

A Particular Love for God in the Exploration of Human Knowledge †

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Abstract: This paper aims at a particular love for God in the human exploration of knowledge (including philosophy and science). Here, “a particular love for God” does not mean something related to religion but a way of thinking to pursue perfection, eternity, and absolute ultimateness because God is considered the only infinite, self-caused, and unique substance of the universe. On the one hand, this kind of thinking paradigm is good for people because it guides people to pursue love, beauty, and all perfect things in theory and practice; however, on the other hand, it is too simple, naïve, and extreme because the existence and evolution of the world is very complex and full of multidimensional and multilayered uncertainties and randomness. The conclusion of this article is that the world is not merely a counting machine, so we should abandon the thinking way of loving God and rationally embrace the uncertainties and complexities the future world will bring to us.

Keywords: knowledge; philosophy; science; human; God



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1. A Particular Love for God in Philosophy

The pursuit of perfect wisdom is one of the oldest traditions of mankind. The original paradigm of this tradition is always associated with God. Philosophers of ancient Greece realized very early that human existence and human thoughts are limited, so they attributed the perfect wisdom to God.

Heraclitus emphasized that “there is one wisdom, to understand the intelligent will by which all things are governed through all” [1] (p. 88), while pointing out that only God has the “wisdom by which all things are governed through all.” Similarly, Socrates claimed that mankind does not have wisdom but can acquire wisdom by obeying the will of God. Plato proposed that the Forms are also responsible for both knowledge and certainty and are grasped by pure reason; reason teaches that God is perfect.

This love for God is even stronger in Leibniz. In his eye, God is a perfect being and the first reason of all things, who sets up a pre-established harmony for us. The world we live in must be the best possible and most balanced world because it was created by an all-powerful and all-knowing God [2]. Therefore, for him, God is omnipresent and omniscient.

From the views of the above philosophers, we can conclude that, in their eyes, God is the representation of perfection and is universal, eternal, and absolute in his full wisdom and infinite ability. On the contrary, everything in the material world, including men and animals, is special, temporal, and relative with limited wisdom and finite ability. Thus, God becomes the embodiment of absolute truth.

However, Feuerbach had different views on God, and he emphasized the role of the human in the world; he showed that, in every aspect, God corresponds to some feature or need of human nature. He stated, “if man is to find contentment in God, he must find

himself in God" [3]. Thus, God is nothing else other than human: he is, so to speak, the outward projection of a human's inward nature.

From Feuerbach's statements, we can see that the position of God is gradually dissolved while the position of human is raised. Philosophers begin to put more attention on humans themselves rather than God. This shift in the way of thinking has caused great influences on philosophy, resulting in several philosophical turns in its research fields and angles, such as the birth of phenomenology. From then on, it seems that God has gradually withdrawn from the human stage, and the viewpoint that men must participate in the truth and knowledge from God has lost its root.

2. A Particular Love for God in Science

In the process of the development of modern science, there is also a particular love for God, for example, "the first cause" of Newton.

We know that Newtonian mechanics are based on Newton's belief in God. He asserted that "God in the beginning formed matter in solid, massy, hard, impenetrable, moveable particles, of such sizes and figures, and with such other properties, and in such proportion to space, as most conduced to the end for which he formed them; and that these primitive particles, being solids, are incomparably harder than any porous bodies compounded of them; even so very hard, as never to wear or break in pieces; no ordinary power being able to divide what God himself made one in the first creation" [4].

In this paragraph by Newton, the issue is not one of establishing the reality of a God whose existence might be in doubt; rather, the aim is to learn more about God and to get to know him better. Newton writes not only of the belief in God but knowledge of God.

