PART IV

Hegel to Modern Day

17th Century Forward

(Chapters 46 – 59)

Hegel Revisited

Now that we have a handle on the basics of Kantian philosophy, let us stroll down memory lane and reminisce on Hegel[1]. After Kant, what drives Hegel back toward the rational? And who could disagree with Kant[2]? Did not he already solve all of the persnickety problems? Oddly enough for the entirety of these rationalist idealists (and rationalistic learners) it is the very nature and identity of the rational 'mind' upon which reality depends that has divided them over time. Hegel is dissatisfied with Kant's explanation of things, but he is not the only one. What is the nature of the mind? Some argue that there is some objective mind outside of nature; some argue that it is simply the common power of reason or rationality; some argue that it is the collective mental faculties of society, and some focus simply on the individual mind.

So let us stroll through the first of many dissenting opinions – but first, a test.

Thought Exercise: Idealist Or Realist?

Philosopher	Idealist or Realist?
Plato	
Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz	
Rene Descartes	
Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel	
David Hume	
Thomas Aquinas	
George Berkeley	
Aristotle	
Immanuel Kant	

Table 1: Great Idealists I Have Known – or not

Hegel Revisionist

In a sense, since we know that German Idealism gave preference to the rational, the jump from Kant back to a more rational-based framework is not a big one. With the 'restoration' of Metaphysics by Kant, Hegel is free to reiterate the importance, nay, centrality of metaphysical thinking. But what does that do to the Kantian transcendentalism (that knowledge comes from beyond the thing), and all of the work he did to unite the empirical and the rational? What part of Kant's thinking does Hegel disagree with?

Well, let us think back to Kant's reasoning for the restoration of metaphysics. How we know, that is the forms of thinking and gathering of knowledge, involve *a priori* and *a posteriori* and synthetic, analytic, and synthetic *a priori*. According to Kant only synthetic *a priori* (that combination of empirical and rational) produced new knowledge; everything else was really just the discovery of existing knowledge (whether scientific/empirical or metaphysical/rational). Hegel in turn pushed the dialectic, the *thesis-antithesis-synthesis* thing, where by doggedly pursuing the truth through rational dialectic, we deepen and expand knowledge.

[1] Ah, yes…Hegel in the Spring…I remember it well….

[2] Fortunately, the non-dogmatic nature of the thought allows one to avoid blasphemy in such an instatnce.

Hegel reached this because Kant had demonstrated, in what he called antinomies, that serious thought about one understanding of things usually produced a contemplation or proposing of its opposite, and only seemed to be at odds when taken in the wrong context. Hegel contended that this was not enough, and being un-contented to leave it there additionally proposes that the two concepts which seem to opposites can, not just co-exist but through the dialectical process actually be synthesized producing a new and higher level of thought (in a sense producing a purely synthetic process which has nothing to do with *a priori* conditions). This in term leads to using the synthesis as a new thesis and starting the process all over again, bringing us to deeper and deeper understandings.

We can see, therefore, that this is really an intellectual, rational process, which is why we peeked at Hegel before we lingered over Kant, but also why we now need to examine him in the light of Kant.

Mr. Fichte

Before we go further on our walk with Hegel, let us pay a call to the residence of a certain Johann Fichte. Like Hegel he comes after Kant, in a historical and a philosophical sense. A devotee to Kant and one of his most talented unsolicited protégés, Fichte is seen as a transitional figure between Kant and Hegel, because he helped to create the transition between Kant's *Critical* philosophy and Hegel's *Spirit* philosophy, galvanizing German Idealism into what we perceive it to be today.

Fichte was devoted to Kant, so make no mistake Kant is the launching point for his thought. He creates a system of philosophy which attempts to reconcile Kant's antinomies and some recent ideas developing about freedom and the idea of necessity, or, more specifically explain how we can at one and the same time be free (having a will and exercising it) and yet integrally part of a world based on causally affected things which follow set rules. To do this, he puts forth the idea that I [we?] have subjective spontaneity, therefore an infinite number of possibilities, and the reason I have these infinite possibilities is because the objective world is fixed; that is to say that because of the way the objective world is, I, in the Kantian transcendental fashion as the engine of meaning, can see the all of the possibilities of that objective world.

Based in what we know of ourselves, we can derive the necessity of the world around us, as Kant does. Synthetic *a priori* subjectively give us infinite possibilities; the innate and universal objective reality around us is finite in its possibilities (a fish is a fish is a fish, and God is God is God). So Fichte bridges Kant to Hegel by producing this synthesis of freedom and necessity, which Hegel can then use to justify his thesis-antithesis-synthesis dialectic.

