Can Digital Awareness in Religion Resolve the Humanitarian Crisis in the Future?

Description

Introduction

By the committee, I was asked to discuss religious moderation in digital humanities. I suspect that the religious context in the future will be significantly triggered by anything that produces human religious awareness. So, the context of religious moderation in the future, like it or not, will be in contact with the digitalization of religious knowledge and awareness which is where the significant role of scholars is to provide meaningful input on future humanitarian crises.[1] The emergence of Techno-Religion has formed a new experience in religion, where the digital world is the most influential in the lives of religious people today.[2] In the past, various human experiences and knowledge were obtained from intuition and empirical and non-digital scientific discovery methods. At this point, human consciousness is more confronted with the animal world. However, humanitarian knowledge is currently being directed towards cyborgs, trans-humanism, robotics, and artificial intelligence issues. Of course, this forms a new awareness in absorbing current human knowledge and behavior.

For this reason, this paper will provide an essential narrative about human life in the future regarding the production of new awareness in religion from the digital world. At least, there are three crucial things in understanding the context of this problem, namely the production of knowledge, which is closely related to the interpretation; the process of understanding, which produces awareness; and finally, the behavior of the manifestation of knowledge production and human awareness in carrying out their daily religious activities. These three important problems require in-depth answers to construct our new knowledge to understand what the new consciousness of religious communities will look like in the future.

Transformation of Religious Knowledge

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In the last two decades, digitizing religious information in cyberspace has been massive. All this information is then known as what we know as knowledge, but it is not science at all. *Knowledge* is a data collection that is then put together in a scientific framework, forming a single body of knowledge, and producing results known as science. Knowledge and science are a severe topic of discussion among scholars, both in the East and the West. It seems that knowledge becomes so strong in vibration that it produces various results of contemplation of knowledge, known as theories. The process above does not involve the internet world at all. All knowledge information is entered into the human mind without involving digital processes. Someone must read, analyse, reflect, and perceive, and then they can produce a form of knowledge through non-digital scientific processes. Nick Bostrom maintains: "Our modest advantage in general intelligence has led us to develop language, technology, and complex social organization. The advantage has compounded over time, as each generation has built on the achievement of its predecessors."[3]

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The absence of the internet's influence in tracing scientific work processes means that the human brain and machines that can think are autonomous. Humans only use their minds to carry out various innovations, which have caused the emergence of various machines from the results of human knowledge. So, philosophers tried to find various primary forms of non-machine knowledge.[4] However, the results of these achievements in the usefulness of the human mind provide a strong impetus for the meaning of human progress in carrying out scientific engineering processes. Since the modern era, humans have been very infatuated with automation processes.[5] The faster the automation process, the more advanced a scientific civilization will be. Therefore, the Internet's presence has significantly impacted science's development.[6] Because humans always want to experience maximum speed, to split space and time.

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Because the above processes initially advanced human intelligence, the issue of their consciousness became neglected. Initially, humans confronted themselves with animals in exploring their academic work. After that, humans frame intuition and matters of a metaphysical nature, becoming their basis for developing an understanding of themselves in the production of science. However, once there is technology that is automated, intelligence and consciousness become very asymmetrical which is the beginning of the disharmony in the impact of knowledge on humans, including in understanding spiritual issues. Religious knowledge was initially intended to make humans closer to their God. However, after the process of searching for expertise became completely automatic, God was considered to have "died" in the world of their minds. Science rose, and religion was supposed to have no significant function in human life.[7]

At least three impacts of knowledge production led to the automation of spiritual life today. First, the broader the scope of knowledge that must be mastered, the fewer opportunities there will be to negate faith globally. People are starting to open their way of thinking and are willing to accept differences of thought because the production of scientific understanding in religion results from the modern era's knowledge system. Social sciences and humanities, in this context, strongly influence the emergence of this thesis. Therefore, the automation system that has emerged recently has helped religious understanding, both in thought and in action, which has been inherited from the working system by social science and humanities approaches. In other words, social sciences, and humanities, which seek to understand religious life and organize ways of thinking systematically, have become the beginning of a rigorous introduction to automated systems. The Internet, thus, only continues what the social sciences and humanities have left behind.

The thesis above assumes that opening automation in science, especially religious studies, through merging social sciences and humanities with the internet has resulted in a shift in religious patterns in everyday life. The digital-based process of spirituality makes understanding across religions or beliefs, even across ideas within a religion, inevitable. Initially, a person understands religion according to what they believe is valid from their parents or teachers. It broadens to an understanding of religion that adapts to socio-cultural changes. This understanding is included in the digitalization process so that the product of religious understanding and experience becomes increasingly dynamic.

