

Review of: "[Commentary] Quo Vadis, Man? Common Sense Approach of Human Life Perspectives"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This is a review of "[Commentary] Quos Vadis, Man? Common Sense Approach of Human Life Perspectives" by Mihail Lucian Pascu

Background first. I had never heard of Qeios but perhaps was selected to review this because I have written articles attempting to make sense out of religions (and with it taking on the scientific vision of life). Pascu touches on the topic of religions with repeated references to "God".

Additionally, my looking around a little at Qeios it seemed like a pretty good place for open discourse and reviews.

Now onto the Commentary. First a broad criticism of Quos Vadis (QV). It is too large and unfocused. The somewhat overlapping positive is that it covers a number of topics with some fine points made a long the way. I think somewhere around 20% of the material could be removed to positive effect.

One perhaps unintended positive in this work is the it provides a sober look at some the global terrain of Steven Pinker's optimistic assessments.

In the end M. L. Pascu felt compelled to acknowledge about possible offensive material. I found no such offense and am glad such work can get published.

I will push my comments on Religions/God topic to the end of the review and get started with some chronological commentary. I was impressed to see the topic of religion discussed and not in an academic dismissive way.

The title is too long. Probably "Quo Vadis, Man?" would be best. I flat out disagree with Pascu's basic assertion that any idea is somehow immortal. As a simple example In doing engineering work I have rumbled through many design ideas and almost all of these were then discarded (and not communicated). I assume that much creative work is like that.

In the abstract there is "row" instead of "raw". Also "should proceed" might better be "could proceed".

Beneath his wide-ranging commentary Pascu suggests was his observations on the variations found in communities that he had traveled too. I indirectly perhaps saw a similar range in working with refugees in my home area.

In Genoa portion there is an over-reaching negative conclusion about human actions - "he [humans] always acted in the same [wrong] way". If you want a profound look at deeper perspective on life and with it a lived realization in the form positive actions - then see "And There Was Light" by Jacque Lusseyran. And for a group counterexample see May 2020's

Scientific American “Living With the Forest: [BaYaka] Pygmies thrived in the Congo Basin - until development coupled with conservation arrived” by Jerome Lewis. Remarkable accomplishments in well-being and relationship to nature and this from very different (non-modern) perspectives.

In the Vienna portion the author claims that it “is unlikely” that humans will “understand above all, his [own] nature”. There are two counterarguments to this vital point. First, from a scientific perspective does anyone question the molecular-only vision of life? They think they have nailed down our nature - period. And then from an investigative approach you have the realization of Lusseyran in his memoir. This appears to echo the Self-realization accounts associated with meditative/contemplative traditions. And such events are arguably in the neighborhood of understanding ones own [ultimate] nature. “is unlikely” might then those case be better said as “obtainable, but very challenging”.

Pascu addresses serious questions with regards to our relationship to nature and with it technology and sustainability. That is certainly commendable. He might have brought in Vaclav Smil who has done an enormous amount of quantitative work in the area. I agree with the point that this is a vital and challenging topic.

Pascu spends quite a bit of time trying to make sense of the educational imperatives faced in the modern world. The word he might have used therein is “culture”. Having worked for years with refugee groups it is readily apparent that humans tend to come packaged with group tendencies (or trajectories). Those cultures are stubborn and can be significant obstacles with regard to education. A librarian 5 years ago told me that our city (Rochester NY) is home to 40 percent functional illiteracy (perhaps akin to Pascu’s “functional alphabets”). That despite substantial expenditures and efforts to get everyone on board educationally. I agree that in our mostly modernized world a basic education is essential. And it also a big societal challenge.

Pascu has good content on the potential and importance of democracy. He also two major unfortunate detours that occurred in the past - fascism and communism.

On page 9 there is a good bit on our future perspective. But I suggest forgetting about the option involving other planets.

Pasco also has some very nice content on the mysteries of communication. And that some of those mysteries might have some overlap with religious perspectives (and perhaps even the dark mysteries of physics).

I suggest questioning the benefits of social media. Perhaps that is a kind of communication that society needs to back away from.

Pascu makes a number of good points with regard to the different aspects of a civilization/nation’s accomplishments. He feels that our violent nature has resulted in our group assessments being too dominated by military accomplishments. I add one further aspect or metric of a society - relationship to nature, and in particular in terms of the percentage of time spent outdoors. I think modern people are moving away from the outdoors and that this is likely problematic.

In the Greece section there is a “dye” instead of “die”.

The paragraph on the potentially “sensitive and explosive” topic of secret societies and their activities I found difficult to

follow and seems out of place.

One of Pascu's stated main societal objective is the "identification of the qualities of individuals and to educate each of them, in order to utilize at maximum" but that doesn't seem realistic. In fact if Pascu's sees this tendency in some organizations he might better have critiqued it. It is probably best for individuals to find their way to meaningful occupations.

Now onto a big topic for potential future work. Pascu raises the potentially taboo topic of religions and God. But I suggest that if you want to raise questions along the lines of Quo Vadis then, yes, you should certainly address religions and their perspectives.

This was done indirectly (perhaps some academics will like it) but without much depth, in particular in raising the topic of "God". It turns out that seriously considering religious(/dualistic) views is not hard to do. I mention a couple of papers offering support for the objective validity of religious(/dualistic) views. Search as needed or request the links.

"Religion versus Science II: Why Science is Wrong about Life and Evolution, and Where Religious Beliefs Can Find Objective Traction"

—> runs through the big and small challenges facing the scientific vision of life and corresponding daylight for religious views.

"Meaning Beyond Molecules and Hubris: A Gross Case Supporting the General Religious Belief Package and Some Critical Perspectives"

—> this paper is simultaneously broader and also more focused. It turns out that there is now an official consensus that we are born with a religious/dualistic understanding including the existence of God. I suggest that people should question this as being evolutionary fallout with a DNA transcription. Coupling that with a number of other things - including the unraveling of DNA's expectations as well as a phenomenon like terminal lucidity could draw some attention. Final point. At the OJPP site you have to "download" to get the paper's formatting.

Obviously ultimate reality if in fact it extends beyond 'Atoms and the Void' could be significant to peoples' perspectives and thus their response to Quo Vadis? A final point on religions. It is much easier and I suggest more significant to investigate the existence of souls (breakdown of the bio-robot business) than that of Gods. If there were good evidence in favor of the existence of a God but no evidence for souls then what would that amount to?

In conclusion, Mihail Lucian Pascu has laid a far reaching assessment of our future potential and problems. I was pleased to be able to read it.