

## Religious Ideas

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I write this article in English, as I live in the Anglosphere. If I were to write in Esperanto or Lojban, a translator would write a bad English rendition hidden from my eyes. I do not dislike English. I see structure and organization in what seems to be chaos, as I am knowledgeable about the International Phonetic Alphabet and grammar. So, here it goes in English...

White women like Daoism, **Dào**. Daoists believe that the small reflects the big. And the local reflects the universal. The local garden tells everything about the cosmos. Travel to far away is superfluous. To be simple like driftwood is key. To bend like the tall grasses in a windswept field is key. The philosophy is called Daoism, or just **Dào**. There is strength in weakness. There is vastness in the tiny. **Dào** likes dualities and paradoxes.

Buddhism is an alluring religion. According to it, anyone can become a Buddha. There have been many Buddhas, and there will be many more. In parallel, in Christianity, anyone can become "like Christ." Jesus may have been a Buddha. Hinduism has similarity, but Hindus just use different terminology and a slightly different perspective. An *avatar*, Sanskrit *avatāra*, in Hinduism means "descent," as the material appearance or incarnation of a deity on the Earth. Buddhism is not really theocentric or god-centred. Buddhists believe in gods being part of a

wider ecology that includes plants, animals, demons, ghosts, humans, spirits, monsters, *et cetera*. Buddhism is really different from most religions. Buddhism does not just ask people to *believe*, but asks people to *test* for themselves its ideas.

Meditation is key. It is not just Buddhist or Hindu. The praying with a rosary in Roman Catholicism is a form of meditation. Meditation makes one tolerate the regularity and repetition in life. A meditative language also does so. A language like English has lots of irregularity in sound and writing, so that it does not really help in toleration of everyday life; it results in a kind of psychosis. I understand the underlying framework of English, so it disturbs me not. So, I do not dislike English. I find rhythm in what seems lacking.

In some religions like Hinduism or Gnostic Christianity, "knowing" but not just "knowing intellectually" is key. "Knowing" is above even "loving" according to adherents. One disdains ignorance according to them. Knowledge is their liberation, their salvation. Salvation is by "knowing."

Some complain silently that English does not sound spiritual. Everything in **Esperanto** or **Lojban** sounds like one is inside a temple. English encourages materialism. It makes one tolerate industrial pollution. **English** has some kind of hidden purpose.

Language too can be religion, as it is for me. **Esperanto** and **Lojban** have been my spiritual duo for some years.

Many Anglos are defensive about English, their language. English has an uncanny Mediterranean-versus-Germanic dichotomy in its vocabulary. So, there are doublings of synonyms in the language, being so bloated as it is.

**Japanese** has an abundance of eerie words. They are a pleasure to know. Japanese has lots of borrowings from Chinese, but it is from a different language family.

Japanese also borrows from Western languages.

My family ancestry is partly Mediterranean, partly other, so that English should not really be too foreign to us. The Mediterranean part of English comes from my many ancient Greco-Roman ancestors. We may have Germanic ancestry from somewhere, but we are not too sure. There is the probability. Of Slavic, it is also probable because the interesting name of my great-great-grandfather was Dimitri, who, though, lived in Greece. Greeks intermarried with Jews in my family. We are sure of Spanish ancestors and hinted at Portuguese. We have both Northern and Southern Mongoloid ancestry for sure. There may be other races unaccounted. For family reasons, I opine that verdant **Esperanto** suits us. Also lavender **Lojban** does too.

Animism is the original religion of humanity. Animists believe that there are spirits everywhere, in plants, in animals, in rocks, in mountains, in rivers, in the sky, in the seas, in words, in names, and so on.

Languages like **Esperanto** and **Lojban** too may have spirits. **Esperanto** is perhaps like Romanian, an exotic

Slavic-influenced Latinate language. **Esperanto** is not blond. I think that he has black hair. Is a language like a person, really?

