

The Value of Philosophy

Bertrand Russell pp.519-524

From: *The Problems of Philosophy* (1912)

“The Value of Philosophy to individual life”

- You can have a philosophy about anything
 - Looks at limitations, presuppositions, methodology, capacities.
- “Philosophy” means love of wisdom. Western philosophy began in Greece, where knowledge in general was sought. Gradually, other subjects have branched off. In philosophy, the presuppositions of other disciplines are included. Unique to philosophy are questions with no simple answer, such as “What is the ultimate nature of reality?” and “What is valid knowledge?”. “What is a place of consciousness in nature?”. “Do we have free will?”. “Does God exist?”. Not questions answered purely by matters of fact, must use technical knowledge, although the basic questions are asked by everyone. There are questions that do not have conclusive answers.
- Russell presents the issue in the first paragraph, where he makes the distinction of the “practical” man. He analyses science and practical affairs. He looks at the issues both of knowledge and usefulness. People’s attitudes towards the physical science are unquestioned, unlike in philosophy, and have no faith in the subject. Physical sciences have prestige because their applications for mankind are more apparent, whether or not they know what the science is. Improves the quality of natural life.
- The “practical” man only recognizes material needs. However, there are also applications in terms of improvement in government (democracy), in ethical matters, in the mind.
- There are certain kinds of questions that only have applications in the mind, but many have huge physical consequences, such as whether or not peoples’ lives have meaning. Questions require the application of reason.
- **Metaphysics**: inquiry into the nature as such and as a whole. The whole of reality, including ourselves. The subject includes more than what Russell suggests.
- Russell does have a point in saying philosophy is mainly in the mind, as it requires reflection. However, the distinction science versus philosophy is not as right as true knowledge versus the wish to understand. A problem with philosophy is that it does not seem to have any answers for its most important questions. Humans ask these questions because they occur naturally, rule out untruths, it is comforting to understand the question itself, it’s a resource for thinking, but it is also important for demonstrating the fact that the answers are not obvious. The value of philosophy is its uncertainty, instead of simply following “common sense”, or the views held in

common, a set of common prejudices. For those who use “common sense”, the world is obvious.

- Philosophy has practical importance because it is a form of cultural critique, a critique of what prejudices are common amongst the population at the time. The value of philosophy is it entertains multiple answers, and people don't know what they think they know, familiar things are shown in a different way. There is something liberating about contemplation and going beyond every day concerns, as well as regarding arguments impartially. Therefore, Russell says that philosophy cultivates the virtue of impartiality, essential in contemplation. This means considering all sides equally, and having no bias or attachment. Helps create distance from prejudices.
- This virtue has counterparts in action and contemplation: the unalloyed desire for truth.

Summary:

1. Philosophy does not give definitive knowledge like sciences
2. differences between practical temperament and philosophical
3. valuable because: settles prejudices, enlarge us by lifting everyday concerns, impartiality.

John Dewey pp.525-527

From: *Democracy and Education: An Introduction Into the Philosophy of Education (1916)*

“The Values of Philosophy to Society”

- Practical questions have applications in society, with philosophical contemplation. Dewey wants us to make better decisions as citizens within a democratic society by having a philosophical education. Important because you can't trust one group of people to make decisions for a whole population, nor to make the right decision.
- **Pragmatism:** Philosophical tradition emphasizing practical consequences of hypotheses and theories. Promoted education reform away from rote learning and towards critical thinking. Believed that philosophy is “the general theory of education”. Education is “the process of forming fundamental dispositions, intellectual and emotional, toward nature and fellow man.” Had to do with teaching people to be good citizens. How should people be taught? For Dewey, philosophy means something broader than Russell. Democracy is not just a government, it is “a way of life, social and individual”. Involves “the participation of every mature human being in the formation of the values that regulate the living of men together.” All citizens are legislators. Hopefully people rationally consider the different options. All participate in shaping ideas and norms together through rational consideration.

Epistemology

Knowledge is not ultimately sense knowledge - Descartes

How do we acquire knowledge?

- **Epistemology**- study of the nature and sources of knowledge and means of right knowing.
- **Metaphysics** - study of the nature of reality.
 - Must understand how we acquire knowledge of reality.
- Epistemology: episteme (knowledge + logos)
 - Questions: 1. What can I know?
 2. How do I know what I know?
 3. Do I really know what I think I know?
 - I know that...
 1. The Earth is round (pictures from space - sense perception)
 2. I learn something new everyday (direct experience)
 3. I'm in PHI1103 (direct experience of self being somewhere)
 4. I'm alive (I'm thinking, so...)
 5. I'm Juliana (experience)
 - Authority is an important source of knowledge.
 - Knowledge about oneself is also knowledge about the world.

Other kinds of knowledge...

- $2+2=4$. Innate? Perception? Analytic? We're taught math, but how do people come to mathematical knowledge to begin with? Mathematical truths? Not really grounded in perception. Kind of innate knowledge. Is it purely analytic, or do we have some sort of innate knowledge that tells us something about the world?
- I know that torturing cats for fun is wrong. Are moral claims objective or subjective? Some say morality is culturally different, but difference does not establish that morality is relative. The difference is we know how to settle the matter using claims about the Earth.
 - We can know whether something is moral if it doesn't hurt or negatively affect others. Maybe cannot be set in a set of principles.

-Sources of moral beliefs include religion, socialization, environment, and empathy. The first three are taught by others (but these can still be challenged). However, a single experience cannot really say whether it is right and wrong. Another factor is conscience, an innate belief of what is right and wrong. Reason allows us to think about these morals.

Classes of knowledge

1. Knowledge about the world. Example: Grass is green. Colds are caused by viruses. How do I know? Sense perception, inferences.
2. About self. Experiences of inner states. How do I know? Immediate experience? Judgement of others and inferences? We do not have immediate knowledge of ourselves, emotions or otherwise. Judgement of self is different.
3. Mathematical. Example: $2+2=4$. $\sqrt{36}=6$. How? Analytic (by definitions alone)? With reasoning? "Intuition" about numbers? Math captures something deep about the world. If you think that, and you don't just have math experiences, some innate math.
4. Moral. How? Moral intuition? Reasoning? Realm of moral facts? Emotivists believe that morality = emotion. Kant believed we can arrive at moral truths purely by reason. Categorical imperative: Could you will that everyone behave the way you do? If not, it's wrong. Other version: Rational natures should never be treated as means (entirely), but also as ends to themselves.

- Kant is an objectivist. Problems: there can be examples where there are exceptions, like lying. Why does mental capacity matter?

- Relativists argue there is no moral objective truth. Only the conventions of a society.

