

# The Age of the World Picture and the Meaning of Human Life

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## Abstract

What does the age of the world picture mean, and how does it relate to human life? It is specially significant to answer such questions concerning the meaning of human life in the age of the world picture, since this age represents an age in which modern human being destroyed his/her traditional relations with the whole system of being, and drawing on his/her modern rationality, built a new world relying on his/her willing. In this pictured modern world, the identity and reality of all affairs have been redefined based on modern human being's understanding and will. Some essential virtues of this age are humanism, atheism, agnosticism, scientism, secularism, moral relativism, demystification of the world, and ignoring death. Some critics consider it as the age of wholly meaningless human life. In this paper, while analyzing many aspects of this age and its essential properties, I indicate that its mundane and temporal meaning is imaginable by restricting the human being's perspective to the boundaries of the mundane world, and interest in the results of modern science and technology. However, such a meaning is far away from the theistic meaning of life.

**Keywords:** The age of world picture, meaning of life, humanism, scientism, atheism.

## 1. Introduction

This research studies significant meanings of the phrase *the age of the world picture*, trying to show what this world means, a world resulting from the modern human being's pictures, who is equipped with modern technology and subjective reason. Moreover, it addresses the meaning that is made for modern painters. In fact, by considering some theories of the meaning of life, it should be clear that if the human life in this age has meaning, which type its meaning is. That is, given the role of some factors, like value, goal, and function, concerning the meaning of life, which of these is related to its meaning? And must its meaning be discovered or created? Finally, we should whether the putative meaning of the modern human being's life is naturalistic, non-naturalistic, or super-naturalistic. Further, how tenable can such a meaning be?

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It should also be seen what factors make life meaningful if the human life at this age can be considered meaningful? In this case, it seems that we can take into account some meaningful factors like theism, belief in the hereafter, purposefulness of life, the place of the human being in the whole system of being, the position of moral values, death, and the problem of evil. The purpose of the meaningful role of these factors is how and to what extent have all of them played a role in a meaningful or meaningless human life in this age.

## 2. Meaning and Properties of the Age of the World Picture

The meaning of life is a major concern of contemporary and modern human beings. When its significance is more deeply understood, then crises ahead of modern and contemporary human beings will be considered, crises that have been caused by scientism, materialism, demystifying the world, putting aside God as the ultimate cause, hegemony of modern technology, and extreme secularism, with which human beings have been engaged. Accordingly, some critics of modernity have underscored human being's spiritual crisis, claiming that some dimensions of our age are meaningless.

Drawing on such viewpoints, different titles are used for describing the essential virtues of modern contemporary age. In this case, one suitable and meaningful interpretation is to describe the modern contemporary age as *the Age of the World Picture* as introduced by Martin Heidegger. The phrase *the age of the world picture* conveys the human being's relation to his/her world, and clarifies all his/her epistemological, religious, theological, moral, political, scientific, technological, and natural relations, as a subject, to the whole system of being as an object. This phrase shows the human being's central role in giving identity to other entities, such as God and the world, based on the human will.

So, the age of the world picture is a proper phrase for illustrating the general circumstances of human beings towards the whole system of being in the contemporary world. This can help us have a better and more adequate understanding of the phrase, "the age of the world picture," which was introduced by Heidegger. He says that the age of the world picture means "the matter stands before us exactly as it stands with it for us. To get into the picture (literally to put into the picture), with respect to something, means to set whatever is, itself, in place before oneself just in the way that it stands with it, and to have it fixed before oneself assert itself in this way. But a decisive determinant in the essence of the picture is still missing. We get the picture concerning something does not mean only that what is, is set before us, is represented to us, in general, but that it stands before us, in all that belongs to it and all that stands together in it, as a system" (Heidegger 1977, 129). These words by Heidegger mean that this age is the age that the identity and reality of the external world are redefined, determined and actualized by human beings. So some significant properties, like quality, quantity, and the nature of

everything in the world are redefined and determined based on human will. He says, "That the world becomes a picture is one and the same event with the event of human being's becoming subject in the midst of that which is" (Heidegger 1977, 132). The significant note is that since the ground for drawing the world is a human being's subjective will, he/she can legitimize the identifies of all other existents, and determine their ontological limits. As Heidegger says, "this means whatever is, is considered to be in being only to the degree and to the extent that it is taken into and referred back to this life, is lived out, and becomes life-experience" (Heidegger 1977, 134).

