

Postmodernism vs Christian Theism

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Introduction

For long, humans have strived to make sense of the world around them and sought to answer questions related to the purpose of life. With changing times, different worldviews emerged to present answers to these essential questions. These worldviews inform the actions and thought processes of their followers by outlining expectations regarding values, attitudes, and ethics. The worldview of any society is expressed through its philosophy, religion, and scientific beliefs and a framework of the societal culture (Gray, 2011). Different worldviews, such as Christian theism, secular materialism, Marxism, postmodernism, and pantheism/new spiritualism, have shaped peoples' thoughts and actions. This paper aims to compare and contrast postmodernism with Christian theism using the ["Ten Ways of Looking at the World"](#).

The Central Ideas

All worldviews entail certain themes, concerns, core ideas, and ultimate goals that distinguish them from the other. This section presents the central ideas of postmodernism and Christian theism.

Postmodernism

Postmodernism emerged in the latter part of the 20th century. The postmodern movement is characterized by scepticism and is based on the idea of relativism. This worldview presents a general distrust towards reason and is acutely sensitive to the ideologies that assert political and economic power. Postmodernism developed as a response to modernism and is often described as a denial of philosophical viewpoints prevalent in the Age of Enlightenment. The core ideas of this worldview reject the idea of objective reality and regard it as a conceptual construct. Postmodernists believe that there is no such thing as absolute truth and that science and technology are not a means of enlightenment. This worldview regards logic and reason as abstract ideas that are applicable only within the established traditions of intellect. Postmodernism believes that human psychology is shaped by certain social determinants rather than attitudes and dispositions (Duignan, 2020).

Christian Theism

Up until the 17th century, Christian theism was a prevalent worldview in the West. It pertains to the thoughts and actions regarding reality, humanity, the world, ethics, and history. The central tenet of

Christian theism is the supremacy of God. It deals with debates between faith and reason and seeks to answer ultimate truths about the reality of God and the creation of heaven and earth. The core concepts of Christian theism regard God as the omniscient ruler. It also regards God as the creator of the cosmos and considers humanity as created by God in his image, possessing intelligence, creativity, and morality. Additionally, Christian theists believe that humans can explore the world around them due to the divine intelligence bestowed upon them. This worldview focuses on the teachings of the Bible and Jesus Christ and addresses the issues of sin and redemption. Christian theism regards death as a means to enter the afterlife. Lastly, this worldview regards history as a sequence of events designed to fulfil the purpose intended by God (Naugle, 2019).

Compare and Contrast

Humans have sought to make sense of the world around them for long and have strived to explain it in different ways. Jeff Myers and David Noebel present ten different ways of looking at the world (2015). These include theology, philosophy, ethics, biology, psychology, sociology, law, politics, economics, and history. This section presents a comparison of Christian theism and postmodernism in light of these ten ways of looking at the world.

Theology

Regarding theology, Christianity presents a belief in the existence of a holy God who is the creator of the universe and is prepared for human life. It presents the attributes of God and the relation of the Holy Spirit with human beings. Meanwhile, postmodernism is characterized by theological suspicion, and it diverts the focus from an outside God to the world that we live in.

Philosophy

Christianity says that God bestowed human beings the ability to observe and understand the world around them. Humans have the capacity to contemplate because God has created them in His image. Postmodernism entails an anti-realism philosophy and says that reality is a relative concept rather than an absolute truth.

Ethics

Christianity says that the concepts of right and wrong are rooted in one's belief in God and are superior to the concepts of moral relativism. Meanwhile, postmodernism does not believe in absolute right and wrong. It does not define a set criterion for righteousness and evil and says that the sphere of morality is relative.

Biology

Christianity says that all living creatures were created by God rather than the spontaneous generation of life. God has organized life on this earth according to the species to which they belong.

Postmodernism follows an anti-essentialism approach and says that identity is not defined by set attributes.

Psychology

Christianity entails that all human beings need a Savior, and their body and soul need to be purified and guilt-free. Meanwhile, postmodernism follows the concept of a decentered self. It promotes a systematic and analytical approach to exploring the human psyche.

Sociology

According to Christian theism, a well-functioning society operates in a manner as ordained by God. In such a society, power is exercised by all institutions, including the family, church, and the state, in line with the authorities given by God. Postmodernism presents a social constructionist view of the world and believes that the interactions between individuals and their society attribute meaning to otherwise meaningless things.

Law

Christian theism believes in upholding the highest standards of justice and believes that human beings flourish in a society that maintains law and order. Postmodernism promotes an urgent need for advanced legal reasoning. Based on the idea of critical legal studies, postmodernism says that the legal system must be reformed to formulate improved legal processes.

Politics

Christian theism says that any political position is a gift from God and that Jesus is the only true King. Men form a government and political groups under the guidance provided by God. Meanwhile, postmodernists believe in a liberal political system. This liberalism promotes the rights of individuals and the ideals of liberty, a democratic government, and equality.