-Subjectivist view held by emotivists.

Empiricism

- All knowledge acquired through sense perception. (Hume, Locke).
- Mind is a "blank slate" - tabula rasa - prior to information acquired from perception.
- problem cases: math knowledge, moral facts and principles.

Rationalism

- source of knowledge is reason (Descartes)
- Spinoza, Leibniz, Malebranche
- Objection: knowledge requires an element of sense-perception.

Mixed

Monday, January 19, 2015

- (Kant) knowledge requires sense perception along with the organizing activity of the mind. Some innate ideas.
- objections: not clear that these are any innate ideas. Can give accounts of how all ideas are acquired. Variations among culture.

What kind of knowledge could we not get if all knowledge was acquired through sense-perception? Moral principles.

BELIEF IS NOT KNOWLEDGE.

Descartes

René Descartes (1596-1650)

- Wrote around the same times as Hoges, Galileo, and was an important part of the scientific revolution. Never lectured at universities, but wrote for the general public. Contributed to many fields, but his largest influence was on philosophy.
- Major works:
 - Discourse on method
 - Meditation on first philosophy (1641)
 - Principles of philosophy
- All branches of science come from the single science of math, which has absolute certainty, as it begins with premises that are absolutely true, and the truth is provable by reason alone. Very transparent procedure.
- Descartes's meditation was written in a very special form: a reflection in which the reader accompanies the author on a journey.

Meditation One

1. I have been wrong about many things I thought were true. Of what can I be certain?
 - Realized that there were many things he accepted as true that are truly false, which is very unsettling. It is not possible to be certain about everything, but Descartes is sure not all things are like that, and they must be used as foundation for the sciences.
2. I will rid myself of all the opinions I formerly accepted and commence to build new from the foundation.
 - Starts for scratch, what can we know? Builds knowledge from this foundation. Move made periodically in philosophy, as some arguments get technical and unresolved, so views are gotten rid of. "What can I know? What is evident?". Some philosophers argue that this cannot be done.
 - Ship of Theseus is used as an analogy for reality, as well as the way knowledge works.
 - Descartes is willing to throw all knowledge out and start at the basics.

Thursday, January 22, 2015

3. I will rid myself of all the opinions. I will withhold assent from doubt everything that is absolutely certain.

- Accepts only what is definitely true. Has not yet got anode of what gives him certainty. Thinks that you can't take consensus as absolutely certain, nor the senses. They are fallible. One can't have absolute confidence in the senses. Sense and perception are different, and perception is not always reliable. Misjudging versus misperception?

4. The senses sometimes deceive me, and are not infallible. Therefore, we cannot be certain about the world as the basics or sense-perception.

- Descartes is not sure of the facts of the world outside of us. How can we know we aren't delusional in some way? What do we mean by insanity? Severely delusional and not conscious of it. Descartes concludes that it is possible, but it is not likely. It may be conceivable that we have a collective delusion. Remember that he is trying to find what cannot be wrong. Methodological doubt. Knowledge of the body cannot function for true knowledge, and must governed in something else.
- This brings him to the possibility of dreaming, which gives reason to doubt things that can be very reasonable. You can be "certain" of things in dreams, but how do we know we are not dreaming? Compare dreams to real life, and draw distinctions. Descartes has been deceived by dreams, so he will not trust them, such as body and setting.

5. I cannot be certain of those things which my senses tell me with apparent certainty, such that I have a body, and am where I think I am.

- Dreams aren't completely divorced from reality. Things you have experienced but strongly configured. Material of dreams come from somewhere, and Descartes likens them to art, as they are composed of already existing things. If the image is very removed from things seen before, at least the colours are real. Counterparts exist in the real world. Even if you can't be sure of any particular matter, at least the material for the imaginative construction must have come from somewhere. Can't we at least be certain of the sciences that study the general structure of space, etc, regardless of other things, as they only make claims about relations/corporeal nature?

6. Still, this does not lead me to doubt that arithmetic and geometry, at least, $2+3=5$ everywhere.

7. What if there is one who could convince me of things such as the external world, I have a body. Of what can I be certain of them?

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- Brain in a vat. Produce images in living brain of being in the real world? What if we had reasons to doubt our logic? Some things cannot be doubted.

8. Of this I could still be certain, that I am, I exist.

- One thing that is absolutely undoubtable. Mind more certain than body. Math has an abstract body. we can doubt our knowledge of bodies, but we cannot doubt the mind. What is left if not these physical bodies? But don't I have to be here to be doubting things? You cannot doubt your own existence. In principle, you can question the existence of anything but yourself. Even a brain in a vat exists in some way. Still have thoughts and beliefs. Knowledge of one's own existence is unlike other knowledge, no inference based on sense-perception. The idea is that in principle, one could have the perceptions not corresponding to anything real.
- Making inference that something going on inside happens outside. We don't know our own existence in that way.

9. What am I? A thinking thing.

- I can be mistaken of things that I think of myself, but existence cannot be doubted. Descartes argues what is different about our own existence is it is not represented in imagination.

10. Knowledge of which you can be absolutely certain lives in the intellect. Also with respect to knowledge of physical objects.

- Example of wax. Through observations, it is an intellectual judgement moving you towards the conception of matter. "Extended substance".

Dualism

Of what does reality consist?

- Asks what truly exists and the nature of reality. Makes the distinction between reality and appearance.
 - **Dualism:** Reality consists of mind and matter. Materialism opposes this.
 - Avicenna and Descartes believe that material and mental reality exists as different substances. Mind, self consciousness well as material things, such as the body.
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Ibn Sina (Avicenna) 980-1037 CE - "Floating Man Argument"

- Influential in philosophy, translated into Latin. Heavily influenced by Aristotle, responsible for the rediscovery of Aristotle. Wrote in metaphysics, philosophical theology, medicine.

The Floating Man Argument

- Awareness of the body is not possible. So what is there to be aware of? There is total sensory deprivation. There is no external perception of self. Nothing has been learned. Would there be any awareness? Will he affirm his own existence? No language or concepts.
- Still aware of self and their existence. Affirming without depth, likely will not have thoughts. If you can be away of self without the body, they are in some way different. Therefore, the self (soul) is not part of the body, and the two are separable.
- A person in this condition can be aware of self and not the body.
- Similar conclusion to Descartes, "I think, therefore I am", but different questions and thought process.
- If one can be aware of the self independently, of the body, does it follow that they are not the same? Does it follow that the self can exist independently of the body?
- Differences exist between the self-consciousness and consciousness of the body and material reality.
- Different forms of access- direct, unmediated experience of the, "internal" access.
- Awareness of the self is different from awareness of anything else, including other conscious selves.
- Consciousness and material bodies seem to have different properties.