So the age of the world picture is concerned with the age in which everything in the whole system of being, including God and his creatures, are actualized and brought into existence based on human will, and he/she only determines all their properties. In fact, a human being is a painter whose painting can determine the components, elements, qualities, and quantities of his/her world. Heidegger refers to this power of the human being's subjectivism as humanism, saying, "Humanism first arises where the world becomes picture" (Heidegger 1977, 133), whereas one of the most important properties of this brand of humanism is to conquer the world as a picture.

Now to analyze the hidden concepts within the notion of the age of the world picture, it can be said that it indicates the essential properties of modern world in which the human being is posited as the axis of the whole system of being, so that his/her main concern is mundane happiness, and to be happy with natural and empirical sciences as carriers of his/her happiness. For such a human being, some realities like God and supernatural entities have no central importance, which is why he/she adopts an atheistic or agnostic approach to such entities.

Modern human being has put aside the hand of God and divine agency from his/her life, and taken a mechanistic attitude to the process of the world, and through modern technology, he/she tries to conquer the world and store its energies, and finally change it in conformity to his/her own understanding, needs, and abilities. In fact, modern human being believes that he/she is dominant on his/her destiny, and tries to answer his/her own fundamental questions by using modern human rationality, and some achievements of modern science and technology have given him/her an apparently powerful worldview to answer such questions. Therefore, modern human beings try to demystify the whole system of being, removing all mysteries and hidden secrets that pertain to metaphysical facts, and then due to his/her human rationality, they concerned themselves with questions that are accessible to mundane abilities. So, a modern human being has certain special virtues that determine the nature of his/her meaning of life, including humanism, atheism or agnosticism, scientism, demystification of the world, moral relativism and ignorance of death. The following discussion will clarify the meaning of such a human life.

## 2.1. Humanism

Humanism is one of the most significant properties and factors concerning a human life in the age of the world picture. It should be studied for understanding the meaning of such a human life. There are different approaches to humanism. For example, it turns a human being to an existent, from which other things, which rely on him/her, derive their ontological reality. Human beings become the axis of whatever there is. Modern human beings refer to themselves when they search for the truth. The freedom that modern human beings look for is autonomy. So they should find the truth and certainty in themselves. Humanism is exactly the view that a human being has no essence, but decides what he/she wants to be through his/her decisions and acts. Accordingly, the essence of humanism includes the following: human beings are biological entities, they are holders of reason, they are posited as the axis and center of everything, and they actively struggle for technological dominance in reality (Abazari 1996, 60-61). The so-called “modern age” is defined as the age in which the human being is the axis and criterion of all existents. So humanism is the belief in the human intellect as capable of discovering the complicated mechanisms of the natural world. Human beings, in the modern age, are defined as axial existents around whom all other things revolve (Ahmadi 2005, 249, 252, 235). In short, human being is described as the base of any being and reality (Abazari 1996, 67).

The above remarks show that humanism has all epistemological, moral, ontological, philosophical, political and cultural aspects, in all of which it is the human being who plays a pivotal role, and any kinds of reality, fact, value, and criterion should be redefined through the human being and based on his/her will. In other words, there is no foundation, criterion, and reality outside of human will, but whatever there is or there is not is only brought into existence based on the human will and his/her epistemological faculty. So modern humanism is mainly characterized by the human central role in the whole system of being. Consequently, all existences, criteria, and values of the world are legitimate and authorized only to the extent of the human will. Nevertheless, human beings are not only the base, but also the end, of the universe, as the whole system of being has no end outside of the human will. Such a human being is not only able to accept or reject religions, philosophies, and worldview, but can also create them based on his/her autonomous reason.

Now, by taking account of the human place due to humanism in the age of the world picture, it is possible to speak about the meaning of the human life. On this account, he/she is the base and legislator of the world, and can define any aims, values, and functions for his/her life, and create any meanings that he/she wants. The problem, however, is that since a human being is the master of the whole system of being, and there is no will above his/her will, then there can be multiple meanings of life as many as there are human beings.