This love for God is also shown in one's belief in certainty and determinism. In 1814, Laplace published what may have been his first scientific articulation of causal determinism. He said in his *A Philosophical Essay on Probabilities* that "we may regard the present state of the universe as the effect of its past and the cause of its future. An intellect which at a certain moment would know all forces that set nature in motion." "For such an intellect nothing would be uncertain and the future just like the past would be present before its eyes" [5] (p. 4). Here, this intellect is often referred to as Laplace's demon, in the same vein as Maxwell's demon, showing his belief in certainty and determinism.

If we say the God in Newton, Laplace, and Maxwell is apparent and visible while, in other circumstances, God is mentioned invisibly, not directly, but the God does exist here and there, such as in the perpetual motion machine, singularity, the superstring theory, and the grand unified theory because they are all proposed based on some perfect hypotheses.

3. A Particular Love for God in Information Science, including Artificial Intelligence

In information science, including the theoretical assumptions and practical research of AI, there is also a tendency for a particular love for God.

In the early stage of information science, because of the success of computationalism, many researchers believed in Pythagoras' philosophy, arguing that all the intelligent behaviors can be realized by number and computation. Furthermore, the famous physicist John Wheeler delivered a paper in 1989 entitled *Information, Physics, Quantum: The Search for Links*. In this paper, he put forward a new thesis: "It from bit" [6]. In his eyes, a number or "bit" is the representation of perfection because a number can explain and constitute everything, and everything comes from a "bit". Therefore, it is also a thinking way of loving for God.

Besides, with the development of intelligent technologies, some researchers believe that humans can produce anything, including organics, inorganics, and even life and intelligence. Based on this, many researchers begin to talk about the "superman" and the possibility of immortality [7].

4. An Evaluation of the Particular Love for God

On the one hand, it is a good thing because it is a human chase for perfection and for the highest good, encouraging people to seek for the final truth and ultimate existence with great passion. However, on the other hand, it has obvious negative effects.

The whole world is a complex system composed of many components that may interact with each other. We call it a “complex” system because it is intrinsically difficult to model due to the dependencies, competition, relationships, or other types of interactions between their parts or between a given system and its environment, and it has the properties such as nonlinearity, emergence, spontaneous order, adaptation, and feedback loops, etc.

Some reductionists think that the complex system can be reduced to the simple ones, but can any complex system be reduced to its simple parts? It is really a question.

The butterfly effect tells us that a small change in one state of a deterministic nonlinear system can result in large differences in a later state, which means that we can accurately or precisely predict nothing, even very minor perturbations, such as a distant butterfly flapping its wings several weeks earlier resulting in a tornado because there are so many uncontrollable factors there.

Physics, before the quantum, has always been about doing this and getting that while the new quantum mechanics appear to say that when we do this, we get that only with a certain probability, and, in some circumstances, we might get the other. It seemed that Einstein was having none of it, so he insisted that “God does not play dice with the Universe” [8].

His friend Schrödinger wanted to support him, but, funny enough, the Schrödinger equation exactly proves that the particles appear in probability with uncertainty, and Schrödinger’s cat tells us that we are uncertain whether the cat is alive or dead because its fate is linked to a random subatomic event that may or may not occur. Furthermore, since the uncertainty principle of Heisenberg is proposed, the belief in certainty and determinism totally collapses. Einstein still tried to find hidden variables, to find a complete description of reality, but Bell’s theorem later suggested that it was impossible.

Here, we need to know that the essence of human thinking and practice lies in freedom because we have free will. We think freely, choose freely, and behave freely, which contradicts the certainty and determinism completely.

5. Conclusions

The human is not an absolute existence, who is always constrained by many factors and influenced by many internal or external interactions, thus showing the characteristics of uncertainty and complexity. Any advanced technologies, such as big data, could not precisely predict the future evolutionary way or tendency of a complex system. The world is not merely a counting machine, so we should abandon the thinking way of loving God and rationally embrace the uncertainties and complexities the future world will bring to us. By the way, whether AI could produce intelligent machines more superior than humans depends on human themselves, and the key point to solve the contradiction between them is to build a civilized, free, and harmonious society [9].

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