

CONFRONTING THE CHALLENGES OF CONFLICTING WORLD VIEWS

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ABSTRACT

There is a multiplicity of points of disagreement among world views; so many that to pursue them would be voluminous and pointless in the context of this paper. Instead, focus is put on the major reactions, conditions, and difficulties that arise from disagreement in general and disagreement involving world views in particular. These consequences are the challenges.

These challenges are given specific solutions. For example, breakdowns in communication often occur when there is disagreement; one can confront that with phatic conversation. One may also shift one's purpose for communicating in the first place to make it possible to continue talking in spite of disagreement.

The contextual definitions of the key terms of the topic are made explicit, and the interpretation of the topic is clearly stated.

The genesis of conflict lies in the attempt of someone to communicate with another; otherwise, there are not sufficient conditions for conflict. As the genesis of conflict is made possible by communication, its cessation is also possible through communication.

An outline of the conditions for confronting is marked. This involves the ability to be located in present time and space, willingness to communicate, etc. A table of principal challenges and their solutions is provided.

CONFRONTING THE CHALLENGES OF CONFLICTING WORLD VIEWS

The title phrase of this paper implies two motifs, namely, comprehensiveness and disharmony; the notion of comprehensiveness comes from "world views," and the notion of disharmony comes from the words "confronting," "challenges" and "conflicting." By the end of this essay, the conviction, that where conflict now exists, harmony could be created, will be felt; this will be achieved by offering many specific and practical solutions for the challenges resulting from ideational conflicts.

Conflict results where there is a breakdown in communication between two or more living beings or terminals. Where there is a breakdown in communication, there is a loss of mutual understanding. When there is a loss or lack of understanding, irrationality and violations against life are committed. The way back to mutual understanding and harmony is through communication; however, communication between opposing forces could only be reestablished by primarily rehabilitating the combatants' willingness to confront each other and secondarily by rehabilitating their willingness to confront the data which is the apparent source of the conflict.

Since nobody actually confronts anything for anyone else, in the sense that the character of the one substituted is benefited, in principle, no medium is sought to relay communication between the holders of varying world views. This means that there would be no authority except that of the communicators—no scholars, experts or leaders of anything. Similarly, in this essay, I presume I am communicating directly to the reader; therefore, no references to authority will be made so as to avoid having the audience attempt to confront the points of this essay through the medium of an authority. For example, many times in the past I would be getting agreement from an interlocutor on some aspect of a subject like multilevel marketing, the mind or ethics, then to meet sudden disagreement when I mentioned a particular company, therapist or religion respectively. In other words, this essay exemplifies the approach that may be taken to handle the challenges that arise from conflict in world views.

The working definitions of the key terms of the topic should be made explicit in a new unit of time. “Confronting” means the act or state of looking at something without flinching or backing off. It also means looking at something without alteration and with the impulse to deal with it. It takes a person who is fearless, not overwhelmed by emotion, not fixated and basically in present time during perception to confront anything.

“Challenges” are any barriers to the achievement of a goal. These barriers may take the form of energy, space, time, objects, counter-intention, counter-emotion, counter-effort and counter-thought. “Conflicting” means being in a state of discord, disagreement, difference, opposition or antithesis. There are apparent degrees of conflict, ranging from the academic to physical combat.

“World” means the totality of people, animals, plants and everything else or a totality of things assigned to a class. “Views” means the opinions, scenes or awarenesses attained by assuming a particular or set of particular perspectives. A perspective is created by assuming a location and interest. “World views” are comprehensive systems of statements of knowledge or assumptions about what exists and how, what is happening and has happened, the agents and the worth of things and the propriety of actions.

“Confronting the Challenges of Conflicting World Views” may be interpreted to mean, fearlessly and without strong emotion, without bias and alteration looking at (and dealing with) the barriers created by discordant comprehensive statements or assumptions about what exists, what has, is and will happen; the worth and correctness of actions, people and things.