## 2.2. Atheism

The atheism of the age of the world picture comes in a variety of forms, including absolute denial of God's existence, rejection of functions of Christian God, agnosticism about God, or the belief in a God who abandoned human beings and the world or a God who lacks some divine absolute attributes, and finally a personal and humanitarian God whom was made and conceived in conformity to the modern human being's will and understanding. In this case, some thinkers have underscored two kinds of atheist human beings: first, an academic atheist who exhibits an aristocratic atheism of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. His/her atheism is motivated by a desire to understand and explain the world without God, a world confined to nature, human beings, history, and society. The second is a market atheist who exhibits the capitalistic atheism of the nineteenth century. His/her atheism is motivated by a desire to achieve happiness without God. In this case, it is asserted that the essence of modernism is nothing but the human tendency to understand the world without God, and live in it without believing in Him.

The problem of modern atheism is, first, to explain why God, who does not exist, is in human minds. So, the gist of modernistic atheism is that as long as we do not need God for understanding and explaining the world, then there is no God (Murray 1996, 401-10). Second is the theater's human being that does not understand and explain the world with God. In his/her view, the world is vain. He/she will not change the world, since such a change, whatever it is, cannot save the world from vanity. His/her aim is to actualize the world without God. His/her aim is to actualize himself/herself; that is, to actualize human beings who want to live in a Godless world. He/she thinks the world has no God, because his/her will has been formed so that the world, like himself/herself, will be without God. He/she wants God not to exist. The essential origin of atheism is the problem of evil, positing a moral principle to the effect that not only evil should not exist, but also its existence is indeed unbearable (Murray 1996, 414-19).

The biggest recent atheistic event is the death of God. Nietzsche says that the belief in the Christian God is no longer justified, which has now spread its effects on Europe. The idea of God's death is a human thought. In the age of divinity, human beings explained natural phenomena and life events in terms of the divine will, but now she/he does not appeal to God for explaining the events of the world (Nietzsche 2001, 193). The death of the Christian God, for Nietzsche, is equal to the end of the morality of good and evil, the end of all forms of idealism. In Nietzsche's view, love of divinity leads not only to limitation of human beings, but also to his/her deviation. Humanism is the base and principle of empowering humanity, but attachment to God decreases his/her humanism. Nietzsche claims that the greatest thing that a human being has sacrificed before God is his/her human nature. He/she has sacrificed his/her

humanity, which means that God has separated his/her humanity (Nietzsche 1981, 99). Heidegger also speaks of a God who has forsaken the world. He does not believe in the traditional metaphysical God, and even the Christian and Jewish God, considering this age as the age of lacking Gods, an age of spiritual crisis and an age of human penury and poverty. He says, “We don’t really pray and sacrifice, and don’t kneel before this cause of causes, God” (Heidegger 2005, 678).

The above points show that ignorance of God is a significant aspect of the human life in this age. Such ignorance is possible to appear in the form of a personal God who is conceived in conformity to the human will, without any interventions in the world and in human affairs, a God who only serves the human will. Such conceptions of God can be found in modern philosophers like Kant who supports natural theology. Or there may be some forms of the Christian God who are not concerned with the world and human affairs. In fact, the world and human beings, like machines, have their own mechanisms, as suggested by some modern philosophers and scientists like Newton.

Moreover, it is possible to speak about agnosticism in its multiple forms, including the idea that because there is no proof for God’s existence and effectiveness in human life and the world, there is no necessity to posit a role for God in such affairs. In its extreme form, it says that due to many scientific, philosophical, and theological reasons in the modern world, in particular the human will for mastery over the world, and God’s prevention of such a will, the human being of this age had better put aside God from his/her life, and believe in own destiny, as elaborated in Nietzsche’s thought.