Dr. Zamenhof in Russian-occupied Poland in the late 1800's was the creator of **Esperanto**. He was a Jew. So, one can surmise today that if **Esperanto** were a man, he would be circumcised.

**Esperanto** first appeared in the time that Hebrew was beginning a revival. Perhaps, Dr. Zamenhof was proposing this different "Jewish" language. Dr. Zamenhof was a genius in that **Esperanto** has a perfect artistic balance with which one cannot meddle. Reforms like Ido ("Child") have failed miserably. Genuine **Esperanto** intrigues many.

**Esperanto** and **Lojban** having spirits is an Animistic notion. Chinese *Dào* and Japanese *Shintō* are forms of Animism. Ancient tribes in all continents practised Animistic ways, the original religion of humanity. In Japanese, *kotodama* is a concept about the spiritual power of words and names. The Eskimos, the Inuit, also believe that names have a spirit or soul. A Japanese writer has written about how words would go through a divine path when speaking Japanese. *Shintō* and *Dào* are Animisms, with ideas tending towards *panpsychism* or *pantheism*, respectively the *mind*-like aspect or the *god*-like aspect, at some level, in everything.

Some today claim that animals and plants seem like

complex machines. How can one reconcile this notion with Animism? Even though they may be "complex machines," there may be some esoteric divine spark in them. Thus, there is Neo-Animism.

Some religions hint at the "divine spark." In Hinduism, all beings have it. In Gnostic Christianity, there are gradations of it, and unfortunately some may not have it at all.

Religions are varied. One can say that they are agglomerations of psychology and art. The true seeker would try to understand multiple religions to gain true understanding.

Can a person live without religion? Is spirituality different from religiosity?

A close friend of mine, Don Chan, has used the intriguing term "shrink-wrapped religions" to describe belief systems that seem contrived and covertly invented by other humans. There is a danger that most people are not aware of this fact. Intellectuals try to escape these societal traps and think for themselves the nature of spirituality. Intellectuals do not "buy" standardized Religion Products from the Religion Store.

Another close friend of mine, Bratislav "Brian" Tepsa, is an avid ufologist. He likes talking about UFO abductions, alien conspiracies, *et cetera*. Don Chan is a voracious sci-fi fan. Meanwhile, Brian thinks that ufology is *reality*,

unlike sci-fi, which is *irreality*. Brian believes that the universe is teeming with life. On the other hand, my usual tendency is to think that the universe is a vast desert, where life is rare, and *intelligent* life is even rarer. Brian is *not* religious, but of religions, he favours something like Dào. He thinks that Jesus is just legendary. Brian is a kind of Leonardo da Vinci, as he makes his own fancy-looking bicycles or other contraptions.

Some people's religion is waiting for a Big War to alleviate their boredom and misery. One may be under the spell of propaganda of apparent war capability. The last Big One was several generations ago. One may be waiting and waiting. It is not a good religion. If another were to come, the results might disappoint warmongers. Life would likely go on even if many were to perish. Many Japanese believe that this world would survive a Big One. Also great climatic changes, humanity could tolerate, not just great wars, they believe. Because Japanese are miraculous war survivors, they have this perspective. They can project far into the future. They have very longterm views. They are not like Western people.

On human nature, there are some doubts. Many look for affection from other humans. But are humans good animals? Would it be better to find affection from dogs or cats? I for one have no longer interest in seeing the human future for I think that I am not human. When I die, I believe that I will just go to some other place, to another planet, or to another universe, perhaps. Perhaps, my fate is not the same as humans'. Whatever is my fate, I

guess that it will not be a human fate.

In Buddhist or Hindu tradition, adherents believe in other worlds inhabited by intelligent beings who are not human. I may be one of them. In Shintō and Dào, there are other similar beings. I really think that I am not human.

I sometimes imagine amusedly or even humorously that my great-great-grandfather Dimitri was from a great line of vampires. Do I believe in vampires? Perhaps, there are just different terminologies from different parts of this world.