In a somewhat humorous vein, initially Fichte really knew nothing of Kant but, as a poor and itinerate teacher he agreed to tutor some desperate chap in Kantian philosophy, unhampered by the fact that it was a subject on which he knew nothing. Upon delving into it he discovered his true calling and emerged a changed man whereupon he set about trying to ingratiate himself to Kant.[3] Kant was initially unimpressed with the lad, but Fichte quickly composed a work on Revelation in the vein of Kant's thought which many believed to be Kant's own work, most probably because of the confusing prose. Anyway, once it was discovered to be his, Fichte's fame was secured in the pantheon of German philosophers, until such time as Hegel eclipsed him.

On a less humorous note, Fichte was eventually accused of atheism and was forced to resign his chair at the University of Jena, from which he and his small family descended into relative poverty and were forced to move from place to place until he managed a position at the University of Berlin until his death a few years later. This probably contributes to his obscurity and supplanting by Hegel.

[3] First, showing Kant's influence while he was alive and second, proving the old adage that if you want to learn something, teach it.

À La Recherché Du Temps Perdu

Surprise! Hegel thought, like the Stoics, Aristotle, and the Islamic thinkers, that the study of logic was the key to and the basis of understanding of reality itself. Therefore, like Kant he professed that reality must be rational, ergo its ultimate structure is mirrored in the structure of our thought. In other words, if we are rational and we are part of reality, then we reflect the nature of reality and vice versa: we are rational because nature is rational. But as we hinted at in our earlier discussion of Hegel (*Chapter 42*), it is a logical system of a different sort. Hegel states that by its nature, all logic (and as stated, by default, all of reality) is dialectical (*thesis, antithesis, synthesis*) in structure and practice, which is different than the thesis-thesis-conclusion of Aristotelian logic. Everything that is thinkable (especially the apparent contradictions that Kant called antimonies) *must* be resolvable under some common unified concept of reason. So we can see the difference from Kant, who wanted to place each under its own heading and solve it only within its realm.

The difference comes down to this: Kant championed Transcendental Idealism and Hegel proposed *Absolute* Idealism. Transcendental Idealism says idealism is 'transcendental' because the limitation of our knowledge (phenomenal only) keeps us from knowing the thing in itself (noumena), that is to say our knowledge has necessary limitations and that we cannot know things as they are, because they are totally independent of us. Still, there is nothing to stop us knowing the appearances as they are (through categories and such). These phenomena are presented to us as from outside and not invented by us, and we have no way of inventing them if they were not really that way, so the transcendent reality or idea, is known of but not knowable.

Absolute Idealism says that Kant's view stopping at the transcendent is incomplete. They argue that the transcendent world is not enough, that the world as we see it is somehow derived, apparent, relative, incomplete, and even contradictory. For that reason the transcendental is not dependable. Recall how Hegel introduces the term 'the absolute' which means reality as it really is, free from the aforementioned limitations but still, as Kant says unknowable by us. That is to say, reality regardless of its nature (mental or spiritual), does not depend on the human mind in particular (as Kant proposed) but comprises a single spiritual entity: the absolute (hence the name 'absolute idealism'). Reality is one, and individual minds and their contents are mere parts or aspects of this and have no separate existence.

Hegel, felt that Kant had just copped out. He pushed onward and came to the conclusion that when we look at reason in its purest, highest form (which Kant had stopped short of), all of thought (including dialectical logic) can be boiled down to the thesis *Idea* (or *Logos*), whose natural antithesis is *Nature*, the thing which is totally *other* and can be considered independently of its relation to the knower. The grand synthesis of these two opposites is *Spirit*, the self-knowing, self-actualizing totality of all that is—namely, the Absolute itself[4]. This thinking is the result of Hegel's fundamental concept as we discussed above: that reality is wholly rational and that whatever is rational must be real. Recall that human thought participates in the Absolute, and even makes it more real. That is, it is merely one portion of the Becoming of Absolute Spirit, which is (through us) thinking and creating itself as it goes

[4] An light-hearted example of this has been put forward using animated Disney movies. In one case, *Pocahontas*, John Smith represents Idea, Pocahontas represents Nature and Mother Willow represents the Synthesis.

along. In *Phenomenology of Spirit*, a book designed to be discarded, Hegel describes it as the three-fold transition from *subjective* to *objective* to *absolute* Spirit.

According to Aristotle, the principle of identity could be formulated because the concept of being is always the same – A is equal to A, and A cannot be its negation (non-A) at the same time and in the same respect. For Hegel, this logic is faulty because it misinterprets reality. For him reality is never identical with itself, but at every moment changes, passing from what it is to what it is not (*thesis*, *antithesis*, *synthesis*). Contradiction, therefore, is the life of concrete being, that is of reality.