Now, it seems that all forms of atheism, noted above, finally lead to the denial of God’s existence in the sense that the human being of this age denies the omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent God, or at least, he/she has no convincing acceptable reasons for the existence of such a God, and even does not need God. Consequently, modern human beings have decided to manage their lives based on the non-existence of God or without His effects. In such circumstances, there is no value above human beings, and they do not recognize any Lord over them. There is no truth above them, and this is a human being who alone should be responsible before his/her ontological destiny.

### **2.3. Scientism and Secularism**

Scientism and secularism of human beings of this age is in close relation to modern humanism, in the sense that his/her main concern is the search for happiness in the mundane world. Therefore, he/she is attached to natural sciences as instruments of mundane progress. For this reason, the prominent virtues of this age are the dominant hegemony of natural sciences and their essential role in drawing the main characters of modern human lives. Such tendency is explicitly illustrated, first, by modern empiricist emphasis on

authority of empirical knowledge that is gained through natural sciences, and next, by Kant's assertion of the legitimacy of the data of natural sciences and his rejection of metaphysical knowledge, and finally, by the dogmatic belief of nineteenth-century positivists, like Auguste Comte, which persisted until the twentieth century when, by commitment to the epistemic certainty of empirical sciences, religious, metaphysical, and moral propositions were judged as meaningless. The most unpleasant repercussion of the above viewpoints is that modern scientists expect empirical sciences to answer the fundamental questions of human being, because of their undue faith in unlimited potentialities of such sciences. In fact, scientism plays the roles and functions of moral, philosophical, and religious worldviews. Another virtue of such scientism, in the form of modern technology, is to save nature's energy, conquer the natural world, change the structure of nature, and destroy the innate and natural relation of human beings into his/her natural universe and environment. On this issue, Heidegger believes that revealing nature's energy through modern technologies unreasonably demands nature to supply energy that can be extracted and stored as such (Heidegger 1977, 14). The challenge happens in that the energy concealed in nature is unlocked, what is unlocked is transformed, what is transformed is stored up, what is stored up is, in turn, distributed, and what is distributed is switched anew. For Heidegger, it remains true, nonetheless, that human being in the technological age is, in a particularly striking way, struggles for revelation. This revelation concerns nature, above all, as the chief storehouse of the standing energy reserve. Modern science's way of representation pursues and entraps nature as a calculable coherence of forces (Heidegger 1977, 16, 21). Heidegger believes that a human being who destroys nature demonically is similar to a homeless person who has no correct understanding of home, housing, and fatherland. For Heidegger, a modern human being always changes his/her home, has no true feeling of housing. The earth is not his/her housing place, but is a means of exploitation. The human homelessness is the outcome of such living. In fact, the modern age has technological relations in which human beings are separated from their traditions and lose their authenticity. He/she, in this circumstance, is not able to recognize the authentic form of his/her existence (Ahmadi 2005, 353, 376-77).

#### **2.4. Ignorance of Death and Demystifying the Whole System of Being**

Another prominent characteristic of human beings in the age of the world picture is ignorance of death and demystification of the whole system of being. The significance of the matter lies in the fact that a human being is a being towards death so that dying is his/her certain destiny. For this reason, being towards death and awareness of dying are essential virtues of human beings. Moreover, they are faced with fundamental questions that are not separable from their minds, questions like: Does God exist? What is the difference

between God and human beings? What is the essence of death? What will happen to human beings after death? Considering these questions, it can be said that the world is mysterious because there is a God in the world, or at least, in addition to the natural world, a meta-natural universe also exists. Furthermore, reflection on the concept of mystery shows that there are, behind the natural world, many realities that have certain relations to the natural world, and have some effects on it that include the realm of human life (Soroush 1998, 15).

As contemplation of the mysteriousness feature reveals, it can be considered that a main characteristic of modern human thought is separation of religiosity from divinity; that is, we can think about God and metaphysical affairs by omitting their divine and heavenly origin, which finally culminated in eliminating or ignoring God. The major philosophical project of the modern age pertains a demystification achieved by Immanuel Kant. He disregarded the authority and legitimacy of revealed religion and instead acknowledged a moral and rational religion that relies on the understanding and rationality of modern human beings. Kant believed that true religion is solely based on human's pure reason, and hence, the human is the criterion of religious beliefs, with no external criteria to rely on (Kant 2009, 215).