Descartes - Reality exists as substances

- Thinking (res cogitans)
- Extended (res extensa)
- Nothing belongs to me conception of myself besides “thinking”. The word “thinking” here must be understood simply as consciousness. The problem is that he seemed to mean a self-conscious that only humans have. No clear distinctions between awareness, consciousness, etc. Argued animals are like complex machines, and was criticized.
- I can know my body is separate and I can exist without it. Conceptual distinction.
- Difference: Body always divisible, while the mind is indivisible. Anything with spatial dimensions are divisible, and the mind is not physical.

Materialism

Materialism - Only matter and its properties are really real.

Follows that: Mind and mental properties are in the same sense merely apparent.

Eliminative materialism (EM)

Eliminative materialism: All reference to mental properties can be eliminated in a true description of reality.

- EM opposes dualism, the mind is strictly material. What would motivate materialism?
 - If mind and body are separate entities, they should be able to exist without each other.
 - Everything in the mind is caused by physical activities in the brain.
 - Trying to make a place for wishes and goals in the physical world.
- Materialists want to argue that they're telling you what the mind REALLY is, that it really is the brain. Example: Water is really H₂O. Does this really apply to the mind/brain argument?
- **Qualia:** Term for qualitative nature of experience, what it is like, etc. Sensation of colour, pain, and other seemingly mental experiences.
- Eliminativists argue that qualia can be reducibly physical, involving no reference to (for example) pain. Something can be physically wrong, and the eliminativists would say what pain really is, neurons firing, foot structure, and give no qualitative experience. The problem with this is that sometimes mental language gets mixed into their definitions, such as colours, which are strictly mental.

** side notes* Physics should give an account for all constituents of reality. Will is a non-physical force interjecting changes in the physical world... Mental phenomena should have causal force if physical. Need free will for responsibility*

- A physicalist tries to describe phenomena in purely physical events in the brain.
- "Folk psychologist" - ordinary explanations of people's behaviour, which usually includes references to mental phenomena.
- Eliminativists would give strictly physical accounts of the event. Not like "the science of psychology", strictly natural sciences.

Churchland

- Materialist view is simple. **Occam's Razor** - "Do not multiply entities beyond what is strictly necessary to explain the phenomena." Example: The naturalist account of forces is sufficient for explanation. Other things are not necessary.
- Explanatory impotence of dualism: There is not explanatory value in dualism. Physical accounts are sufficient and have made great progress. The dualist, by contrast, can tell us little or nothing of any use about "spiritual substance" or "mind stuff".
 - The problems with this objection is that it is not true that dualists cannot give accounts of behaviour, they use "mental" language. Also, it is very unclear as to how much progress has actually been made, it seems that we are given a promissory account instead of real evidence. People who make reference to mental phenomena have made progress. Accurate predictions of one's behaviour can be made without neuroscience.

Reasoning, emotion, consciousness

- All three of the above are functions of the brain.
 1. Machines can calculate, and more quickly than human beings.
 2. Are finding out more and more about "the neurodynamical basis" of both emotions and consciousness.
- Counterpoint to #1: John Searle - The Chinese Room argument
 - The Chinese Room Argument was developed in opposition of a claim made by Alan Turing, who said that a test of whether a machine is a person or not is if the computer can convince you that it is a person.
 - Searle said that computers do not "understand" anything. His example is ... Imagine a person with no knowledge of Chinese is in a room where they are handed a paper with characters on it. They are then given a book for instructions of what to do with his specific symbols. What Searle says is they can behave and they think they can have a conversation in Chinese with someone, but they don't know Chinese. That's the computer. A computer does not refer symbols to anything. Therefore they are not really reasoning.
- Argument for evolutionary history is that there is no need for nonphysical substances or properties in our account of ourselves. We do not get consciousness by evolutionary history. Why does it arise among a species at all? Can we give a purely physicalist account of consciousness?
- Poverty of folk psychology. Most central things about us remain mysterious. Therefore, there have been no significant changes or advances in 2000 years. This is NOT TRUE!

Criticisms of EM

Churchland (continued)

Arguments against eliminative materialism

1. There is direct introspective evidence for the existence of mental phenomena and properties such as pain, belief, desires, etc.

Churchland's rebuttal: We need to reconceive the framework of observation, which is mistaken.

2. EM is incoherent because its meaning requires mental states.

Rebuttal: If EM is true, meaningfulness has a different source. Example: The word "tree" makes reference to the physical object, and you have the concept of it without the word looking like the thing.

- We describe things we do not in a purely physicalist way. Mechanical descriptions do not adequately include goals, wishes, etc. These relations are not like physical relations. They seem to be intrinsically mental phenomena without physicalist description and some sort of causal force.
- With respect to meaning, we need to see this description. There are only promissory notes. No promising physicalist account of wishes, goals, etc. This form of materialism does not work and cannot be sustained. Church land was trying to be consistent and describe reality in physicalist terms.

Criticisms of EM

David Chalmers

- Could consciousness be an illusion? We know consciousness more than we know anything else. It is presented directly.
- We know more about the brain than Descartes, couldn't consciousness emerge from the brain? Consciousness may be derivative rather than primary (be dependent on physical materials), but its existence cannot be denied. Other people's consciousness can be denied, but not your own. Emergent property.
- ZOMBIES: These are people that lack consciousness. They are imaginable, conceivable. Purely physical description only picks out zombies, leaves out consciousness, which we know exists.
- Could consciousness be evolutionarily selected for? You can always give the evolutionary explanation without consciousness.

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- Qualia: “The raw sensation of experience”. Feeling a certain way. There is more to consciousness than physical processes in the brain. Mary the blind scientist.
- The “easy” problem in philosophy: In principle we may be able to isolate the brain processes that make us behave as we do in response to our environment.
- The “hard” problem: Why is all processing accompanied by a conscious experience? Why is there conscious experience at all? This cannot be solved by neuroscience alone.

Alternatives to EM and Dualism

Softer forms of materialism

- Do not claim that all phenomena can be described in material terms.
- **Epiphenomenalism:** mental phenomena are irreducible to material terms, but are caused by physical events and do not cause physical events. Revised concept of matter that could account for mental properties.
- **Dual aspect monism:** Mental and physical are two aspects of a single substance or reality. The problem with this is that it is not a solution.
- **Idealism:** Reality consists of only “ideas” and is therefore purely mental; we have access to mind-independent objects.
- **Can’t know:** Perhaps there are some questions our minds are capable of posing but not solving.

