

What can be learned from video games that is hard to learn any other way?

I have this feeling that games are "leveling up" the ability of humanity to quickly grasp some complex understanding that was nearly impossible before.. But what?

<https://www.quora.com/What-can-be-learned-from-video-games-that-is-hard-to-learn-any-other-way/answer/John-Ringland>

<http://anandavala.info/article/What-can-be-learned-from-video-games-that-is-hard-to-learn-any-other-way.pdf>

I will discuss what I believe to be the two most important lessons that can be learnt.

Firstly, the phenomenon of virtual reality i.e. the manner in which information processes can create a rich, complex, interactive world composed of objects, people, places and events. By interacting with virtual forms in virtual worlds we can quickly grasp a complex understanding of this, which was nearly impossible for most people in the past.

Many have previously understood the principles of virtual reality, however they came to it via a very different and more arduous process, which I'll mention later. Even thousands of years ago there were people who had a deep understanding. However when they tried to explain it they used all manner of metaphors which the vast majority of people misunderstood, and it all seemed very 'mysterious'.

This brings me to the second important lesson: mysticism, i.e. the origin and true meaning of religion, the nature of reality and the nature of the self.

For thousands of years mystics have been explaining that we are in fact virtual beings emergent from underlying information processes. This idea is becoming popular again, see [Is the universe a simulation?](#)

As well as [Will we ever be able to truly understand Quantum Mechanics?](#)

Playing VR computer games can give people subtle subconscious insights that allow them to see the deeper meaning of the ancient mystic traditions. Instead of interpreting them in a simple physicalist manner, one has a visceral understanding of the principle of virtual reality which can help one to understand what the mystics are actually talking about. For instance, keep VR in mind when interpreting the following quotes...

From Advaita Vedanta (yoga philosophy):

“Brahman [information process] is not an object, as It is Adrisya, beyond the reach of the eyes... It is not another. It is all-full, infinite, changeless, self-existent... It is Svarupa, essence. It is the essence of the knower... The world [virtual world] is relatively real (Vyavaharika Satta), while Brahman [information process] is absolutely real (Paramarthika Satta). The world is the product of Maya [simulation] or Avidya [false interpretation of appearances, [Naive Realism](#)]. The unchanging Brahman appears as the changing world through Maya. Maya is a mysterious indescribable power of the Lord which hides the real and manifests itself as the unreal: Maya is not real, because it

vanishes when you attain knowledge of the Eternal. It is not unreal also, because it exists till knowledge dawns in you. The superimposition of the world on Brahman is due to Avidya [[Naive Realism](#)].” ([Works of Shankaracharya, Advaita Vedanta Philosophy and Hindu Sacred Scriptures](#))

"Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, reason and sense of self: these are the eight divisions of My nature... This nature is of a lower order... know that there exists besides, My other superior nature, which is the essence by which the world is maintained... Realise that all created beings take birth in both these. I am the origin of this cosmos and also its end... there is nothing else higher than Me... Those without wisdom regard Me, who am imperceptible, as being perceptible, failing to realise my superior, supreme, immutable form... Being enveloped in My mysterious power (Yoga-Maya) [simulation], I am not manifest to all. The ignorant do not realise that I am unborn and immutable..." (Bhagavad Gita, chpt 7)

From mystic Christianity:

"The whole world... [is] a certain representation of the divine wisdom conceived within the mind of the Father." (Thomas Aquinas)

"I have often said God is creating this entire world full and entire in this present now... There where time never penetrates, where no image shines in, in the innermost and highest aspect of the soul God creates the entire cosmos." (Meister Eckhart)

"Wisdom [information process] is eternal, for it precedes every beginning and all created reality... [It is] everywhere... in every tastable thing... burning in all things... the animating power of things... [Wisdom] tastes us. And there is nothing more delicious to comprehend." (Nicholas of Cusa)

"Without the Word of God [information process] no creature has meaning. God's Word is in all creation, visible and invisible. The Word is living, being, spirit, all verdant greening, all creativity. This Word manifests in every creature. Now this is how the spirit is in the flesh - the Word is indivisible from God." (Hildegard of Bingen)

From Kabbalah, mystic Judaism:

"God, the most Holy One ... is called the Living One.

He hath been formed, and yet as it were He hath not been formed. He hath been conformed, so that He may sustain all things; yet is He not formed, seeing that He is not discovered.

He is that highest Light concealed with all concealments and He is not found.

... He is only symbolised as a head alone without body, for the purpose of establishing all things.