The continuation of the thoughts of certain thinkers, including Kant, has given rise to a greater emphasis on mysterious approaches to the whole system of being and to modern human beings' ignorance of their essential mysteries of life, as well as their focus on managing their mundane lives to attain greater enjoyment. However, as modern human beings strive to answer such questions, they are forced to venture beyond the limits of the material universe and explore the metaphysical universe and intelligible affairs. This pursuit amounts to authenticity and validity of mystical, moral, metaphysical, and theological realms, while modern human beings are concerned with the mundane universe and the data of empirical sciences, and lack interest in metaphysical affairs, and are unable to answer such questions.

As a result, modern humans view such questions as intractable mysteries that have no place in their mundane thoughts. They feel no necessity to engage their minds with such matters. So, in the age of the world picture, the world of human beings is demystified, with any secrets, mysteries, and metaphysical realities pushed aside. Instead, they are concerned with mundane categories and how to achieve mundane happiness. For this reason, even if human beings of this age accept the existence of mysteries, like the mystery of death, they do not have any interest in thinking about them. Instead, they want to manage their own mundane universe in scientific terms.

## **2.5. Moral Relativism**

One of the main features of the age of the world picture is moral relativism and the lack of a moral foundation. All divine and metaphysical foundations of



morality have been lost, and morality has been completely transformed to a human-centered system based on human understanding and will. Consequently, modern morality is founded, legislated, and ultimately determined by human being, rather than by a metaphysical or meta-human being called God or the Sacred. Kant can be considered the first thinker to fully humanize morality and to search for all moral axioms, values, foundations, and ends within the human ability and will. In fact, Kant's ethics has two essential properties: first, it is based on human beings in terms of its foundations, axioms, and ends; that is, it is an ethics for human beings and has meaning in human values and boundaries. Second, even though human beings are the ultimate end of ethics, due to their limitations, they need God to guarantee moral virtues and happiness at the highest level, which is called holiness or sacredness. Therefore, Kant's interpretation of ethics can be seen as a demystified and humanistic ethics that does not require divinity or metaphysical teachings, as human beings can understand, legislate, and determine the totality of such a moral system.

Put in a nutshell, as human beings of this age have destroyed the natural world and built a world based on their own will, they have come to deny divine finality and the ethics of super human beings, seeing to it that morality relies on their abilities and tendencies. In this case, moral values, like honesty, truthfulness, justice, self-sacrifice, goodness, and so on, have no meaning beyond the tendencies of the mankind, but it is our temporary benefits and interests that, depending on the circumstances, determine the definition as well as the external objects of these values.

## **2.6. Humanization of the Truth**

The last feature that is closely tied to the age of the world picture is humanization of the truth, in the sense that, due to negligence of the divine universe, modern human beings have an eye only on the natural world and their own human potential. This is because, if there is a truth, it should be in this visible world and in human abilities such as will and power. Relatedly, Nietzsche denies any truth outside of the mankind, claiming that all struggles of the history of metaphysics was/is for the human to take over the power; that is, it was subjected to the Will to Power (Copleston 1977, 7:408-9). In fact, for Nietzsche, the truth is a deception, it is an error, and we cannot ask about the truth. Moreover, no fixed reality exists. All things are in mobility and motion, and are unrecognizable. Nietzsche's theory of the Eternal Recurrence says that there is no meaning and no special conception in the world (Copleston 1977, 7:416). The reality of existence depends on mankind and humanity. It is necessary then to link the Will to Power with Eternal Recurrence in order to speak about the Super Human Being (Heidegger 1979, 216-17).

### **3. Analyzing the Relation between the Meaning of Life and the Age of the World Picture**

Critics of the virtues of the age of the world picture often describe it as a meaningless world because, in such a world, human beings have lost all their authentic relations with God, truth, the world, moral values, and so on. In fact, the people of this age are homeless, living in poverty due to their loss of God and spirituality. The absence of God and the Sacred, coupled with the ignorance of death, destruction of nature, moral relativism, and entrapment by the destiny of modern technology led Heidegger to believe that people in this age live in a terrible spiritual crisis that is as dangerous as a third world war.