There are few types of world view, though there may be many variations. The apparent multiplicity of world views fall within a structural and qualitative framework that reveals little difference between them. One may identify types of world view by observing whether entities and qualities are mutually exchangeable. If entities and qualities are not mutually exchangeable, we are dealing with fundamentally different world views. Even though Christianity and Islam are presented as opposing systems in text and in history, structurally and qualitatively they are virtually identical. On the other hand, materialistic world views do not admit spirits into their world; therefore, they are a distinct type of world view from most religious world views.

It is almost pointless to consider world views by name or movements because there are so many, and many of them differ by virtue of added emphasis, rejection or innovation in earlier doctrine. Buddhism, for instance, has Tibetan, Chinese, Japanese, Indian and other forms, and within these

forms are other variations. Hinduism, likewise, has several forms, namely, Vedanta, Mimamsa, Yoga, Nyaya, Samkhya Vaisesika; and there are variations of these. Christianity has spawned several forms and variations of those. The complexity could easily lead to perplexity. The fact of the matter is that any aspect of a world view, be it terminology, source, logic, coherence, factualness, etc. could be and has been a point of conflict.

Simplification of this field is needed. This can be done by examining how ideational conflicts arise. Before a view exists anywhere else, it exists in the mind of a living human being. If the view is considered merely as an idea or set of ideas existing in the mind of the individual, there is no conflict. Conflict between views, so to speak, begins when there is an attempt to communicate that view to another, by whatever means—orally or in writing. It is in the attempt to transfer the data of the view to another being where disagreement, hence, conflict arises. The corollary to this is, if there were no attempt to communicate views, there would be no conflict between views.

Communication, the sending of data from a source to a receipt point, is a bridge between two or more minds; these contain the world of their possessors. In the attempt to connect two minds or two worlds, the discovery is made that the individuals have different internal worlds. This is the origin of conflict on the level of ideas. If this initial disagreement is not handled properly, physical conflicts and other phenomena follow.

We are essentially dealing with the conflicts between people, the world view simply being a point of reference. Where the focus is on the associated details of the world view, there is a proliferation of more ideas and views as has occurred in fact. The literature on world views is voluminous, yet the conflicts abound. Rather than try to build on the original disagreement, a concerted effort should be made to discover and share the unexpressed assumptions behind the views.

If disagreements about ideas are not resolved immediately, an array of unwanted consequences follow. One may have a major breakdown in communication. If this occurs, there is a breakdown of (shared) reality. This is a factor in the reduction of affinity between people. When there is a loss of effective contact between people, the disputants become a mystery to each other, which leads to the creation of myths (imaginings) about the other. Suspicion sets in; boundaries are erected, and ultimately, force becomes an option.

The aforementioned consequences of conflict in relation to ideas and views are the more general challenges to be confronted. The more specific challenges resulting from conflicting world views would be to maintain the person's sense of identity, prevent confusion and stabilize orientation.

These human concerns have to be addressed and handled in order to terminatedly vanquish the academic disputes and physical battles consequent to academic disputes. The conflicts persist in spite of further academic explanation because the ideas have been invested with significance much beyond words and concepts; they take on survival value. People have to realize that they will survive whatever occurs during communication. After that, one can then return to the ostensive point of difference.

Here are some examples of how to bring a person to confront the challenges that may result from conflicting world views. One person says in a conversation with another, “God can help you in whatever you do.” The other person replies, “There is no God.” There is disagreement here. Normally, the first person then proceeds to get the second to agree with his proposition. This approach lends to further conflict and challenges. A more effective approach would be to ask, “What is your definition of God?” Whatever the answer, acknowledge it. Then ask, “From where do you get your help?” Whatever the answer, acknowledge it. Then, “Has that source of help been adequate?” If the answer is no, continue until another source of help is accepted by the person, and that would be the end of the matter. If the answer to the question is yes, that would be the end of the matter.

