

What is a Conception about the World and Life?

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ABSTRACT: The conception of the world and life represents a fundamental interpretative framework through which the human being understands reality, existence and his own role in the universe. This article analyzes the nature, functions and structure of a conception of the world and life, highlighting its determining role in the formation of human thought, values and behavior. The main ontological, epistemological, axiological and theological questions to which a conception of the world responds are discussed, as well as the practical and logical implications of adopting different models of interpreting reality. Throughout the history of human thought, people have constantly sought answers to the fundamental questions of existence: who we are, why we exist, what is the purpose of life and what is the nature of the reality in which we live. The way these questions are answered coherently is articulated in a system of ideas known as a worldview. This is not just an abstract set of theoretical beliefs, but is the foundation on which individuals and communities build their values, moral decisions, social structures, and the meaning of life. Without a coherent worldview, human experiences remain fragmented, and reality becomes disjointed and directionless.

KEYWORDS: worldview, human existence, reality, meaning of life, answers

Defining the concept

A worldview can be defined as an integrative system of assumptions, beliefs, and values through which a person interprets reality in its entirety. This worldview functions as an intellectual and existential lens through which all aspects of life are perceived and evaluated (intreabauncrestin.ro). In a broad sense, a worldview explains the origin and structure of reality, defines the nature of the human being, provides criteria for good and evil, and grounds the meaning of history and personal existence. Although often assumed rather than explicitly stated, every human being inevitably operates with a certain worldview, whether it is philosophically or theologically articulated or implicitly adopted through culture, education, and experience.

The worldview is not a random collection of ideas, but a coherent philosophical system that attempts to explain how the different dimensions of reality are interconnected. In doing so, it fulfills two essential functions: the

explanatory function, through which it provides answers to fundamental questions about existence, and the interpretative-applicative function, through which these explanations are transposed into practical life.

We can compare the worldview to an intellectual lens, emphasizing the fact that not all lenses offer a faithful image of reality. Since different worldviews support fundamentally contradictory statements, it is logically necessary that only one can correspond to the truth, while the others are erroneous (Rotaru, 2005, pp. 144-145, 166-169, 181, 182). The worldview is therefore a complex phenomenon, integrating both rational and affective and volitional dimensions. Its structure includes: knowledge and concept, emotions and soulful experiences, deep convictions, moral and spiritual values, existential ideals, concrete actions and behaviors. Thus, the worldview shapes not only theoretical thinking, but also practical behavior, generating a certain lifestyle and social ethics.

The religious conception is based on the acceptance of a supernatural reality, creator and ruler of the world. It assumes the existence of a transcendent dimension accessible through revelation and faith, which provides ultimate meaning to human existence and history. The philosophical conception explores existence as a whole, using human reason as the main instrument of knowledge. Philosophy not only describes reality, but also proposes normative ideals regarding what should be.

The fundamental questions of a worldview

Any coherent conception of the world and life tries to answer a consistent set of essential questions: ontological questions—what is the primary reality, whether there is a supernatural reality, and what the nature of the external world is; anthropological questions—what the human being is, whether human being are just biological entities or more, and what happens after death; epistemological questions—how knowledge is possible, and whether objective truth exists; axiological and moral questions—whether there are absolute values, how good and evil are defined, and whether humans create values; theological and historical questions—whether God exists, whether God is personal or impersonal, what the meaning of human history is, and who governs the world. By the way it answers these questions, a conception of the world establishes the direction of all human life. The philosophical conception of the world answers the question of ultimate reality: whether reality is material, ideal, or dual in nature; whether there is an objective order of existence; or whether everything is contingent and arbitrary. The answers to these questions underpin all other levels of philosophical thought.

The world can be conceived either as an intelligible order or as the result of chance. This aspect directly influences the possibility of knowledge and the meaning of existence. The philosophical conception of the world determines how man is defined, namely as a pure biological organism, a rational and moral being or an entity capable of symbolic and cultural transcendence. The definition of man

influences the idea of freedom, responsibility and dignity. Philosophy has approached death as an absolute limit or as a problem of meaning. Depending on the conception of the world, death can be interpreted as: a definitive end, an existential problem that gives value to life, or as a moment of ontological transformation.

A philosophical worldview involves answers to the question of knowledge: is knowledge possible, is there objective truth, what role do reason, experience, and language play? Philosophically, a worldview establishes the criteria of truth and the limits of knowledge. Without a coherent answer to these questions, any claim to meaning becomes fragile. A worldview also underpins values: are values objective or socially constructed, are there universal moral norms or merely conventions? From this perspective, ethics is not a separate field, but derives directly from a general conception of reality and human nature.