Second, control over the production of knowledge, which was initially carried out in the real world by someone who has authority and power in religious discourse, then changes in the virtual world, which is based on an algorithmic system, causing someone to be pious or wrong in understanding their religion daily. The consumption of religious knowledge in cyberspace uses keyword patterns, which is part of the SEO (Search Engine Optimization) business in digital marketing in cyberspace. The more frequently a keyword is searched for by internet users to accumulate information in their minds, the more it provides great potential in the SEO business on search engines. It is said that:

Search engine optimization (SEO) plays a crucial role in the potential dissemination of personalized content that reflects quality. This quality is related to the curation of content and proper usability in the Web-based systems in order to cover users' information needs. SEO's main purpose is related to the provision of strategic steps to Web developers and content creators to optimize websites for higher rankings in search results and, hence, greater organic traffic that comes from search engines.[8]

The control of religious knowledge production is an interesting topic for further investigation. Currently, the production process is based on SEO or keyword-based techniques, which results in a need for

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more structure in religious understanding, like the experience in traditional societies. The shift from authority in the real world to authority in the virtual world has led to religious understanding following trends recommended by search engines. This means a person may become deeply religious not because they meet a teacher in a class or religious forums in public spaces but because they find a teacher in a virtual space. In such cases, the drive to become knowledgeable in religious matters decreases because the person seeks knowledge only to increase their information on religious matters, not to continue the production of religious knowledge. Consequently, the person only seeks to maintain their knowledge and obedience rigidly; this occurs due to the assumption that the more comprehensive a person's religious knowledge is, the broader their horizons and soul will be in understanding different interpretations of religious life.

Third, it has been observed that the transition from non-automatic to automatic religious knowledge has led people to become easily agitated or emotional in certain situations. This has resulted in conflicts among religious followers because they are being supplied with religious information that they cannot control themselves. The automatic production of knowledge, triggered by a targeted keyword system, means that people do not have adequate knowledge support to clarify the religious information that enters their thinking. This lack of understanding leads to counter-productive behavior in religious life today. It should be acknowledged that cyberspace plays a significant role in influencing people's emotions, leading them to act irrationally.

The book *Chaos Monkey*, by Antonio Garcia Martinez, explains how human minds are busy in cyberspace, like monkeys flying in the trees. People's minds are preoccupied with something that is not at all important to them. It is stated that: "…in the future, there will be two types of jobs: people who tell computers what to do, and people who are told by computers what to do."[9] It is interesting to note that the production of religious knowledge often exhibits chaotic behavior, like that of the *Chaos Monkey*. Religious behavior tends to be extreme and is triggered by human thoughts jumping around, much like monkeys jumping from one branch to another on a tree. Although a person's mind may have a lot of targeted information, they may not be able to acquire it comprehensively and responsibly through academic work. Therefore, individuals with a scattered way of thinking, like jumping monkeys, hold sway in disseminating religious information, supported by an algorithm system and digital marketing. This results in a disconnect in the production of religious knowledge, which fails to bring about a change in thought leading to an improvement in consciousness.

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Transformation Religious Behaviour

In the previous paragraph, I explained how the automated production of religious knowledge is linked to the spiritual satisfaction of religious practitioners. If this process is not properly studied, the behavior of these individuals may take on a machine-like pattern. Scholars have conducted several studies on how digital machines, including those used for communication and daily activities, affect human behavior. [10] Studies of the influence of the internet on behaviour prove that nowadays, humans are governed by the digital world, not the other way around. If this assumption is accepted, religious behaviour patterns will also significantly influence. Above, we have explained how the automation of religious

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knowledge is taking place rapidly. The condition is stated to be superintelligence, with Bostrom saying that "any intellect that greatly exceeds the cognitive performance of humans in virtually all domains of interests."[11]

Therefore, I argue that now, in religion, groups have emerged in society that prioritize feelings or emotions in responding to every religious issue they receive in cyberspace. Here, Daniel Kahneman has presented two models of thinking: First, System 1 contains fast, intuitive, and emotional ways of thinking. Second, System 2 is slow, deliberative, and very logical.[12] The first system is starting mainly to be used to respond to information originating from cyberspace. Of these two systems, it implies that religious behaviour that is based on the first model of thinking produces more unproductive attitudes and even tends to be provocative. When information in cyberspace tries to catch up with the number of advertisements that will generate income for a content creator, emotion, intuition, and a fast response are what is desired. They assume that when someone can last up to 20 seconds, then for the rest, the audience will enjoy the information presented until the end. So, the influence of fantasy and emotions that the content creator wants to stir.

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[2]Yuval Noah Harari, *21 Lessons for the 21st Century* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2018).

[3]Nick Bostrom, *Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), vii.

[4] Isaiah Berlin, 'The Philosophers of the Enlightenment', in *The Power of Ideas*, ed. Henry Hardy (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2013), 43–62.

[5]Michio Kaku, *The Future of Humanity: Terraforming Mars. Interstellar Travel, Immortality, and Our Destiny Beyond Earth* (New York: Doubleyday, 2018).

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