Personal Identity

Chuang-Tzu (4th century BCE) - Dream of the Butterfly

- What makes the self a single unit?
- Foundational texts of Taoist thought are: Lao-Tzu's Tao Te Ching, a compilation of writings, and Chuang-Tzu's book, another compilation, partly composed of "Master Chuang".
- Dream of the butterfly: Chuang dreamt he was a butterfly, but in the dream he didn't know he was his human self. The important themes of this are:
 1. Reality versus appearance: Which is the dream and which is reality? Do we have any sure way of knowing? Skepticism. Skeptics say we cannot be sure. Is reality always relative to a perspective? Chuang-Tzu believed that this is the case, and that reality is relative to the perspective of the person experiencing it. Relativity of the real. When dreaming, reality is the dream, and when awake, reality is how it's currently experienced.
 2. Who/What am I: Subject and objects: Consider the difference between dreaming of being a butterfly and observing a butterfly. This is the difference between "I" and "it". What is this "I" that can imagine being a butterfly? You can imagine dreaming the butterfly dream. What is the self that it can imagine being so different from an actual reality? In a dream, do you have the awareness of a butterfly? The properties associated with being yourself are transformed. What does "being" mean? We can imagine having a different body/consciousness, but can you be put in that state of mind? Seeing and dreaming/experiencing from the first person perspective are different. Some say the self is just a bunch of components of mental life.
 - What is this "I"? How can this "I" change states of being? If we didn't have mental thinking states, we wouldn't be. There's something curious about the nature of the self. There must be a "True Master" (consciousness) who has no form, but has a identity, and controls the mental states, the act of thinking, etc. Isn't there a self that could try to control these states? Its form cannot be seen, it isn't possible in principle because when we reflect upon ourselves, we see some thoughts, perceptions, desires, but no self... It is an identity without form.
 - Among all parts of the body, there must be a hierarchy, with one part in charge, the self. What dominates, and what is a functionary? How do you describe the functional organization? How do you describe unity, instead of just a collection of parts?
 3. Change / Transformation: Could I "be" a butterfly? Could I have been a butterfly in a former life? Why choose the image of the butterfly, as opposed to some other creature?

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Conceptually, could I have been a butterfly? Does it make sense to say “I was a butterfly in a former life?” If yes, there is some continuity of the self, where it can undergo such a transformation? If no, the self does not have this continuity, cannot undergo such a transformation. Is reincarnation as an idea coherent? Even being reincarnated as another person, they will have different experiences, attitudes, etc. Will they still be the same “person”? Why the butterfly? Butterflies undergo a radical transformation. From a literary perspective, the butterfly imagery is pleasant and peaceful, nicer imagery. There is something about being a butterfly that he connects with the transformation of things. An existential/ethical implication is the butterfly represents possible ways of being in the face of “the transformation of things”. The butterfly is an image for the kind of happiness that Taoists recommend.

King Melinda - No person is found

- Early Buddhist sage Nagasena and Indo-Greek King Melinda fictional dialogue. Written in about 250-235 BCE.
- Indian Buddhism is originally non-theistic. Thesis of impermanence of all things. Applies to the self and other things.
- Buddhist doctrine of “amatta”: no-self or no-soul versus the orthodox doctrine of “atman”: self, soul.
- Not a system of belief with “faith”, but there are words that are taken as rule. Elements that make it different for philosophy. Ancient Indian philosophy is not purely theoretical; it has practical implications; theory is combined with practice and self-discipline, with the aim of achieving liberation/happiness.
- Realizing no self:
 - Understanding at a theoretical level; argumentation; reason
 - Understanding at a deeper level; observation, emotional detachment
 - Results in liberation from the fiction of ego: release from suffering.
- Nagasena: The name “Nagasena” is only “a designation, a label, a concept, a expressing”.
 - ie no “person” (a unitary being) exists who corresponds to that name. There is, in truth, no real person named Nagasena
- Milinda: Then who acts and receives, who is morally responsible?
- Is Nagasena: any part of a body, material form, feeling, perception, mental form, consciousness? Component of mental life? All of these elements put together? Something else? NO. Then does he exist in any sense? Nagasena’s response: the analogy of the chariot.

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- Is the chariot one of its parts? Is it something separate from all of its parts? No. Then in an ultimate sense, no chariot exists. No single things that corresponds to the word “chariot”. Just a bunch of things put together in a certain way.
- **Aggregates:** clusters of events that make up what we conventionally call the “self”.

John Stewart Mill - Liberty is Independent from the Majority's Tyranny (387-395)

- Dates 1806-1879
- John Stewart Mill was an important figure in English philosophy and an important political theorist of the nineteenth century.
- Proponent of utilitarianism: takes happiness as its central principle. The founder of utilitarianism was Jeremy Bentham, who said justice is what makes most people in a group happy. This is very debatable, as it violates individual rights. For example: You buy a house in a neighbourhood where there are many dog owners, but no dog park. They designate your backyard as the place where people can take their dogs to poop. Although this may be unfair to you, it makes 50 other people happy. What are the moral and political principles that follow?
- Mill was also a central figure within libertarianism, the political theory that takes individual liberty as its central principle. It conflicts with utilitarianism. A government could take measures to increase happiness but violate liberty. Libertarianism seeks to limit what a government can do.

Earlier Ages (Pre-Democratic)

- There is a struggle between liberty and authority in free democratic societies. How did rulers become rulers? Often, they arose from families and dominant tribes (monarchy), or conquest, where support was gained.
- These governments still protect their people from external enemies. The rulers are still useful to their people, but they are very much self-interested, and their interests can be antagonistic to the interests of their subjects.
- Liberty is limiting the power of rules. Self-interested rulers that inherit their positions can practice violence against their subjects and make laws that are not good for the people. Liberty means something different in democratic societies because it is a different type of government.

Development of Democracy

- Problem: the tyranny of some people over others. The government is installed at the will of the majority.

Problem of limited perspective/bias:

- Why can no group be trusted to lay rules for everyone?
- One problem is that of custom. Custom is the way in which we are used to thinking and acting, which is a strong second nature. Conceptions of right and good are influenced by culture, and may violate laws of fairness.
- We have a tendency to impose our beliefs and views on others. We have a strange aversion to difference...

Consequences for morality and law

- Why not have a government making laws for the moral conventions of our society? They are not necessarily a product that reflect the interests of everyone. Ideas are put in place by powerful groups.
- “Culture” of a given society is not a product of all members of the society. Many have no share of the means of cultural production. Example: In a patriarchal society, men all produce the culture. We must ask who produces the values. The morality of a country emanates from its class interests.