Another situation could be that one person says, “Everything that exists is matter. There is no such thing as spirits.” The other says, “The spirit is mightier than matter.” A response could be, “What is your definition of ‘matter’?” Whatever the answer, confirm it by checking a large dictionary. Next ask, “What is your definition of ‘spirit’?” Whatever the answer, consult a dictionary. One should also clear the definition of ‘mightier.’ Having come to an agreement on the meanings of key terms, evaluate the two statements for probable truth against the definitions. One then asks, “How do you know that everything is matter?” “How do I know that the spirit is mightier than matter?” After that, “What is the significance of your assertion—what purpose does it serve?” By this time, there may still be some disagreement but a lot of mutual understanding.

These examples embody a strategy that greatly avoids the development of challenges resulting from ideational conflicts. This strategy has as its goal, mutual understanding. The attainment of that goal requires explicit definition and examination of the terms used to express the conflicting views. Discussion proceeds on the basis of agreements. Mutually declaring the means by which each person got his knowledge of the particular view is critical. Finally, one finds out what role the view has in experience and practice.

This strategy does not include the goal of proving the other wrong and making oneself right. It does not go beyond the point of disagreement (which complicates matters). Conversion is not the goal. Overt or covert evaluation of the correctness of the view or of the person for holding the view is unwelcome. This strategy does not tolerate improperly defined terms. Moreover, it does not favor insularity—“Let’s agree to disagree.”

The following is a list of principal challenges and their handlings:

CHALLENGES

HANDLINGS

Breakdown in Communication

- (a) Resume and keep talking.
- (b) Make mutual understanding the goal rather than conversion.

Reduction of Affinity

- (a) Identify admirable qualities/ attributes in the other.
- (b) Identify some positive trait that the other has that one does not have.
- (c) Become aware of how aspects of

	another's world-view could solve one's problems.
Breakdown in Reality	(a) Identify points of agreement (e.g. purpose, emotions, tools).
Mystery	(a) Increase contact with areas of mystery.
Myth	(a) Investigate myth for utility and coherence.
Boundaries	(a) Find something to agree on. (b) Find something to like about the other. (c) Find something to talk about. (d) Do anything that renders wall unnecessary or penetrable.
Force	(a) Absorb it. (b) Deflect it. (c) Channel it. (d) Store it.

As mentioned earlier, conflicts in world views create particular challenges, namely, threats to identity and sanity, orientation and the threat of confusion. These challenges have specific handlings. Where one feels his or her identity is threatened, an examination of self in terms of DO/ACTION (past, present, future), in terms of BE/ROLES (past, present, future) and in terms of HAVE/OWNERSHIP (past, present, future) should be done, assisted or unassisted.

Threats to sanity and orientation could be confronted with the locating of things that one knows most certainly through direct experience and by looking at the world again from the orientation point of one's certainties. Confusion is handled by discovering the certainties of direct experience, looking at the world from that point of view and understanding the concepts and perceiving the mass referred to by the words of the world views.

One may find that the other person is not able to confront the specific challenges that arise from ideational conflicts; in that case, one would have to rehabilitate the person's ability to confront anything. This may entail that one get off the topic and engage in phatic conversation. Such topics that would engender a sense of good will and safety rehabilitate the person's ability to confront. Moreover, any process or action that would do the following is highly recommended: (a) orientate the person in present time and space (b) make the person more willing to

communicate (c) increase the person's attention (d) increase the person's intention (e) make the person want to look for himself or herself (f) increase the person's ability to duplicate. Fundamentally, confronting is the act of looking at, acknowledging the presence of and not reactively fighting against the thing. It culminates in a distinct sense of immediacy and "hereness," the state of being for tackling anything effectively.

The solutions in this essay are not merely academic; these solutions are meant to be applied. It is only then that one would know that these solutions work. For these solutions to work well, they must be understood and applied by individuals, not a person to a group or a group to a group. Of course, people may be taught these techniques *en masse*; however, the application has to be on an individual basis for major long-term results.