Many sense that I have Jewish ancestry from the Iberian and Greek zones, and maybe from Eastern Europe. But yes, I also have Greek ancestry. Is the Middle East more important than Mesoamerica? Why do Xtians always focus on Jews? Is it their hidden desire to become a Jew? Is the Middle East more important than the Australian Outback? Is it more important than the Pacific Islands? Is it more important than the Arctic tundra? Is it more important than the Amazon rainforest? To me, these far-flung places are sacred.

I may have family lines from Eastern Europe. I sense that **Esperanto** is important. It is an interesting Slavic-influenced, Germanic-influenced Latinate language. Of course, at the traffic lights, "go" is green. Some Japanese Esperantists liken **Esperanto** to the traditional game of **Go** (囲碁).



Language can be a religion. **Esperanto** and **Lojban** would be important to me, even if they were just toys. I am both an evergreen Esperantist and a violet Lojbanist. Despite my romance with these languages, I for long have had the **Orange Dream**, the dream of creating an artificial language inspired by natural languages like Vietnamese and Thai. Anyway, I have created a marvellous prototype *conlang* called Vling, which I sometimes proudly consider my son.

Of natural languages, Tagalog is special because maybe a Dark Trickster God has chosen it for everybody on the Earth to know, at least at a basic level. I call it the **Tagalog Global Xenoglossia**. Tagalog is my native language, in the Philippines. English I have learned since Nursery School. French is my thirdly learned language, starting from Grade 5 in Canada. Spanish is my fourth, in university. Then, Japanese is my fifth, in university. Cantonese and Mandarin I learned in Night School only sparingly, those languages being my sixth and seventh. **Esperanto** is my eighth, as an avid hobby. **Lojban** is my ninth, also as an avid hobby.

Sporadically, I have learned other languages as bits and pieces only, those languages having included German, Arabic, and various Latinate ones as Portuguese, Italian, and Catalan, as well as many others as Russian, Swedish, Hawaiian, Indonesian, Thai, Finnish, Hebrew, Korean, Greek, Pali (for Buddhist chanting), Volapük, Interlingua, Vietnamese, Romanian, Klingon, Toki Pona, Elefen, Inuktitut, Classical Nahuatl, Haida, Yoruba, Sanskrit, and



Swahili. I cannot really list all of the serendipitous linguistic journeys, as I have boxes and bookshelves full of phrasebooks, dictionaries, and grammar books. They are like mini vacations.

In recent years, I gleefully have collected research papers and books about Amerindian languages, Eskimo languages, Pacific Islander languages, Australian Aboriginal languages, African languages, *et cetera*. I also have collected cookbooks in different languages, my favourite cookbook being *La gran cocina mexicana*. Hispanics think that I am Hispanic.

Here on Lulu Island, locals and visitors alike share an interest in religiology, although, in comparison with Japanese in Japan where I lived before, they are not really too spiritual. In my studies of religiology, I have encountered Roman Catholicism, Baptist, Pentecostal, Zen Buddhism, Dào, Theravāda Buddhism, Pure Land Buddhism, Jehovah's Witness, Hinduism, Shintō, Voodoo, Mormonism, Ancient Egyptian, Jainism, Islam, Judaism, Hawaiian Animism, Amerindian Animism, Australian Animism, African Animism, Philippine Animism, Inuit Animism, and Urantia.

Going back to Brian's life-filled universe model, I have heard from him about the Plasma Universe Paradigm. He describes that outer space is not really "just vacuum," but is full of plasmic creatures. I reiterate that I have been thinking that the universe is a vast desert, with rare life and even rarer *intelligent* life. I remain open-minded to

other possibilities, however. I link Brian's ideas with *panpsychism* or *pantheism*. In so doing, I opine that the *mind*-like aspect or *god*-like aspect, whichever, could be present at some level in the rocks, ices, gases, and other objects of the deserts of Mars or Saturn's moon Titan, *et cetera*. Is it *life*? I still wonder. There may be ghostly creatures in unexpected places beyond this Earth.