The philosophy of history explores whether history has a direction and purpose, a cyclical structure, or is a meaningless succession of events. The way history is understood influences the individual's relationship to progress, responsibility, and hope. The internal structure of the philosophical worldview is a complex phenomenon, integrating the cognitive dimension (ideas, theories), the affective dimension (feelings, attitudes), the axiological dimension (values, ideals), and the practical dimension (actions, behaviors).

The practical consequences of worldviews

An extremely important aspect is that ideas never remain without consequences. Any conception of the world determines the way in which man lives his life, the way of relating to others, the social, political and economic structures, the attitude towards morality, responsibility, and transcendence. Therefore, understanding conceptions of the world is essential not only for theoretical knowledge, but also for assessing their impact on culture and civilization. The conception of the world and life represents the foundation of any conscious human existence. It provides the framework through which reality is understood, interpreted and experienced. Due to the fact that different conceptions of the world are mutually exclusive in their fundamental statements, the question of truth inevitably becomes central. In the end, the true value of a conception of the world lies not only in theoretical elegance, but in the logical coherence, explanatory capacity and existential consequences it produces.

Worldview and Life: A Philosophical Analysis of Structure, Functions, and Existential Implications

Worldview and lifeview represent a fundamental philosophical framework through which human beings interpret reality, existence, and their own place in the world. This article analyzes worldview as a coherent system of ontological,

epistemological, and axiological presuppositions, highlighting its central role in organizing human thought, values, and actions. The internal structure of a worldview, the fundamental questions it answers, and its theoretical and practical consequences on individual and social life are discussed.

The human being is distinguished by the ability to reflect on his own existence and on the reality in which he lives. This reflection never remains fragmentary, but tends to constitute a global framework of interpretation, known in philosophy as the conception of the world and life. Throughout the history of philosophy, different systems of thought—from ancient metaphysics to contemporary philosophy—have tried to offer a coherent interpretation of reality, formulating answers to fundamental questions about existence, knowledge, value and meaning. The conception of the world represents precisely this unifying structure, implicit or explicit, which gives unity to human experience.

From a philosophical perspective, a worldview can be defined as an organized system of fundamental assumptions through which an individual or community interprets reality in its entirety. This is not limited to theoretical knowledge, but includes: representations of the nature of reality, explanations of the human condition, criteria for moral and axiological evaluation, models of meaning and existential purpose. The worldview functions as a global interpretive framework, prior to and external to particular judgments, guiding the way in which the data of experience are understood and integrated into a coherent vision.

A worldview is not a simple collection of disparate ideas, but a coherent philosophical system, governed by the principle of non-contradiction and by demands of logical consistency. Therefore, the worldview shapes both theoretical thinking and existential and social behavior.

This structure explains why the worldview is not just an intellectual exercise, but a way of being in the world. The fundamental ideas of a worldview generate inevitable consequences: on the meaning of life, on interhuman relations, on social and political organization, on the relationship to truth and responsibility. From a philosophical point of view, the evaluation of a worldview must take into account not only its logical coherence, but also its explanatory and existential capacity. The worldview and life concept constitute the core of any authentic philosophical reflection. It provides the framework through which reality is understood, ordered and valued. Without such a concept, human experience remains fragmented, and existence lacks orientation and meaning. From a philosophical perspective, the fundamental stake is not only the formulation of a worldview, but the critical analysis of its logical and existential consequences, since the way we interpret reality inevitably determines the way we live.

A worldview is the way we perceive our world and our place in it (Noebel, 2013, p.25), and it answers fundamental questions such as: why do we exist, what is the meaning and purpose of life, is there a difference between good and evil, does God exist, are humans highly evolved animals? A worldview determines the way

we act and respond to every aspect of life, with ideas about the world and life generating a certain set of consequences.

The acceptances of some theologians and philosophers regarding the conception of the world and life

Geisler and Watkins (1989, p. 11) argue that a worldview is a way of seeing or interpreting the whole of reality, an interpretive framework through or from which one understands life and the world. A worldview should contain a certain perspective on the following ten disciplines: theology, philosophy, ethics, biology, psychology, sociology, law, politics, economics, and history (Noebel, 2013, p.27).