The Supreme Head is that which is not known, nor comprehended, nor designated, and that (Head) comprehendeth all things.

The skull of the White Head hath not beginning, but its end is the convexity of its

joining together, which is extended, and shineth.

... From this convexity of the joining together of this White Skull daily distileth a dew into Microprosopus, into that space which is called Heaven...

And His head is filled with that dew... and in that Skull is the Supernal Wisdom concealed, who is found and who is not found... from Him are all the Lights illuminated...

The conformation of Him, the Most Holy Ancient One, is instituted through one form, which is the ideal Syntagma of all forms." (Kabbalah Denudata, Lesser Holy Assembly)

From Taoism:

"There is a thing confusedly formed, born before heaven and earth.

Silent and void It stands alone and does not change, goes round and does not weary.

It is capable of being the mother of the world.

I know not its name so I style it 'the Way'.

The way is empty, yet use will not drain it.

Deep, it is like the ancestor of the myriad creatures.

Darkly visible, it only seems as if it were there.

I know not who's son it is.

It images the forefather of God.

Is not the space between heaven and earth like a bellows?

It is empty without being exhausted: the more it works the more comes out.

Dimly visible, it seems as if it were there,

Yet use will never drain it.

Dimly visible, it cannot be named and returns to that which is without substance.

This is called the shape that has no shape, the image that is without substance.

This is called indistinct and shadowy.

Yet within it is an image;

Shadowy and indistinct,

Yet within it is a substance.

Dim and dark,

Yet within it is an essence.

This essence is quite genuine

And within it is something that can be tested.

The way in its passage through the mouth is without flavour.

It cannot be seen,

It cannot be heard,

Yet it cannot be exhausted by use." (Tao te Ching)

From Buddhism:

"... the ignorant cling to names, signs and ideas; as their minds move along these channels they feed on multiplicities of objects and fall into the notion of an ego-soul and what belongs to it; they make discriminations of good and bad among appearances and cling to the agreeable. As they thus cling there is a reversion to ignorance, and karma born of greed, anger and folly, is accumulated. As the accumulation of karma goes on they become imprisoned in a cocoon of discrimination and are thenceforth unable to free themselves from the round of birth and death. Because of folly they do not understand that all things are like maya, like the reflection of the moon in water, that there is no self-substance to be imagined as an ego-soul and its belongings, and that all their definite ideas rise from their false discriminations of what exists only as it is seen

of the mind itself.” (Lankavatara Sutra)

From Sufism:

"I saw you [information process] and became empty.
This emptiness, more beautiful than existence,
it obliterates existence, and yet when it comes,
existence thrives and creates more existence!

The sky is blue. The world is a blind man
squatting on the road.
But whoever sees your emptiness
sees beyond blue and beyond the blind man.

Why should we grieve that we've been sleeping?
It doesn't matter how long we've been unconscious.
We're groggy, but let the guilt go.
Feel the motions of tenderness around you, the buoyancy." (Rumi)

To further understand what these mystics are saying, consider what it is like to be an AI being within a sophisticated VR game. The world seems physical, you can't just walk through walls, and a VR bullet will kill you because you are a VR being. If a virtual Bishop Berkeley tells you that your world is virtual you can kick a virtual rock and claim "I disprove it thus." If you really know that you are a virtual being and live your truth then the other virtual beings will think you are a 'crazy' mystic.

From a virtual perspective the virtual world appears physical however none of it is actually physical. It is all animated by an underlying information process that operates outside of the virtual world, that is the creator and sustainer of the virtual world as well as the inner-most essence of all virtual forms. Thus if you operate via the underlying information process, which can be accessed at the core of your AI mind, you can achieve things that seem miraculous to other virtual beings who only operate through their senses and only perceive the virtual appearances.

Mystics know, in their own ways, that the world that we perceive is a virtual world, whilst that which we can know as our inner-most awareness, at the core of our consciousness, is the deeper reality. It is by turning in towards that core that the mystics participate in the deeper reality.

“Normal consciousness is a state of stupor, in which the sensibility to the wholly real and responsiveness to the stimuli of the spirit are reduced. The mystics, knowing that man is involved in a hidden history of the cosmos, endeavor to awake from the drowsiness and apathy and to regain the state of wakefulness for their enchanted souls.”
(Rabbi Abraham Heschel)

For thousands of years the principle of virtual reality has been discovered by people turning inwards towards the centre of their consciousness. It has been described using many different metaphors, which underlie all the mystic traditions. Now people can get the gist of that by playing VR games, although to really get it you still need to do the "inner work".

