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This page was added by the journal. The article begins on the next page.

God is Dead, Psychology is Dead and Fear is Dead: A Global Worldview Critical Analysis

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Abstract

One cannot ignore the juxtaposition of sustaining an African future with sustaining a Western civilization future. It has to be troubled from the start, that any assertion that Africa or any other nation in development ought to necessarily follow the way of the so-called First World nations (Western civilization). Under pressures globally of a loss of future(s) on many fronts, exacerbated by careless and unjust development policies in the West, one has to question if anything like sustainability is even possible. What does that term mean anymore? It is a term that invokes a future; but what is this future coming? What can one in any nation, but particularly in Africa, do to re-vice the imperatives of Western civilization and the Western knowledge pursuit, especially since 17th century European Enlightenment? The study critically sought to provide an insight on how to sustainably develop Africa in the Covid -19 periods through fear management.

Keywords: Fear, Psychology, Transdisciplinarity, Sustainability, Africa

Introduction

The discourse will begin and focus on the use of "dead" in this provocative title. Based on the famous quote from existential philosopher Fredrich Nietzsche, father of postmodernism, one must be more than cautious about the nature of the Enlightenment motivations and pursuits—that is, knowledge quest for "progress" (and sustainability). Ultimately, Nietzche is more famous for his quote "God is dead." The American contemporary Integral philosopher Ken Wilber has said "psychology is dead" with a provocation to re-examine everything we think we know about psychology. All of the old assumptions need to be upturned and re-examined as the world we are living and going to be living, with cascading crises (e.g., Coronavirus pandemic). Are worlds of futures demanding more than our enlightenment psychologies, or religions, are capable of handling well? Why? The reason is simply because fear management/education is very far behind the times.

Moreover, it is this last point the researcher made from his 31 years of research into the Fear Problem. So, it is appropriate in the indictments of Nietzsche with Wilber to then add the authors view to the trio of calls for a severe (but not nihilistic) indictment of Western civilization and its (Dominant) worldview. From the researcher's perspective, "*fear is dead*." Furthermore, although this is not the main focus of this article, it is underpinning of its entirety and, arguably, it underlies the iconic statements by Nietzsche and Wilber.

The Problem

It is imperative to portray and analyse what human species are facing in the era of Covid-19. The researcher has not taken time to articulate the cascading crises of what is now dubbed the Anthropocene era. The thought here are somewhat mute and wholly insufficient to the demand to critically analyze the world's problems and put those in the context of analyzing Africa's problems.

Literature Review

Form the foregoing idea that "fear is dead" *Fear knowledge is dead,* is the more accurate description of the researchers assessment *via* the Fear Problem on this planet. Understanding the Western worldview, before (and underlying) diverse "cultures," "religions", "ethnicities", "politics" among others is the source of interest in this study. The *worldview* idea stands for the underlying assumptions of the nature of the universe, of one's place in the universe, of the role one is supposed to play in that worldview (i.e., ethics) and all values and beliefs, discourses, fall within the architecture of an adopted worldview. All worldviews are constructed socially, and in many ways, are arbitrary. However, also they provide 'substance' of meaning and purpose, of which cultural anthropologist Ernest Becker would call "buffers" to the raw human condition with its concomitant(unpleasant) knowledge that 'you are going to die' eventually. He called it "death anxiety" at the root of human behaviour, individually and collectively (e.g., Terror Management Theory). A good deal of research on worldviews is worthy of study, and the study will only briefly discuss those studies and findings that are most pertinent to this discourse on fear and the future.

The accumulated knowledge on fear (and our *fear education* process) has failed us as a species, with the Western civilizing (conditioning) at the forefront of the failing (if not distorting) evolution of knowledge/culture and economic progress. At least, that is where the researcher starts as a proposition. So, the research draw from many works of other scholars and sources holding this proposition. For one, we ought to turn to the great late existential philosopher-artist Albert Camus, who wrote of the fate of the Western knowledge quest since the Enlightenment:

1. 17th century was of the century of mathematics,

2. 18th century was that of physics,
3. 19th century of biology, and
4. 20th century is the century of fear (c. 1946)