Also, Geisler and Bocchino in their work “Unshakable Foundations – Contemporary Answers to Crucial Questions about the Christian Faith” (Geisler & Bocchino, 2024, pp. 19-20) state that a worldview is like an intellectual lens through which we see the world and ask what color this lens should be in order to have a correct picture of the world and whether there is only one correct worldview. The conclusion of the two authors, Geisler and Bocchino (2024, p. 49), is that since each worldview supports certain essential beliefs, opposed to the beliefs of other worldviews, logically, only one worldview can be true, the others being false. A worldview is a philosophical system that attempts to explain how different aspects of reality are connected and intertwined, shaping and coloring thought, while also providing an interpretive system for understanding and explaining the facts and experiences of life (Geisler & Bocchino, 2024, p. 53). While it is very important to know worldviews, it is more important to understand the logical consequences of putting into practice the ideas considered true by a particular worldview.

In the understanding of Site (2005, p. 17), a worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, which can be expressed in the form of a narrative or a set of assumptions that we hold, about the fundamental structure of reality, and which provides the foundation on which we live, move and have our being. A worldview answers the following questions: (Site, 2005, pp. 18-21) What is primary reality—true reality? What is the nature of external reality, that is, the world around us? What is a human being? What happens when a person dies? Why is it possible to know anything? How do we know what is good and what is evil? What is the meaning of human history? Who runs this world—God, people, or no one? Are we the only ones who set values? Is God really good? Is God personal or impersonal? Does God actually exist?

In another sense, as developed by the authors Macarthur and Mayne (2019, p.53), a worldview comprises a collection of assumptions, beliefs and values on the basis of which a person tries to understand and give a certain coherence to the world and life, being at the same time a conceptual scheme through which, consciously or unconsciously, we arrange or integrate everything we believe and through which we interpret reality. A worldview is, first of all, an explanation and

interpretation of the world and secondly, an application to life of this conception (else.fcim.utm.md). General representations about the world and about man's place in it, if they can be realized and formulated, are called worldviews. The worldview is a concept necessary for human consciousness and knowledge, a system of representations, ideas of man about the surrounding world and his place in this world, formed under the influence of practical knowledge and everyday experience and able to develop or change throughout life depending on the level of spiritual and cultural development of man. The conception of the world as a complex phenomenon involves the following structure (else.fcim.utm.md): knowledge, emotions, feelings, spiritual experiences, beliefs, spiritual values, ideals, concrete facts and actions, the main components of a conception being knowledge, skills, creative capacities, opinions and conceptual beliefs that determine and generate in the human being the system of ideals and principles of socio-human behavior.

The religious conception of the world is based on the admission of the supernatural beginning of the world, which resulted in its division into the natural world and the supernatural world. Any religion includes a coherent system of postulates that admit in the plane of mystical knowledge, through unconditional faith, the existence and total autonomous force of a divine supernatural world, creator and director of the real world, visible and invisible. Philosophy, on the other hand, aims at the world as a whole, existence in its entirety, that is, infinity. The philosophical conception of the world explores what is and tries to impose what it considers to be or that it would be desirable to be.

The concept of the world and of life represents one of the deepest and most fundamental structures of human thought, forming the basis on which an individual shapes their existential, moral, and cognitive orientation. It is not simply a collection of opinions or occasional reactions to reality, but a global, coherent, and often implicit vision through which a person interprets everything that exists, establishes the meaning of things, defines their position in the world, and structures their behavior. From this perspective, a worldview functions as an internal network of beliefs, values, and meanings that influences every personal decision and interpretation of existence (Patterson, 1999, p. 141).

The essential elements that define the worldview

An essential element that defines a worldview is ontology, that is, the perspective on what truly exists. This includes the answers a person gives to fundamental questions about the nature of reality: is the world essentially material, spiritual, or a combination of both? Is the universe governed by order, or is it dominated by chaos and chance? The answers to these questions influence not only theoretical thought, but also the way a person positions themselves toward life, toward others, and toward themselves. For example, in a Christian religious worldview, the world is created by God and has profound meaning, being the place of a sacred history

culminating in salvation. In contrast, a materialist worldview asserts that reality is exclusively physical, reducible to matter and energy, and that human life has no transcendental purpose.

The epistemological dimension of a worldview is equally important, because it defines how a person comes to know the truth. The recognized sources of knowledge—reason, the senses, intuition, revelation, experience—are hierarchically valued differently depending on the framework in which the worldview is formulated (Patterson, 1999, p. 108). In Christian thought, for example, divine revelation is considered a superior source, accompanied by reason as a tool for deepening understanding. In a secular scientific framework, on the other hand, empirical experience and logic are valued as the main valid means of knowledge, while revelation is viewed as a subjective form of understanding.