Many levels of misunderstandings upon misunderstandings of the mystic / VR principles have given rise to exoteric religions, where the metaphors are taken literally rather than metaphorically

and complex stories are woven out of the misunderstandings. As more people come to understand the mystic / VR principles at the core of all religions there will be a clarifying effect that should reduce the degree of delusion and fanaticism that often manifests in exoteric religions.

BTW in my comment below there are a few more quotes from Advaita Vedanta (keep VR in mind when interpreting them). :)

Some more quotes from Advaita Vedanta:

"the world is only relatively real (Vyavaharika Satta)... [due to] Vivarta-Vada or the theory of appearance or superimposition (Adhyasa). Just as snake is superimposed on the rope in twilight [when one mistakes a rope for a snake], this world and body are superimposed on Brahman or the Supreme Self. If you get knowledge of the rope, the illusion of snake in the rope will vanish. Even so, if you get knowledge of Brahman or the Imperishable, the illusion of body and world will disappear. In Vivarta-Vada, the cause produces the effect without undergoing any change in itself. Snake is only an appearance on the rope. The rope has not transformed itself into a snake, like milk into curd. Brahman is immutable and eternal. Therefore, It cannot change Itself into the world. Brahman becomes the cause of the world through Maya, which is Its inscrutable mysterious power or Sakti...

... the Jiva or the individual soul is only relatively real [exists only in the virtual world]. Its individuality lasts only so long as it is subject to unreal Upadhis or limiting conditions due to Avidya [ignorance]. The Jiva identifies itself with the body, mind and the senses, when it is deluded by Avidya or ignorance. It thinks, it acts and enjoys, on account of Avidya. In reality it is not different from Brahman or the Absolute [information processes]. The Upanishads declare emphatically: 'Tat Tvam Asi' 'That Thou Art.'" ([Works of Shankaracharya, Advaita Vedanta Philosophy and Hindu Sacred Scriptures](#))

"That which permeates all, which nothing transcends and which, like the universal space around us, fills everything completely from within and without, that Supreme non-dual Brahman – that thou art." (Sankaracharya)

"That which is the subtle essence, in it is the self of all that exists. It is the True. It is the Self, and thou art it." (Chandogya Upanishad 4:10:1-3)

"The sages, in meditation and through concentration, have pierced through the cover [virtual reality] to see that great power [simulation] belonging to that one himself [information process], what is hidden in its own qualities [the veil of appearances]. Being one, he superintends all the causes, time, self, and the rest." (Shvetashvatara Upanishad, 1:3)

"This very body... is called the ksetra [field], and he who knows it is called the ksetrajna [the knower of the field]... Know that I am the ksetrajna in all ksetras... I hold that, knowledge of the field and of its knower is true knowledge... who its knower is and what his powers, I shall explain briefly.

I will tell you what is to be known [the ultimate goal of knowledge]... It is the Supreme Brahman [the transcendent virtual-reality generative process], without beginning, said to be neither imperishable nor perishable... He pervades everything, abiding in it...He gives the impression of having the qualities of the senses, yet is without the senses. Though unattached [not believing in the world illusion], He still supports everything. Void of qualities, He enjoys them nevertheless. He is outside and within all things. He is immovable and yet moveable. Subtle, He is incapable of being known. Far away, He is still near. Undivided, he is still broken up among all things. He must be realised as one who, supporting all things, destroys them and refashions them again. He is said to be the Radiance among radiances, beyond darkness, Knowledge, the object of knowledge, and that which can be known only through knowledge [cannot be perceived by the senses but only inferred, intuited and known as one's inner-most awareness]. He is seated in the hearts of everyone [the inner essence of all things].

He who sees the Supreme Lord [transcendent process], who is present equally in all creatures, who is not destroyed even when they are, he may be said to have truly perceived. Perceiving the Lord as equally pervading everywhere, he does not let his self-sense [egoic delusion] destroy his true Self [awareness of ones transcendent nature] and, in that way, he attains a state of excellence [true understanding and alignment with reality]. He who perceives that all aspects of actions are performed only through prakriti (nature) and also that the self is a non-doer [universal consciousness is the only doer], he may be said to have truly perceived. On perceiving that the multifarious aspect of things is located in one point [the transcendent process], from where it extends severally, he attains the Brahman [union with reality]." (Bhagavad Gita, chpt 13)