What Kind of “Tyranny”?

- Political: Democratically elected government represents the majority. This may reflect their views and interests at the expense of others. Examples: Racial segregation, voting against minorities.
- The ascendent class can also limit democracy, such as not allowing women to vote.
- **Liberal democracies are not exclusively bound by majority votes**
- Social: Pressure of public opinion and custom. Examples: Women being harassed for wearing what they are legally allowed to.

What Kind of Protection?

- Political: Constitution guaranteeing rights that laws must respect. For example, we have the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982), which allows freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and freedom of association. So, a government can't just make any laws they want. All laws must respect the charter.

Basic Political Principle

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- Places a premium on individual autonomy. Government cannot promote their idea of happiness and impose it on its citizens. Cannot force you to act in a way they believe is for your own good. The role of the government is to protect us from each other and protect individual liberty.

Classical Liberalism

- Respect for individual autonomy
- Its role is to prevent individuals from harming others or interfering with the liberty of others.
- Laws may not limit individual liberty when there is no harm to others being done.
- Anti-perfectionist: The government does not promote a particular idea of “the good life”
- Different ideas of the good life: High level of property, fame, success, recognition, healthy lifestyle, education, thrill, interpersonal relationships, creative/intellectual achievement, quiet life.
 - How do these affect other people?

Mill (pt 2) and Ghandi (pt 1)

John Stewart Mill

Basic Political Principle

- Democracy is a government in which it is elected by the people and represents the people. However, there is still the danger of the tyranny of the majority, so the government cannot have unlimited power.
- This danger does not only apply to minorities such as different races, sexual orientations, etc., but also to the minority that does not believe what the majority does. Mill wants to avoid this. So, he proposed that the only power that can be exercised over a member of the community against his own will is to prevent harm to others.
- A constitution helps prevent this. The government cannot violate this. Amending a constitution is much harder than changing laws. If a law violates a charter, it can be challenged as unconstitutional and must be changed.

Classical Liberalism Issues

- It can be hard to distinguish between harming only yourself and harming others. For example, smoking definitely hurts the smoker, but it indirectly harms other via second hand smoke. Also, there are lifestyles with negative impacts on the environment, which hurts every one.
- Sometimes, it makes sense to shape choices for the good of the individual themselves. This includes policies such as pension, harm-prevention, and health promotion.

The Value of Free Speech

- May express a true opinion
- May be erroneous but contain a portion of truth
- May be completely erroneous but helps to understand and justify better the true opinion that it contests.
- Contestation helps to keep doctrines alive, and prevents them from becoming mere dogma.

GHANDI

Freedom and Non-Violence in Ghandi

- Ghandi looked at morally good action, which is performed through a moral duty.

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- The “right reasons” arose from “duty”, which had a set of virtues accompanying morally good action.
- Freedom = **swaraj**. Sanskrit for “self rule”.

Ghandi's early Life

- Born in 1869 in Porbandar, a princely state. This region is important in colonial history, and was not directly ruled by the British.
- He was a shy, average student. Political leadership was not new to his family. His father was politically astute and his mother was deeply religious (Hindu). Despite his family's influence, they were not wealthy, but they had connections.
- In 1882, at the age of thirteen, Ghandi was married along with his brothers. His wife was also thirteen at the time. Despite his deep love for his wife, he was avidly against child marriages.

Ghandi in South Africa

- This was a politically and philosophically significant point in his life. He became a well-established barrister.

Gandhi part two

Freedom and Non-Violence

- The Turban Incident in Durban
 - In a conversation with a European judge, Gandhi was asked to remove his turban as a sign of respect. This was seen as a political move, as Indians were not recognized as full political citizens. It was an implicit way to humiliate Indian people by not allowing them to wear their clothing, and dehumanizing them. He refused to remove the turban, so the judge refused to hear his case. This civil interaction caught the media's attention, and made him famous. This action had political significance.
- Train Ride from Durban to Pretoria
 - On this trip he faced many challenges, which shaped the way he understood violence, and his political purpose in life. Indians were not allowed to travel first class. He was asked to exit the train, and was eventually thrown out. He returns to India, and decides to be a voice for those who cannot express their political rights. He is physically abused. Ultimately, he wins his case and returns to Durban.
- The Anti-Franchise Law that denied the right of vote for Indians remained in South Africa for twenty years.
- Twenty years later, he returned to India.
- Gandhi transformed the independence struggle in India to a mass movement. He highlighted the political, economic, and social oppression under British rule.
- He rejected the idea of the majority governing the minority.
- He lived an alternative lifestyle, making the following changes:
 - Transformation - oath of poverty. The oath of poverty is a common religious vow taken to not be poor, but to share all possessions with the world. Therefore, the person has no real ownership of any possessions.
 - Non-violence - Way of Life. The principle of non-violence applies to political, social, and economic situations. All aspects of life are to be governed by non-violence. This applies not only to human-human relations, but also those towards the environment. Therefore, Gandhi was a vegetarian. Also understood as love: "Self love compels regard for others." The goal is to achieve inner harmony. Methods of non-violence are known as **satyagraha**.
 - Gandhi rejected violence for many reasons.

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- One reason is the Theory of Souls, which dictates that all human beings have a God-given soul that should not be violated.
 - Another reason is the Claims of Truth, which is an implicit idea that we don't have access to the whole truth, but we have a sense of knowing what's right. The goal is to experience truth and humility while eliminating arrogance.
 - Violence also delivers contrary results. People tend to get angry with the idea that people will agree with them if they show displeasure, but when you use violence, you are allowing other people to have disinterest in what you are saying. It also is unsustainable. People you are interacting with will eventually stop responding.
 - Means-End relationship: Gandhi believed that the ends were potentially contained in the means. The end is a peaceful society. If we use just means, we end up with a just society.
- **Satyagraha** is a term coined by Gandhi in South Africa in 1908, meaning truth-force or soul-force. Soul-force is active participation in a non-violent manner. Virtues of satyagraha include self-control, truthfulness, moral courage, and fearlessness. Three main ideas:
 1. Spiritual nature of human beings: having a God-given soul, which is enviable.
 2. Sacrifice and suffering
 3. Love that ignites change
- Methods of non-violence:
 - Fasting: Used as a form of protest, which had to be timed to have the desired effects. It is meant for those who are physically and mentally strong. Never used for personal gain. This requires a shared basis of understanding of self reflection. Differentiated from blackmail.
 - Boycotting is used mainly against economic injustices and oppression. Boycott of foreign goods, especially foreign made fabrics. This is closely related to the Swadeshi movement.
 - Civil-Disobedience is also known as **hartal**, or general strike. It shuts down the city. Should be completely non-violent, and only unjust laws can be protested.
 - Non-Cooperation is withdrawing cooperation from a corrupt state, with the aim to educate. No fear of the effect of non-compliance. Sincerity in the belief of truth. Designed for mass movements.
- **Swaraj** - self-rule, coming from "swa", self, and "raj", rule. The goal of non-violence, consisting of:

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- National independence, “collective freedom from alien rule.” Rejected the rule of the politically and economically strong of the weaker. “constructive programme” 1941.
- Political freedom is focused on the underprivileged classes, but will benefit all of society. Duties precede rights. Involves suffering and sacrifice.
- Economic freedom is freedom from poverty. Addresses private property versus trusteeship. Wealth and the value of work. **Sarvodaya**.
- Spiritual freedom is attaining **moksha**. Removing internal obstacles to freedom. Not given by God, but strived towards by man. Requires virtue of self-restraint, non-violence, moral courage, and sincerity.

Martin Luther King Jr. “Liberty and Racial Prejudice”

- Martin Luther King Jr. was very much influenced by Gandhi and his ideals of nonviolence. He proceeded to influence other notable figures such as Nelson Mandela.
- These nonviolent strategies have been adopted by many movements. Strategies include hunger strikes and fasts. All of these function to draw attention without harming others. They can garner sympathy without evoking a violent response. Other examples include boycotts, sit-ins, and allowing passive arrest.
- Both Gandhi and King used these for strategic and philosophical reasons, and they were effective and morally correct.

History

- King lived from 1929 until his assassination on April 4, 1968.
- He was the leader of the African-American Civil Rights Movement of the US in the 1960s.
- Organized campaigns of nonviolent protest.
 - The Montgomery Bus Protest (1955) against “Jim Crow” laws.
- Even after slavery was formally abolished, racism was (and still is) prevalent. Segregation laws were adopted without haste in confederate states. Their “separate but equal” idea was not at all ideal. Those laws came to be known as “Jim Crow” laws, “Jim Crow” being a slang name for a black man. These laws prevented people of colour from the right to vote, and even in “more equal” northern states, people of colour were not given the same treatment in terms of housing and status. In southern states, lynchings (public executions outside of the law) were common, and would happen for any number of reasons.
- The legal framework changed mid-1960s, but it still was very difficult for these groups to vote. Kings problems persist.

Nonviolent resistance as a form of civil disobedience

- There are three ways of dealing with oppression:
 1. Method of acquiescence
 2. Hatred and physical violence
 - These are the most common forms of resistance used by oppressed people. The first is simply accepting the nature of a situation and adapting passively. There is a fear of resistance since it may have no effect, or it may have a negative effect.

The second method is due to normal emotions, and was a competitive idea (Malcolm X) to King's views. They had the same goal, but X agreed that some degree of violence is required, and eventually proposed a separate nation for people of colour.

3. Nonviolent resistance

- This method was adopted by King as the most effective strategy.
- The ends and the means are intimately connected. When violent resistance is called for, it is in the name of producing a more just society, but King argues that immoral and destructive means cannot result in a moral constructive society. So, resist in the way you want the result to be.

Example of violent resistance and violent ends: The CIA mobilizing the Taliban to fight Russians in Afghanistan, resulting in a major terrorist group.

Counter examples: The Stonewall riots... The American Revolution... The end of slavery (initiated by violence).

- It is unclear that violent resistance is never moral and constructive. In some cases, nonviolent resistance is more effective.

Love Ethic

- “the individual who is engaged in a nonviolent struggle must never inflict injury on another”. EVEN IF THEY INFLICT INJURY ON YOU.
- “avoid external physical violence”
- “avoid internal violence of the spirit”
- love is understanding, creative, redemptive good will to all men. Loosely translated from Greek as “charity”.
- do not hate the people you are protesting against.
- Can you be well-disposed to all individuals, even those you do not like?
 - It isn't easy, may not be possible to love them themselves, but instead do it for yourself. But even this can be difficult. King says you can hate the act, but not the person. Separate the act from the person. Some cases, for some people, require them to pardon the perpetrator to move on with their own lives.
 - The system in which they are educated may be to blame for their thought process. SO don't hate the person, hate the institution.
- Are resentment, indignation, anger, all “bad” emotions?
 - These can propel actions, but be cautious when making decisions. They have been effective in fuelling protest effectively.

- Some argue that are necessary a sense of dignity and self-worth in those who have been oppressed for a long time. Franz Fanon wrote The Wretched of the Earth. This text influence Malcolm X and communities that were treated as inferior with internalized inferiority.

Other features of nonviolent resistance

- Defeats the unjust system and not an individual.
- Suffering powerful and creative social force inflicted on oneself. Not retaliating can evoke sympathy and prevent further violence.
- Human nature contains enduring potential for goodness.
- Moral obligation to refuse to cooperate with evil

Law and justice

- Society depends on citizens following laws, but there are unjust laws. The kinds of civil disobedience King used was deemed unlawful, and many thought they should just change the laws internally, but people of colour were not allowed entry to such institutions.
- A just law is a law that squares with a moral law (law of God).
- “an unjust law is a code that the majority inflicts on the minority that is not binding on itself” and “which that minority had no part in enacting and creating”.
- How unjust is the law? What are the chances of changing it through other means?
- Treating people “the same” is not always equal.

Negative and true peace

- Negative peace is mere acceptance of the (unjust) status quo
- “True peace is not merely the absence of tension, but it is the presence of justice and brotherhood.”

What is “race”?

- The “folk” concept of race in the US: Three main races (white, black, Asian), are not different species but “breeds” that are biologically distinct. Naomi Zack argues here is no such thing as biological race (which there isn’t).
- Genetically, there is too much internal diversity and overlap to have “races”.
- Alcoff says race is real in the sense that it creates real identities with shared history and social identity, created by the shared experience, resulting from being treated as a separate group.

Rosemarie Tong

Feminism in the New Millennium

First-Wave Feminism

- Rooted in classical liberal thought
 - Mary Wollstonecraft - *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792)
 - Harriet Taylor Mill - *The Enfranchisement of Women* (1851)
 - John Stewart Mill - *The Subjection of Women* (1869)
- Stresses equality in the sense of sameness. Fought for the right to vote, other rights that were exclusive to men.
- Equal capacity for rationality, autonomy, moral discernment, self-direction.
 - Equal pay for equal work/qualification. Union movements over the 50s and 0s that sought better wages for workers tended to be centered around men's occupations to support a family, as women weren't expected to support themselves.