Economics

According to Christian theism, the use of property and monetary resources should be to glorify the Creator. The economy should be aimed at bringing benefits to the people rather than for personal

gains. Postmodernists believe in economic interventionism. This is characterized by economic policies that give governments the power to intervene in market processes to rectify market failures and to work towards the general welfare of society.

History

Christian theism views history as a series of events that occurred to fulfil God's ordained purpose. All events of history lead to the fulfillment of the Bible's promise of a future Kingdom led by Jesus Christ. Postmodernism presents the view of historical revisionism, which views historical events as a collective memory that could be altered by reviewing the historical evidence of that time. It does not view history as absolute truth (Myers & Noebel, 2015).

A Logical Defense

Over the years, various worldviews have emerged to guide the thoughts and actions of people following them. Each worldview presents a compelling argument about the various domains that it seeks to influence. While in Christian theism, the utmost reality is the presence of "an infinite, personal God revealed in the Holy Scriptures", postmodernists construct reality through language and believe in the existence of God while being sceptic of absolute truth (Sire, 2009). Postmodernism is based on humanistic structure, whereas the Christian worldview is based on the belief in divine power. Postmodernists view knowledge as created by humans; however, for Christian theists, knowledge resides in the teachings of the Bible.

Amongst the different worldviews, a more compelling argument is presented by Christian theism. The reasoning underlying Christianity is far more comprehensive than the newly emerging world views. Through the Bible, humans are provided an outline of the rules that they must abide by in their daily lives. It outlines the idea of right and wrong in an absolute manner rather than presenting it as a relative notion. It is important to note that certain acts are either right or wrong and must not be relatively judged to ensure that justice is upheld. Christian theism presents universal truths that are straightforwardly denied by the postmodern school of thought. Although many ideas in this world are open for discussion and may have numerous possible answers, these ideas may be debatable by individuals as per their understanding. However, the rules governing this universe, such as the presence of an omnipotent God and the truth about life, death, and the hereafter, are not relative.

The Christian worldview rests on the ultimate idea that all reality is from God. The creation of life on earth was not by a mere accident. Rather, it was upon the word of God that life came into being. Since this universe and all that it entails is from God, it logically follows that the choices we make will yield a response from Him. To guide these choices, the teachings of the Bible have been presented to humans; however, the decision to follow it rests entirely with us. The universe is created to promote order but is not fully determined. This gives humans the freedom of decision-making.

Another aspect of Christian theism that presents a compelling argument is that it views human beings as individuals created in the image of God. In essence, each individual is equipped with certain characteristics that not only differentiate them from others but also enable them to work collaboratively towards building a successful society. Although humans are created in God's image, we have the freedom to adapt our actions and behaviours as we desire. Therefore, in the beginning, when we are born, we are created in goodness. He creates us in His image because He desires us to glorify him and follow the path of righteousness. However, our actions are not predetermined, and each of us may take a path based on the social factors we encounter. In contrast, the postmodern worldview presents the idea that the identity of human beings is based on language (Myers & Noebel, 2015). Therefore, human beings are how they identify, i.e., they are who they say they are. While human beings exist in society, however, this society is not a determinant of what a human being is. Rather, it is our actions that define it.

Another argument that resonates as sound reasoning is the concept of heaven and hell presented in Christian theism as opposed to the absence of an afterlife promoted by postmodernism. It seems logical that since man is a creation of God, He created us with a purpose, and upon fulfilling this purpose, there will be judgment as well. This belief enables humans to be responsible for their actions in this world and enables them to continually reflect upon their deeds, striving to become better human beings (Sire, 2009). In contrast, the argument presented by postmodernists that death is not followed by an afterlife does not leave a purpose for the time we are spending in this world. This disregard for life after death makes all that we do in this world quite meaningless.

Common Ground

Numerous distinguishing factors set postmodernism apart from Christian theism. However, the followers of the two worldviews can find common ground and exist in harmony. Both worldviews believe in upholding the law of the land and believe that justice is important for the harmony of any society. While Christian theist believes in upholding the highest standards of justice and maintenance of law and order, postmodernists promote an urgent need for advanced legal reasoning (Myers & Noebel, 2015). They believe that our current legal system requires reform through critical legal studies. Based on this common ground, the two worldviews can not only work together towards the betterment of the legal system but can help in creating a society that follows the legal standards as outlined in the Bible and is backed by critical study.

The second common ground can be found in the formation of society. According to Christian theism, a well-functioning society operates in a manner as ordained by God. In such a society, power is exercised by all institutions, including the family, church, and state, in line with the authorities given by God. Postmodernism presents a social constructionist view of the world and believes that the interactions between individuals and their society attribute meaning to otherwise meaningless things. Merging the two views and providing the structure of social interaction can not only empower institutions but can also help individuals attribute meaning to the things around them (Sullivan &

Pecorino, 2002).

Over centuries, many worldviews have shaped the thoughts and actions of individuals. However, only through an amalgamation of the teachings of different worldviews can one develop a society that is in line with the demands of the current world.

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