Besides the 21st century is the century of terror. Turn to Y2K global fear of a collapse of computers and clocks, and such with the turn of a new millennium (2000) and then 9/11 and then the ongoing "War on Terror" declared by the USA (and supported by its military allies)—the world's futures changed and were lost on many levels of existence. We have not as a civilization and globalizing world recovered from those events of traumatic and iconic nature—affecting everywhere and everyone. Africa's future is tied in with these events, like it or not. Nevertheless, the point of Camus' is the focus. It seems he is saying that it is modernism that needs revisioning, needs deconstruction, and needs to ask itself "why has a century of fear" become the actualized product of our good intentions of the Western Enlightenment to set us all free (from premodernity)?

The researcher's theory: the very Western Enlightenment (and civilizing) agenda, unfortunately, was deluded from the start, because it underestimated the nature and role of the fear of death in shaping all human activity—including the 'scientific' pursuit—and, before that, likewise the 'religious' pursuit for freedom/transcendence, among others was also motivated by fear—that is, a fear-based worldview. It is this fear-based worldview that has dominated humanity, especially in the Western worlds for so long it has become the water we swim in, and thus it is invisible (virtually). We do not recognize that the fear of death led to knowledge and in ignoring the 'betterment' of fear management and fear education, we repressed death and repressed fear with it for the most part. The duo came back to haunt the world in the 20th century, as Camus so nicely expressed. The basic 20th-century Freudian psychoanalytical principle of, 'return of the repressed' (but going back to Nietzsche's writings as well in the 19th century) is apt. Ignore fear in your knowledge pursuit and fear will be the result of your knowledge pursuit—and, add to all that, fear will be the result of your "development." From individual to group to nation—all have been infected by this viral fear-based worldview.

A colleague Four Arrows' has given an account in detail of the Indigenous Worldview that operated reasonably well for 99% of our history as a species of *Homo sapiens*, and he contrasts that with the fear-based Dominant Worldview of 1% of our history (modernism, postmodernism). He asserts, as the researcher do, we are now being called to recognize the "diagnose" of a sick worldview and, we ought to not spread it one bit further before it is too late. The researcher has a different theory and psychology from Four Arrows' proposition, but collaborates with his works and ideas. This is a fearlessness worldview (philosophy and

psychology) which is awaiting birth in a post-postmodern (i.e., Integral) worldview. The study of fear, in this context, has to be a complicated one, defining fear from a transdisciplinary perspective (e.g., *via* fearology). This definition all can add a critical worldview analysis and new solutions to Africa's future if it so chooses to do the inventory of its history and fear-based worldviews—and re-discover and integrate the ancient wise worldview(s) of ancestors (e.g., Yoruba tradition). However, going only back to the past will not be enough either, the danger there is always a romantic nostalgia for 'the good old ways.' However, that cannot be the only way to rebuild a healthy, sustainable and sane worldview for the 21st century, a century of terror.

Conclusion & Recommendations

Four Arrows' concluded: "our worldview, not our technologies, can save us." Furthermore, the study agrees in principle—and, we will have to build a worldview for our times consistent with the advance of fear education for everyone. The influence from many sources in how best to understand and analyze the deeper motivational core of our guiding worldviews, to mention only a few directions of my influences is obviously expressed. It would include research on worldviews, aesthetic research (my A-ness vs D-ness experiments), Ken Wilber's "spectrum" for new epistemologies founded on a theory of consciousness, development, evolution of multiple holoarchical levels of progress, the relational (and feminist, post-colonial) turn in philosophy and postmodernism, and matrixial (mother-child based) theories like Bracha L. Ettinger and Four Arrows' Indigenous worldviews (based on his "point of departure" theory).

Besides, the views of the Terror Management Theory (Sheldon Solomon's work) and the engagements with the philosophy of fearism (Desh Subba) is also important. Such gives one a sense of the diversity to develop the topic of worldviews and philosophies related to fear and fearlessness. It is up to each of us as futurists, personally and professionally, to pursue study and follow-up as collaborations IF we genuinely want to revise the very worldview that got us into such a mess. If not, we will repeat history and re-create the same problems, just different in form, from that, we are trying to solve in the first place.

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