



Destaque Semanal

Pan-Africanism

Pan-Africanism refers to the conviction that all Africans and descendants of Africans in the diaspora share a common history, common interests and, ultimately, a common fate which thus(...)

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Worldview

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Worldview is a combination of ideas, beliefs, sentiments, experiences and traditions by which a subject understands the world and interacts in it. The expression 'understanding of the world' renders the meaning of worldview and highlights its interconnectedness with the notion of knowledge. Worldview identifies an encompassing religious, philosophical, cultural, political and/or ideological system oriented and orienting knowledge, its production and the actions originating from it. It provides a path to respond to existential questions of individual and community life related to the origin, meaning, orientation, morality and the aesthetic of things. Subjects (individuals or groups) understand reality and act within it through their worldview ('*cosmovisión*' in Spanish). The term traces back to Immanuel Kant who coined the word '*Weltanschauung*' (*Welt* = world and *anschauung* = view, also translated as outlook, intuition, perception) and has been widely discussed in hermeneutics by various philosophers such as Wilhelm Dilthey, Martin Heidegger, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Hans-Georg Gadamer.

Worldviews are broad conceptions rooted in communities, practices and beliefs. The role of reason in defining its limits and characteristics is controversial and prone to conflicting positions. Western worldviews advocate for the supremacy of reason in justifying and developing knowledge, for the collective incremental effort to understand the world to be codified in the sciences, and for non-scientific knowledge to be diminished. If reason and human beings are not the centre of the worldview, the understanding of the role of human beings in the universe, the scope of life and the very nature of its relations with the others (community, Nature) and with its own life is radically different.

Worldviews are dynamic and world history has been characterised by interactions between different peoples intensified with domination and empires (i.e., the Persian, Macedonian, Roman, Mogul, Arabic, etc.). This created a melting pot of worldviews and made new philosophies emerge. Worldviews are generally a consequence of violence – rather than dialogue – and with an implicit loss of knowledge. History registers the worldview of the winner and ignores the worldviews of those that are marginalised or destroyed. The harshest clash of worldviews occurred since the end of the XV century, with the modern European colonisation carried out by Portugal, Spain, Holland, England and France, and, since the end of XIX century, by many other European countries. European colonialism coupled violence (genocide, slavery, war, oppression, domination) and anthropocentric reason in a euro-centric system of world relations where the supremacy of western science, politics, law and technique was superimposed on the world, thereby inflicting a heavy hindrance in non-European worldviews. As a result, western knowledge imposed itself as the pattern of world knowledge together with its concept of development encompassing industrialisation, objectification of Nature, consumerism, elitist representation and market liberalism. Since European colonialism, the euro-centric worldviews became global.

Other worldviews question this state-of-affairs. For instance, the Indigenous people of the Andean region of Latin America regard Nature as the superior living being, and as a consequence the existential importance of the individual is traced by their relations within the Natural harmony and in the community, outside of which they lose their dignity. To respect the individual one should respect the basic relations with Nature and community. Human autonomy is inscribed in the autonomy of the whole communitarian and Natural harmonies. Rather than pure rationality, Andean worldviews are rooted on relationality, correspondence, complementarity and reciprocity of all beings. In this perspective, reason is one among other sources of knowledge and inferior with respect to the overall harmony of '*Pachamama*' or Nature. It is only in conformity with the relational dimension of life that human reason can achieve its potential.

The Hindu worldviews identify in *moksha* a controversial dimension of life-transcendence that is broadly understood as liberation. According to these worldviews the spiritual dimension of life is cultivated as an ultimate goal, in coexistence with the goals of worldly life. The supreme objective is total liberation from selflessness and physical constraints. Different Hindu worldviews read the path of self-transcendence differently and they set different targets of liberation (from pain, negative situations, reincarnation, within life or after death). Some advocate for the superiority of moral and spiritual pursuits over physical goals while others promote the notion of equilibrium among the two. However, none of them question the importance of morality and self-transcendence that advocates for a dedication to others, personal renunciation and liberation from desires and wants.

Cognitive justice, or respect for different worldviews, is advocated through an 'ecological thinking' which promotes dialogue among different worldviews through the practice of 'intercultural translations'. This is promoted because the 'understandings of the world by far exceeds the western understanding of the world'.

References and further readings:

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Mishra, R. C. (2013), "Moksha and the Hindu Worldview", *Psychology & Developing Societies*, 25(1): 21–42. doi: 10.1177/0971333613477318.

Santos, Boaventura de Sousa (2014), *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers. Especially Chapter 7 "Ecologies of Knowledges" (pp. 188-211) and Chapter 8 "Intercultural Translation: Differing and Sharing con Passionalità" (pp. 236-235).

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