

Response to Mercedes document

We can assume from the evidence in nature that we have three primary *purposes*; to eat, avoid being eaten, and procreate. Those of us born with all the normal physical and mental attributes have what is necessary to carry out these tasks. Humans, in their early simple primitive existence, accomplished their predetermined purposes without much thought until, in fact, they started reflecting on their actions. This was the start of a search for meaning and the beginning of spiritual awakening. As we evolved and found more efficient ways to survive and had more free time, doors opened up for us to start asking questions such as; “where is here,” “how did we get here,” “what force created life” and “what happens to us after we die.”

The first part of your paper explores these questions under the rubric of an evolution of intellectual thinking about God from the Judeo-Christian perspective. You explore various definitions of God. The Christian God is all good, infinite, eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, infallible. For Aquinas, God is the designer. A more contemporary view is one of God the fine tuner that created a world perfect for life. God is also defined as the first uncaused cause or, put differently, the action that started everything. Finally, you discuss Pascal who suggests the utility of believing in God outweighs nonbelief. Your formative epistemological tracing of beliefs about God can be looked at in several ways. I see it is man’s search for meaning in a meaningless world. Others might see this as the evolution of faith in a supreme being. Throughout your discussion of God, I sense a switching between God the infinite and the creator of all things to the personal God who is in our everyday life.

Perhaps most unnerving is our society’s present insistence on the role of God in the political process. Your mention of Dawkins critical analysis of the validity of rigid religious doctrines struck a chord with me. There is a great deal of justification for feeling that the organized religions of the world have become dangerous. They demand adherence by the faithful and punishment of the unfaithful. Even in our democracy with this constitutional separation of church and state, a lack of belief in God disqualifies you from participating as a full citizen.

I think you overstate science when you talk about its infallibility. That science is not meant to be infallible as exemplified by the scientific method. Scientific methodology raises questions, reviews the literature on questions, designs a methodology, carries out experimentation, reports findings and reaches conclusions. These conclusions are certainly not infallible as they are challenged by other scientists who conduct similar methods to either confirm or reject the previous findings. This is a continuing process and is considered a way to seek a better understanding. If Eagleton characterizes this as a declaration of infallibility, then he does not understand science.

In your conclusion you mentioned that if God is dead and we are faithless, then we must come to terms with our own unique end and annihilation. This assumes that faith-based people will be resurrected rather than annihilated. Isn’t this the same ploy Western religions use to scare people into their belief systems? I would rather adhere to a narrative in which we came from nothing, we experience being, and we will leave this world with our own unique footprint on it. Our true spirituality is based on how we emotionally experience being.

Thank you very much for all the hard work you put into writing your paper. It was very thought-provoking and useful for discussion.

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