Ethics is another essential dimension, because any concept of the world contains, implicitly or explicitly, a theory of good and evil, of the purpose of life, and of how people ought to behave. Moral values, norms of conduct, and the principles by which personal and collective life are organized are anchored in this overarching vision. If, in a secular concept, ethics is relativized and adaptable to social context, in a religious vision, moral values are rooted in an objective order, established by a transcendent authority. From this derive fundamental differences between paradigms, for example, between postmodern ethics, which emphasizes tolerance and pluralism and rejects universal truths, and Christian ethics, which affirms the existence of an absolute good revealed by God.

Philosophical or theological anthropology represents the component that examines human nature, the existential condition of the individual, their purpose, and their relationship with the world and the divine. The concept of man is decisive for how responsibility, freedom, identity, and the meaning of life are understood. In a Christian vision, man is created ‘in the image and likeness of God,’ possesses intrinsic dignity and a spiritual mission, and his existence has meaning on a divine plane (Riggs, 2005, p. 117). In the postmodern paradigm, by contrast, human identity is fluid, socially constructed, and subject to continual reinterpretation. This difference directly affects how the individual relates to themselves, the community, and the norms of society.

All these four dimensions—ontological, epistemological, ethical, and anthropological—are interdependent and together form what is called a concept of the world and of life. This system is not necessarily explicitly formulated or consciously recognized by each person, but it is present behind every choice and every way of interpreting reality. For this reason, confrontation between different paradigms, as in the case of the postmodern and the Christian, centers not only on doctrinal or theoretical differences, but on radical differences in vision regarding the whole of existence. Understanding what a concept of the world and of life presupposes is therefore essential for the deep analysis of any of these paradigms and the relationships between them.

The role of education, culture, religion, science and personal experience in forming a worldview

The formation of a concept of the world is a complex, long-term process that involves multiple, often interdependent influences, coming from varied sources such as education, culture, religion, science, and personal experience (Veith Jr., 1994, p. 62). These sources do not act in isolation, but penetrate each other, each contributing to shaping the way the individual perceives reality, structures values, and defines their place in the world. A concept of the world is never purely theoretical; it synthesizes knowledge, lived experience, reflection, and value-oriented guidance.

Education is one of the most powerful formative sources of a worldview. Through education, the individual comes into contact with logical structures, thought models, values, and perspectives that teach them how to interpret the world. From the earliest forms of socialization, the child learns to see reality through the lenses transmitted by the family, and later through those of the formal educational system—school, university—which provide conceptual frameworks and methodologies for understanding the world. Education does not merely transmit information; it shapes a mentality, cultivates certain types of reasoning, and encourages specific attitudes toward truth, authority, meaning, and morality.

Culture, in its broad sense, is another fundamental medium for forming a concept of the world. Culture includes language, symbols, objects, myths, institutions, and value systems that define a social space (Bowes, 2020, p. 64). It provides a common foundation for interpreting reality and establishes what is considered 'normal,' 'acceptable,' and 'valuable.' The individual internalizes these cultural reference points through constant exposure, via art, literature, film, mass media, as well as through life models promoted by the community. In a secular cultural context, the concept of the world tends to be marked by relativism and individualism, while in a traditional-religious context, it is dominated by collective values, symbolic stability, and transcendence.

Religion plays an essential role in the formation of a concept of the world, especially regarding the meaning of existence, morality, and the relationship between humans and the absolute. Through religion, the individual not only learns certain doctrines or rituals, but internalizes a comprehensive vision of reality, life and death, good and evil. Christianity, for example, offers a worldview centered on the idea of divine creation, the fall, and salvation, in which history has meaning, the individual has intrinsic value, and truth is revealed and absolute. This vision profoundly influences not only spiritual life, but also the way suffering, responsibility, community, and even progress are understood. Religion provides a metanarrative, that is, a general framework that explains everything, from origin to finality.

Science contributes to the formation of a concept of the world by offering a specific way of relating to reality: the systematic investigation of phenomena, the

validation of hypotheses through experiment, and the formulation of predictive theories (Leung & Milbank, 2022, p. 154). Although science does not have as its object the meaning of existence, it often influences the overall image a person has of the world. For example, modern cosmology, evolutionary theory, or neuroscience modify the way time, the origin of life, consciousness, or identity are understood. In the postmodern era, science is no longer perceived as an absolute source of truth, but as one of many possible narratives about the world. Nevertheless, its epistemic authority remains influential, often shaping concepts of causality, progress, truth, and reality.