In my childhood through adulthood, I have watched many sci-fi shows and have read much sci-fi literature. Sci-fi offers a cornucopia of pleasures and ideas. My birth year 1966 was when *Star Trek* first started appearing on television. It was not a mere coincidence, I intuit. I watch all the different series even today. The model of the future portrayed is of a militaristic academy in an exploratory starship or a religiopolitical space station. The shows are not for the faint-hearted. *Star Trek* has been my school away from school. It has been edutainment. I have travelled far away. I have learned even a bit of the Klingon language from a book and audio. Trekkers prefer to promote the language of the warrior spacefaring race, the Klingons, instead of the language of the pointy-eared logical philosophers, the Vulcans.

My inclination to sci-fi probably started in Grade 1 in my private school of La Salle Green Hills in Metro Manila in the Philippines, as I read imaginative books, such as *Green Eggs and Ham*, *Bartholomew and the Oobleck*, and *The Lorax*, by Dr. Seuss. Subsequently in my outings with my family in Metro Manila, we sometimes went to a bookstore and a library, and I saw intriguing book covers

of sci-fi novels, such as Edgar Rice Burroughs' *The Chessmen of Mars* and Robert Heinlein's *Red Planet*. The decade was the 1970's.

In more recent years, I like many anime shows from Japan. Some of my really creative favourites include *Vampire Knight*, *Gargantia on the Verdurous Planet*, *No. 6*, *Mushi-Shi*, *Naruto Shippūden*, *Kemono no Sōja Erin*, *Moribito: Guardian of the Spirit*, *The Mystic Archives of Dantalian*, *Galaxy Express 999*, *Xam'd: Lost Memories*, *Fate/Zero*, *Level E*, *La storia della Arcana Famiglia*, *Polar Bear Cafe*, *Yumeiro Pâtissière*, *Gintama*, *Maoyū*, *Maō Yūsha*, *Aoi Hana*, *Nokto de la Galaksia Fervojo*, *Mononoke*, *Shelter*, *Akira*, *Sirius the Jaeger*, *Violet Evergarden*, *Attack on Titan*, *Carole & Tuesday*, *et cetera*.

By the year 2020, after much contemplation at the café Starbucks and at Casa Medrano, I have settled on tendencies towards Science, Buddhism, and Animism as my belief systems. I opine that Animism can explain other religious systems which are monotheistic or polytheistic. I incline towards Animism's *panpsychism* or *pantheism*.

Languages always have intrigued me. In conjunction with the triangular constellation, three special artificial languages have been dear to me for a long time: **Lojban**, **Esperanto**, and **Interlingua**, which I imagine as the **Purple Slime**, the **Verdant Garden**, and the **Blue Castle**, respectively. (The neighbouring triple-star system Alpha

Centauri comes to my mind, too.) Some natural languages, Classical Nahuatl, Tagalog, Inuktitut, Japanese, and the Latinate Continuum, have been dear to me, also. I have read many mini phrasebooks, as mini vacations. I have collected many research papers about linguistics, especially about Amerindian languages and other native languages around this world. Like a swinging hammock or pendulum, my interests spiral through time. I am verily a beginner in maybe over a hundred languages. A saying goes, "Anything worth doing is worth doing badly..." My language experience is like a big *sushi combo*. (One cannot be too overconfident!)

People have been wondering about their sexuality, whether they are gay or straight. My studies in sexology lead to the thinking that *most* people are really bisexual. In pre-Xtian times, such as the Greco-Roman times, bisexuality was the social norm... I have practiced nudity in nudist parks and bathhouses. In those places, I have learned a lot about anatomy and human behaviour. Where I am here at Lulu Island, there should be nudist places. They would inspire others, I think...