Second-Wave Feminism

- Formal equality had not led to real social and economic activity. Why?
 - Women were still treated differently from men
 - there are some real differences between men and women
- Reproduction: Only women get pregnant and give birth.
 - Maternity leave
 - Mens' participation in childcare
 - More flexible work arrangements
 - Changes in social expectations of women
- Sexuality: sexualization, sexual "objectification" of women. It is a double standard. Men are not judged negatively for sexual activity. Not much progress has been made.
 - Sexual assault: Issues of consent. Attitude towards "good" and "bad" women.
 - Women and men discriminate towards women's sexuality
 - Reports on sexual assaults and convictions are still VERY low.
 - "Rape Shield Law". The victims of sexual assault in trial cannot be routinely cross-examined about their sexual history. Defence lawyers used to routinely

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bring sexual history into trial. Non-virgin = vulnerable. Would not be an issue had people not had a notion of “good” and “bad” women. Social attitudes must change. Everyone has the right to fair trial, which does not happen.

- What counts as “consent”? Current slogan is “Yes means Yes”. Need to have a positive form of consent, which is difficult to legislate.
- Resistance and insistence is a problem. Consent is a weird word, like just giving permission.
- Other substantive equality issues
 - Domestic violence had been considered a “private” matter. Need for change to police and course. Does go both ways, but typically death, confinement is against women by men.
 - Sexual harassment used to be invisible and accepted. Need for legal remedies, changes in social attitudes.
- “Feminine” and “Masculine”
 - Complaint that evaluations of traits associated with these categories should not be internalized and accepted.
 - Shouldn’t assume all “feminine” traits are inferior to “masculine” characteristics. Emotionality, interdependence, non-domination, gentleness, care for others.
 - Reevaluating traditionally “feminine” roles
 - You can argue that women are just as rational as men and are not emotional, but that makes the “female” trait inferior to the “male” trait.
 - Refused inferiority of all things “feminine” and superiority of all things “masculine”.
 - Masculinity is heavily policed, so femininity is an insult. eg. you can insult a boy just by calling him a “girl”.

Third-wave feminism

- Anti-essentialist: Not all women are alike
- Attention to different situations of women depending on race, class, culture, national origin.
- True liberty for all women requires broader social justice. Class, race, local inequality must be rectified. Broader than feminism.

Are humans always selfish?

James Rachels

“Morality tells us what we ought to do, but there is little point to it if we cannot do what we ought”

Psychological egoism: Humans are always and only motivated by self-interest.

- Self-interest is what motivates all human actions. Not only sometimes. It may be true that we are mostly motivated by self-interest, but it isn't bad if we do not trample on the interests of others. Only bad in a situation when they should have regarded somebody else. If everyone is selfish, selfishness doesn't exist.

Ethical egoism: Humans “have no obligations to do anything except what is in their own interests”

- Normative thesis of what we ought to do. Does not describe human psychology. Do what you want, basically.

Humans are Always Selfish: Glaucon's Challenge to Socrates

- Glaucon is telling Socrates the nature and the origin of justice. The position being put forward is in defence of psychological egoism. Justice is established by the institution of laws, instead of being a reflection of justice itself. Justice is a compromise. Humans always act to maximize their own interests, and claims that people would consider doing injustice and not being punished optimal. The problem is, if everyone behaves that way, everyone is in danger of being harmed, and not being able to do anything about it.
- Some freedoms are exchanged for protection; justice. Not the justice of something good in itself, it's only that it serves everyone's own interests to live in a society where some laws are enforced. Laws not intrinsically good.
- Tries to test this through a thought experiment. Imagine a just and an unjust person has power to do whatever he or she likes: each will behave in the same way. All creatures pursue their own good. Example of the Ring of Gyges. If both men were given invisible rings, they would just it in the same way. Will act completely selfishly. The only thing that makes people act justly is the fear of reprisal.

James Rachels: “Humans are not always selfish”

- First argument (in favour of psychological egoism):
 - P1: Whenever people act, they are doing what they want to do
 - P2: No action which is done because someone wants to do it can be described as unselfish
 - C: Therefore, no action can be described as unselfish.

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- What's wrong with this argument? Not everyone does only what they want to do. Premise two is false, or "want" has been defined so broadly that it becomes meaningless.
- Second argument (psych):
 - P1: Unselfish actions always product a sense of self-satisfaction in the agent.
 - P2: This sense if satisfaction is a pleasant state of consciousness.
 - C: Therefore, we are justified in supposing that the agent acts so as to achieve a pleasant state of consciousness (rather than to bring about any good for others).
- Evaluation: In the case of ethical action, the goal is bringing about a state of affairs, not the pleasure one receives from doing so. Thought experiment: "pleasure machine".
 - Robert Nozick. Imagine a machine you can be hooked up to, that gives you whatever sensations you like. in the case of pleasurable activities you think are bad for you, if you could be hooked up to this machine that would provide the same sensation, would you be just as happy to be hooked up to the machine as actually doing the thing?
 - Suppose if instead of committing a moral action, imagine the machine can give the sensation of doing those things.
 - If it's just the pleasure you seek, you should be happy with the machine instead of actually committing the action.
 - other experiment: suppose you are offered a sum of money to do something you wouldn't want to do. How much would you accept for doing the action? Sometimes, you wouldn't be able to be paid enough. Suppose you can be given a drug that will make the actual act of doing these things pleasant, and the memory of doing these things will be erased. It's not true that if you can take the horror away and the act includes harming someone else, you will want to do it.

Three confusions:

- confusion of selfishness with self-interest
- every action is done from self interest vs other regarding motives
- one's own welfare is incompatible with the compassion for others

Refutation of the ethical egoist:

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Epictetus and the Life of Self-Control

- What's problematic about the view that life only exists to seek pleasure, since there is no after life? (Hedonism) Why might this not lead to happiness?
 - Some things worth having may be left out. Impoverished lists. Not everything worthwhile is "pleasureable".
 - No sense of duty,
 - Other people will be a barrier to one's happiness. Competition for scarce resources. You can't always get what you want.
 - There are things out of our control that may limit us, and even ourselves.
 - Even if you are born into circumstance and you get the things you thought you wanted, they may turn out to not be as great as you thought, and pleasure doesn't last long and is quickly replaced by boredom and wanting more. Anxiety.
 - Some anxiety can have to do with fear of what you want or have being taken away. Anxiety of death. You can't just not think about it, as we as humans anticipate the future, which has its benefits, such as planning, projecting different outcomes. But this also means we live in the shadow of death.
 - There are conflicts between wants.
- This motivates alternatives and philosophy in general. People devise other options to deal with the difficulties of being human

Stoicism

- Epictetus was born a slave, who lived as a slave in Rome until obtaining his freedom after the death of Nero.
- Studied Stoic philosophy in Rome; taught it after being freed
- Emperor Domitian banished Philosophers from Rome around 93 Ce; Epictetus went to Greece, founded a philosophical school.
- Was lame (damaged leg); lived a simple life; unmarried but adopted a destitute child in old age.