Personal experience has a significant impact, though often more subtle, on the way a concept of the world is formed. Intense experiences, existential crises, interpersonal relationships, suffering, success, encounters with authentic life models, or with opposing ideologies – all contribute to the nuance, confirmation, or even complete transformation of a worldview. Often, what theory cannot prove, experience can impose by the force of lived reality. This subjective dimension makes each concept of the world not only a logical system of ideas, but also an affective and biographical reality.

By combining these sources—education (Rotaru, 2021a, pp. 190-196), culture (Rotaru, 2021b, pp. 87-92), religion, science, and experience—a person builds an internal map of reality, which helps them navigate the complexity of existence (Grenz, 1996, p. 9). None of these sources is neutral or purely objective: they reflect visions, values, and interests. Therefore, a serious analysis of the concept of the world involves not only identifying influences, but also a critical reflection on how these are assumed and integrated into a coherent and conscious worldview.

The concept of the world and of life represents an indispensable inner foundation for the individual's orientation on an existential, moral, and practical level. It is not a mere intellectual decoration or an abstract option, but a profound reality that, often unconsciously, shapes all personal and collective choices. In a universe marked by cultural plurality, axiological uncertainty, and unstable identities, the need for a coherent reference system becomes imperative. In this way, the concept also provides a framework in which a person can understand life, set objectives, and justify actions. Without such a reference, the individual risks being lost in postmodern relativism, disoriented in the face of the world's complexity, and vulnerable to ideological manipulation or superficial temptations.

On the level of meaning, the concept of the world acts as an interpretive matrix that allows a person to make sense of surrounding reality and to their own life. Through this worldview, experiences gain coherence, the past, present, and future become linked into a narrative with direction, and fundamental questions find assumed answers: who we are, why we exist, what purpose suffering has, where we are heading (Wells, 2005, p. 152). A person who lives in a universe governed by chance or devoid of transcendence will seek meaning in ephemeral

forms, while the one who grounds their existence on a spiritual horizon, for example a Christian one, will perceive life as a path of moral maturation and of drawing closer to a supreme purpose. Meaning is no longer a philosophical luxury, but a deep need for orientation in a world that would otherwise risk becoming chaotic.

Conclusions

Beyond its explanatory dimension, the concept of the world grounds the values by which a person lives. These values are not arbitrary choices or simple contextual preferences, but follow logically from the image the individual has of reality, of the human being, and of the good. If, for example, one believes that the human being is mere matter, a product of evolution without purpose, then life and morality will be relativized. If, on the other hand, the human being is seen as a created being with intention, capable of communion and spiritual transfiguration, then values such as love, truth, justice, and hope become absolute and worthy of pursuit, even in the face of daily difficulties. Therefore, the concept of the world not only justifies morality, but makes it possible, transforming it from a social convention into an ontological responsibility.

On the basis of this value system (Rotaru, 2024, pp. 301-318), the individual's life directions are structured. The choice of a career, the way a relationship is built, social or political involvement, the way suffering and failures are handled—all of these are influenced by the image a person has of the world. There is no meaningful decision that is not influenced, consciously or not, by one's concept of the world and of life (Carson, 2005, p. 162). A rationalist view will favor efficiency, control, and technological progress. A hedonistic perspective will pursue the maximization of pleasure and the minimization of suffering. A Christian view will value sacrifice, fidelity, and hope in the transcendent. Every choice is a concrete expression of a personal metaphysics.

Moreover, the concept of the world supports the individual's identity coherence. In an age in which a person is tempted to fragment according to contexts—in a professional role, another social one, another virtual one—the concept of the world has the role of maintaining the deep unity of one's being. It is what remains constant amid change, what offers a person a 'stable core of meaning' in the face of multiple pressures. In the absence of this core, identity becomes diluted, and a person becomes easily shaped and torn apart by contradictory external demands.

From this perspective, human beings are personally responsible for the world around them and for how they relate to others within it. Do they see themselves as brothers? Are they brothers? Are they my brothers? The answers to these questions are not dictated by norms; rather, they stem from a fundamental misunderstanding or reflection of reality. Thus, the concept of the world has direct

effects on human relationships, the social climate, and the way community is built (Jasper, 1993, p. 142).

The importance of a worldview cannot be overstated, whether at the educational, theological, or ethical level. Without a deep reflection on it, human beings risk living guided by unconsciously adopted schemes, by models offered by mass media or by fleeting currents of opinion, without realizing what foundation they are building their lives upon. Therefore, the formation of a coherent worldview—assumed consciously and open to truth—represents one of the highest forms of human maturation. Only in this way can the individual become truly free: not in the sense of doing anything, in any manner, but in the sense of acting in accordance with a stable and well-grounded inner truth.

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