one's life.

One way that worldviews can be thought about is to look at a person's self-view, view of external reality, and the view of the relationship between the person and external reality.

Aspects of Worldviews

Worldviews can be very restrictive, or very broad. The following is a partial list of some of the aspects of a worldview.

Self-view (Me: Who am I?)

Below is an example of a list of components of “self”, ranked in order of control, and influence over other components. For example, “Muslim” influences “Husband”:

1. Involuntary components of self:

- Earthling
- Alive
- Human
- Male, adult, Caucasian, son, brother, uncle, nephew, etc.

2. Voluntary components of self:

- Atheist / Christian / Muslim / Buddhist / Hindu
- Husband
- Father, Grandfather, Great-grandfather
- American (geographical and cultural roots)
- Farmer (profession)
- Philosopher / Apologist / Good ‘Ol Boy / Mass Murderer (hobby)

Beyond the “self”, one views the external environment, or world, using tools to detect and determine reality. These are necessarily filters to the actual reality:

3. External Reality: Tools I Use To View The World:

- Sense Filters: 5 senses; Sense extensions, such as instrumentation.
- Data Filters: Empiricism, forensics (historical), tradition, revelation, logical philosophy.
- Rationality Filters: Fad philosophies; broadcast / pop realities.

The validity of one’s view of reality might (or might not) be challenged by using another set of tools:

5. External Reality: Tools I Use To Determine the Validity of My View The World:

- Usually none; no challenge.
- Principles of Logic, rational thought.
- Emotion; non-rational desires, lusts.

Beyond reality, there is a view of transcendence that requires still other tools:

6. External Reality: Tools I Use To View Ethics / Morality

- None, there is no right or wrong, only law and punishment.
- Internal moral compass (self directed)
- Human wisdom (from philosophy to soap operas to Oprah).
- Tradition. ('Twas always thus).
- Intuition / Revelation.

The validity of the transcendent can be questioned using these tools:

7. My relationship to the World: Tools I use to determine the validity of my view of Ethics / Morality:

- Human wisdom (from philosophy and logic to tradition to pop culture).
- Intuition, Revelation.

My worldview is my personal contact with, and view of, reality. My view of reality will color my view of morality, social responsibility, and my relationships with virtually everyone. If my world view is not synchronized in any way with yours, our ability to communicate is seriously impeded.

Moreover, if I do not understand my own worldview, including whether or not it accurately reflects **true** reality, my worldview might be schizophrenic, endorsing contradictory, illogical values. A worldview that contains contradictions is said to be ***“internally inconsistent”***.

Dualism

There can also be “dualism” crossover in a worldview. It is possible to restrain one’s ethical, moral views into one mental container, while allowing physical, naturalistic, materialistic views to be restrained to another container, even though the two concepts clash or contradict. For example a scientist might be a materialist empiricist from 8 to 5 pm, then come home and exhibit non-secular, non-materialist feelings such as love and respect, and moral behavior while with his family. The day-time materialism existence might deny the existence of such transcendent entities, but the scientist could ignore that contradiction while at home, thereby living non-coherently inside a worldview paradox. Western culture has become dualist, separating public secular naturalism and materialism from private spiritual, intuition and revelation.

From Nancy Percy, “Total Truth”.

Structural Elements of a Worldview.

Worldviews contain some common elements. These elements will be found in almost all worldviews, even if the holder of the worldview has not given them much, if any, thought.

Here is a list of elements common to most worldviews:

1. Cognition of essence of reality, and levels (Godelian) of reality:
 - a. Cognition of Natural essence
(First Principles of the existence of reality and truth)
 - b. Cognition of Intuitive essence
(First level of validation of the existence of reality and truth)
 - c. Cognition of Spiritual essence
(Second level of validation of the existence of reality and truth).

2. Stories concerning the essences:
 - a. Origin Story
 1. Origin of the cosmos
 2. Origin of life
 3. Origin of man
 - b. Purpose of Life Story
 - c. Value of Life Story
 - d. "Becoming" Story
 - e. Afterlife / Beyond life Story

3. Statements of Belief
 - a. Statement of Faith (Non-negotiable)
 - b. Statement of Ethos
 - c. Statement of Unacceptable Beliefs
 - d. Statement of The Wisdoms, Accepted Beliefs
 - e. Statement of Teaching, Education
 - f. Statement of Evil
 - g. Statement of Relationship with other Beliefs.

4. Hierarchy
 - a. Journeymen practioners; High Authorities
 - b. Teachers, Educators
 - c. Becomers, Students

5. Valued Unquestionable Legacies
 - a. Texts, documents, unquestionable absolute truths.

It has been said that few people have a coherent philosophy; fewer still have a coherent theology; but whether they know it or not all people have a worldview (coherent or not).

Every human has a worldview. Every human sees the world through a filter that is specific to his/her particular circumstances. So accurate communication has to compensate for each participant's own specific slant on the world. The next section shows how some concepts can be skewed incrementally, providing erroneous

segments that are plugged into worldviews. Communication with holders of such illogical worldviews is difficult.

Worldviews become **presuppositions** for all of one's approaches to life. Every decision, every response is made in congruence with one's worldview. The person probably doesn't even know, or at least doesn't think much about, the underlying basis for all of one's view of reality and truth.

1.9 Logic Creep

Logic Creep is a series of "logic" steps, which include small incremental fallacies, and which reach "interesting" conclusions. These fallacious thought processes are used intrinsically to arrive at fallacious worldviews. The logic is rarely deconstructed, and is generally presented as an unsupported conclusion, with the presuppositions concealed. I have outlined some logic "creepers" and have labeled the fallacies or hidden presuppositions at each step. (See Appendix for several examples of logic creep)

Intolerance Creeper

- We must be completely tolerant.
(This common premise is used as a psuedo- first principle, dangerous due to lack of qualification. Although it is assumed to be non-deniable, It is in fact false, since we do not tolerate everything).
- Because I am tolerant, I will tolerate everything, except intolerance.
(paradox: If intolerance cannot be tolerated, then I myself am intolerant... of intolerance).
- If you disagree with tolerating everything, you are intolerant.
(Fallacy: Ad Hominem Abusive)
- If you disagree with me and are thus intolerant, then I cannot tolerate you,
- because you are intolerable.

Truth – Religion – Intolerance Creeper

- We must tolerate all religions.
(worldview; another psuedo- first principle, dangerous due to lack of qualification; e.g. is neofascism a religion? Or infant sacrifice?)
- All religions must be tolerated equally.
(worldview; false)
- All religions are equal.
(Fallacy Domino: causality does not follow)
- All religions convey their truths equally.
(Fallacy Domino: causality does not follow)
- Each religion's truth is equal.
(Fallacy Domino: causality does not follow)
- There are many equal truths.
(Fallacy Ad Ignorantium)
- There is no one single truth.
(i.e. no absolute truth: Relativist's Paradox #5, above).
- If your religion claims absolute truth, it is wrong.

(value judgment, Fallacy Domino).

- If you claim absolute truth, you place your religion above others, therefore you are intolerant.

(value judgment; forms easily into a worldview).

This creeper demonstrates two worldview filters, three errors in a row, a paradox, with subsequent judgmental non sequitur “logic” based on those errors, which in turn becomes a value judgment.