In short, critics of the age of the world picture have made a judgment about the totality of the human life. However, I suggest that we should suspend such judgement until we study the theories and semantics of the meaning of life. It is through this study that we can clarify how and to what extent we judge the meaningfulness or meaninglessness of the modern human life in this age. To achieve this goal, we need to review the semantics and related theories about the meaning of life.

When we speak about the meaning of life, should we clarify our understanding of the meaning of life? It seems that the meaning of life can be, at least, understood in three respects: goals, values, and functions. Furthermore, it should be clear whether our approach to the meaning of life is individualistic or holistic. In short, the goal of life is consciously the same as the goals that a human being adopts in his/her life or God considers for his/her life. However, the goal of life is different from its result. The question of the function of life concerns its role and merits for actualizing more goals. Accordingly, to see the importance of the function of life, it should be compared greater lives and their function(s). The question of the meaning of value is whether our life, which is surrounded by many disasters, evils, and problems, has any meaning. However, our life can have original, intermediary, and other kinds of values (Metz 2013, 18-19).

On the other hand, there are three different approaches consideration of which helps us to judge justly about the human meaning of life: naturalism, supernaturalism, and non-naturalism. Naturalism maintains that there are necessary and sufficient conditions for the meaning of life in the mundane world. The possibilities of this mundane world provide a fertile ground for those values through which we can attain our meaning of life (Metz 2013, 164-65). Non-naturalistic approaches hold that, for attaining the meaning of life, there is neither a need to the possibilities of this mundane world, nor to the hereafter or God. However, with the help of some rational or moral axioms or principles, like freedom, we can have a meaningful life (Audi 2005, 334-41). Supernaturalism defends the existence of God or everyone's

immortality as a necessary and sufficient condition for the meaning of life, in the sense that the existence of God or the immortality of the soul is a necessary and sufficient condition for attaining a meaningful life.

Now, considering multiple semantics of, and different approaches to, the meaning of life, it is possible to assert that the universal judgment of critics about the meaninglessness of this age is not accurate. This is because it is not clear in what meaning or under which approach the modern human life is deemed meaningless. Are their judgements about the meaninglessness of the human life related to the whole life or some parts of their lives? Have critics taken sufficient note of the significance of human lives for discovering or creating the meaning of life? Have they noticed the differences of meanings through considering their values, goals, and functions? And what are the roles of meaningful factors, or their lacking in a meaningless life?

In contrast to the criticisms of human life in this age as being meaningless, we argue that human life does have meaning. However, this meaning is not what the critics suppose, but rather it depends on the meaning that arises from an analytical semantics of the meaning of life and the person's approach to it. In this case, first, we notice the triple meanings of meaning: goal, value, and function. The human life in the age of the world picture has its meaning, since his/her life has a goal, a value, and a function. He/she has no goals beyond his/her mundane life, but the goal of his/her life is to attain happiness within the boundaries of this mundane world. Moreover, there are many values in his/her life, including fundamental or instrumental values, although he/she does not believe that there are any foundations, criteria, or ends beyond his/her subjective will. To the contrary, he/she is the foundation, criterion, and end, as well as the legislator, of all values. So, in terms of value, his/her life has a meaning, though confined to temporal will-based human values, which render the meanings arising from those values temporal and transitory, rather than stable and absolute. What is more, his/her life has its special function, in the sense that every moment and act of his/her life has its meaning even in the visible world, although its function is limited and changeable.

So, given the three meanings of life—i.e. goal, value, and function—a human life in the age of the world picture is meaningful. Modern human beings, however, are the legislators of their goals, values, and functions, and hence, the resulting meaning has no stability and immutability, but changes based on his/her will. In fact, in this regard, the human problem is not the lack of meaning, but the problem is its extreme mobility and relativity that is absolutely dependent on his/her will.

As a result, such persons merely struggle to create their own meaning of life within the mundane world, and since such a meaning is posited as an

object, it is rebuilt based on his/her will. So a modern human being is the creator, rather than the discoverer, of meaning, and the realm of his/her creation is restricted to him/herself and the mundane world. Consequently, in this meaning, his/her life is meaningful, albeit limited to the boundaries of the mundane world and his/her own subjective volition.