Basic Principles

- Human beings are rational: they have the capacity of reflect on "impressions" and to judge what is good and bad. We don't just react, we can make judgements on the

thing making the impression. Only humans have free will because we have the capacity for reflection and prudence. This also means we have the capacity to have a distance over things to which we may have a liking or an aversion. We have the capacity to manage our desires and our distresses. How can we manage these to achieve a settled state of happiness? Have control by waiting and not getting carried away by the immediate impression.

- Human beings have the faculty of choice; volition.

What is in our control?

- In our power are opinion, movement towards a thing, desire, aversion, whatever are our own acts.
- We are not in control of things that are not our own acts. The body is not completely within our control.
- Unhappiness lies in the attachment to things not within our power.
- Is a form of slavery: dependence on things you cannot control.
- Freedom lies in desire only for those things you can control.
- Achieved by examining all “appearances”, removing desire and aversion from what is not within our power and transferring it to what is within our power.
- What causes distress is not an actual event, but our view of it.

Practical Maxims

- “be not elated at any advantage which belongs to another.”
 - Don't be envious or compare yourself with others, you'll never be happy.
- “Disease is an impediment to the body, but not to the will”
 - Physical, not mental unfreedom.
- “On the occasion of every accident that befalls you, remember to turn to yourself and inquire what power you have for turning it to use”
 - When something unfortunate happens, think how can you turn it to account, what benefit can it have? Make the unfortunate things mean something good.
- Lead a simple life, use only what is necessary. Avoid excessive luxuries to avoid the unhappiness that accompanies it. There is no end to this.
- Instead of getting angry about gossip about you, don't...

Death

- Always have death before your eyes to not desire anything extravagantly or think of anything mean. Why does he think this? You could appreciate what you have, and you can focus on the most important things in life. It reorders your priorities. You can't take

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your material belongings with you when you die, so why want them so much? With end in sight, more likely to be virtuous and not petty and rude.

- Don't be profoundly affected by the death of those close to you. You haven't lost them, because others do not belong to you. Do not grieve as if you did own them. When they must be returned, let them go.

Analogies

- "Remember that in life you ought to behave as at a banquet."
 - A good guest is gracious, doesn't complain or demand or berate or criticize, takes suitable portions. Restraint and politeness.
- "Remember that you are an actor in a play of such a kind as the author may choose."
 - What's within your power is to act your part well and to be the best sort of person one can be in that role. The events, scenes, conclusions, are not up to you...

Tolstoy vs. Camus

Levels of Happiness

1. Superficial everyday happinesses
2. Overall happiness
3. Meaningfulness

Pleasure isn't enough, even meeting deeper values, to divert feelings of meaninglessness.

Tolstoy: Experience of the ultimate "why"?

- are the "arrests of life".
- Although was surrounded by happiness, always had a feeling of emptiness. Starting out small and eventually more and more haunted by a sense of despair.

Camus: Experience of the absurd

- feeling like an actor, and the sets collapse. One day the "why" arises and nothing is the same. The weariness sets in. Why we would ask "what's the point"?

Death

- Tolstoy: sooner or later, you will die or be surrounded by death. Sooner or later, you will stop existing and be forgotten. Why accomplish our possibilities if it will all end? Eventually, it all comes to nothing.
- Fable of the Well
- Dostoevsky: "Who would accept life under such ridiculous conditions?"
- Pascal: The last act is bloody, however fine the rest of the play. They throw dirt on your head anti is finished forever."
- Camus: "time carries us, but a moment comes when we have t carry it" when we become aware of this progression. As far as we know, we will all die, but we live with this unawareness. we hide the signs of death. Not a lot of representations of death within our public spaces, but when we do, they are usually exceptional deaths (heroes, etc). People are uncomfortable with the subject. Seems worse than anything. Is this thought something people can face squarely, but at the same time feel joy?
- Both Tolstoy and Camus confront this, and give no answers.

Reason gives no answer

- Tolstoy: Science tells me:
 - you're a mass of things and this globule is fermenting, called life. The globule falls to pieces and the fermenting comes to an end.
 - Metaphysics tries to find answers, but the methods and arguments are too uncertain to be convincing. Can speculate anything using metaphysics, and there are many rational arguments, but they are inconclusive. Very much ongoing.
- Camus: Metaphysics
 - "in a universe suddenly divested of illusions and lights, man feel an alien, a stranger".
 - "nostalgia for unity" "appetite for clarity" "appetite for the absolute"
 - "What is absurd is the confrontation of this irrational [nature of the universe] and the wild longing for clarity whose call echoes in the human heart."
 - The universe is irrational, in the sense that it doesn't conform to our reason. Doesn't answer the questions our reason asks. Nothing in our evolution allows us to comprehend the nature of reality. No guarantee that we understand anything on a fundamental level, no reason that our brains should be such that it can solve the deepest mysteries of reality.

Temptation of suicide

- Tolstoy: Worried he might commit suicide. In order to go on living, would have to find the answer to the meaning of life.
- Camus: Suicide is a philosophical problem. Deciding whether or not life is worth living is the most important of all questions. The meaning of life is the most urgent of questions. Final answer not suicide, but Camus did think about it. Must accept the poor things that happen in life.

Tolstoy's answer: Faith

- What sustain ordinary working people? Faith. Purpose becomes to serve others.
- He decided his mistake is that he was looking for answers within life itself, so he opts for faith despite the irrationality. Faith gives him a sense of meaningfulness, but comes to accept the fundamentals of Christianity.

Camus' answer: Revolt

- rejection of faith: The want of another life is a form of evasion and betrayal.
- Eschatology - study of death
- Living with uncertainty:
 - I know that I will never know the meaning of life because it is impossible.
 - Dignity of living "without appeal" in a state of "permanent revolution"
 - Constant battle is the human condition. "myth of sisyphus"
- Finding meaning in death. From a bad event, good ones can come and death is peace.
- Questioning the meaning of your life is also absurd, and to find your life's meaning is by not questioning it. Ignorant phase, revolt of the flesh, questioning phase, acceptance. Revolt gives life value and finding the meaning is not the only mission.