On the other hand, a consideration of naturalistic, meta-naturalistic and non-naturalistic viewpoints also clarifies some significant points about the meaningfulness or meaninglessness of the human life in this age. If we choose a meta-naturalistic approach alone, his/her life will certainly be rendered meaningless, since even if he/she is a theist, he/she does not assign any kinds of role and function in the world and mankind's affairs to his/her putative God. If he/she is an atheist, then certainly because of the disbelief in God, such a human being suffers from a crisis of the meaning of life from a meta-naturalistic point of view. It seems that most of the above critics tend to allude to this aspect of the human life in this age. In fact, for them, the absence of God and sacred entities leads to the meaninglessness of such life.

Furthermore, It can be argued that the modern human being's neglect of contemplating death and their uncertainty about the possibility of life after death, including the immortality of the soul, contribute to the perceived meaninglessness of their life. So, both interpretations of supernaturalism, namely the necessity of believing in God and in the immortality of the soul, lead to the meaninglessness of the human life in the age of the world picture. This is because he/she either has no judgement about the existence of God and the soul's immortality, or even if he/she believes in them, such a belief plays no effective role in his/her life. If, however, we adopt a non-naturalistic approach, then such a human life is certainly meaningful, since he/she maintains both rational and moral principles and uses them in his/her life. The difference is only how to consider the relevant principles: do these principles have some realities beyond a human will and understanding in the age of the world picture, or do they depend on his/her will and understanding?

It seems that the second option is true about modern human beings. The idea is that although he/she maintains some rational and moral principles, he/she is as the foundation, the legislator, and the end of such principles. The resulting meaning of applying them is finally obtainable in the level of his/her will, understanding, and capacity, and it has no reality beyond his/her human abilities. Nevertheless, such a meaning is so relative and artificial that it is subjected to contraction and expansion based on the human will and tendencies. Finally, if we adopt a naturalistic approach, the human life in the age of the world picture will be meaningful, since all his/her interests are exhausted by construction of the mundane world through modern science and technology. He/she even tries to answer the questions beyond the

empirical world by appealing to the abilities of modern science and technology. In fact, for modern human beings, modern science and technology is able to play the role of an efficient worldview, and to answer his/her basic needs. So from this point of view, the modern human life is meaningful, but its meaning is certainly temporary, relative, limited, and susceptible to fundamental challenges, because the modern human being believes in its abilities in all dimensions, and is subjected to essential challenges and questions that gradually lead to a search for answers to human questions outside of such scientific worldviews.

#### **4. Conclusions**

It seems that the human being in the age of the world picture has changed all his/her relations to the basic elements of the traditional world. He/she not only tries to understand some fundamental realities like God, the hereafter, death, the world, morality and so on, in terms of his/her own subjective reason, but also wants to change their meanings and functions in terms of his/her own tendencies. So the subjective understanding and autonomic changing of the structure of the whole system of the world and its realities is a feature of such a human being. For this reason, the phrase “picturing” provides a proper explanation of the human active, central, and voluntary role in the modern world. In fact, all affairs of the whole system of being, like God, His other creatures such as a painting, as the components that are brought into existence by the autonomous human painter, as well as their quality and quantity are in his/her hand. By the way, the life of such a human being is not completely meaningless, but at least from a naturalistic point of view which is restricted to the natural world, his/her life has meaning, and even through taking a non-naturalistic point of view, he/she is able to make his/her life meaningful by relying on his/her own autonomous reason.

The basic problem of the two above-mentioned forms of a meaningful life, however, is to picture it through an autonomous mankind; that is, he/she has no home (hope) beyond his/her will in which he/she can rest, since he/she is trying to build a new house every moment. So although the naturalistic and non-naturalistic meaningfulness of human lives in the age of the world picture is a temporary tranquilizer, but it is not stable. As far as the meaning of life, however, is a gradual and hierarchical reality, its naturalistic level might satisfy some people. However, assuming the fundamental questions of human beings, such a meaning does not have much value, but through a return to God and closeness to divine virtues, he/she can get the more authentic meaning of life.

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