A Title Dealing with Loss and Misunderstanding

So, Hegel rejects Kant as close but not close enough, or as Maxwell Smart would say, 'Missed it by that much.' ***Warning! Shocking Pre-fore-anteshadowing Ahead***. Kant had his *antinomies*, but Hegel contends that knowledge is possible even beyond Kant's antinomies. The domain of the thesis is the mental world, the domain of the antithesis is the spatiotemporal world, and their synthesis produces a kind of non-being being.

There is somewhat of a conflict here. Kant revives metaphysics, but Hegel, in an attempt to expand metaphysics into the only thing, wrests part of the power of metaphysics away from its source. For this reason, God can be perceived as imperfect in a way, as depending upon us to perfect itself. In fact, for Hegel, the primordial Being, is the poorest and simplest unity. So poor in fact, that blends in with the wallpaper, or as Hegel puts it, with nothingness. Shocking and confusing as it might be, Primitive and absolute Being is actually *non-being*. Now, granted the word we are using ('being') is a faceted German word *sein* and couched in many different ways, too complex to take on at this time. Suffice it to say, this non-being-Being is a *subject*, that is, it has existence and it is one of constant activity. Through this constant activity, the primitive absolute Being becomes distinct, in itself, from all other being. It accomplishes this by constructing itself in an unlimited series of phenomena. That is to say, the "pure indeterminateness" (nothing) builds itself upon itself, passing from state to state, developing explicitly (in a series of determinate beings) what is implicitly contained in itself. In any passage of this kind (and such passages are continually occurring) the primordial indeterminateness becomes ever richer and more conscious.

So, Being and Nothingness lead to Becoming. The Absolute, because it always becoming is the ultimate being and so, unlike those before him, for Hegel essence and existence are not equivalent. The dialectic of being and nothing constantly lead to the synthesis of becoming, it just is and as we have said, it is the nature of reality. Hegel proposes a very dynamic view of reality, one in opposition to Kant's fairly static one. Things can never be settled, and in truth are not based on static objects but a myriad of constantly moving and developing objects. Kant was a transcendental idealist but an empirical realist, willing to let sleeping dogs lie, passive to certain types of knowledge and allow all thinking to reside within the subject. Hegel thought this was fragmented and incomplete, so he dialectic-ed it to a single reoccurring dynamic of idea, nature and absolute. Kant saw the dynamic of the synthetic *a priori* as the ultimate, that place where, since all meaning really originated from the subject, humanity excelled and all newness arose. Hegel put that power into the Absolute.

Kant put metaphysics back on the map and really depended upon universal absolutes for much of his ethical thinking. Hegel thought that Kant had dropped the ball and expanded the world to the Absolute, perhaps what he thought of as the strongest argument for the understanding of God there could be. This is where most of the controversy about Hegel

arises, but that is for another time. Needless to say, while they thought that it explained a lot of metaphysics and theology, this kind of thinking got Fichte and others into a lot of trouble. It smacked of agnosticism and even atheism, which in spiritual Germany, was frowned upon in academic circles.

Putting It Together

What about Hegel do we take away from this that we did not take away before? Well, probably the development of philosophy in the post-Kantian world.

How could Kant be so wrong? It probably comes down to the understanding of what is reality. Both Kant and Hegel saw the world in rational terms. Both believed that the noumena were unknowable. Phenomena are the empirical objects upon which we rationally operate, but they are not, forgive the pun, the thing in itself. Hegel really wanted to reconnect human thought to something beyond itself, something he felt was lacking in Kant, who placed everything within the subject. Kant's compromise of rational and empirical left Hegel dry, so in an attempt to push the limits of Kant's thought, he pushed a more rational system, which is why we covered him before Kant.

Still, in the end, we must understand him in terms of Kant. The Absolute is the result of reality, not merely a static ruler for it. The struggle for the meaning of the subject individual, which we see in Hume, Kant and Hegel is still open to interpretation.

In an interesting department of unintended consequences aside, as Kant's thought pushed empiricism to the side, so too did Hegel's push toward rationalism create an empirical reaction. Phenomenology[5], which uses the term so dear to Kant and Hegel, begins to re-focus on the empirical.

"Only one man ever understood me. And he didn't understand me" ***Johann Fichte,*** *speaking of Kant*

"Once upon a time these guys were transcendental idealists and they said KANT IS TOTALLY ON OUR SIDE and the absolute idealists said KANT WAS A PANSY WHO DIDN'T GO FAR ENOUGH (p.s. Kant will you sign this first-edition copy of the *Critique* OMG – call me!). And the transcendental idealists said OMGNOWAI, YE HEATHENS, WE SHALL KICK Y'ALL OUT OF JENA and Hegel said I'M TOTES FILING YOUR PHILOSOPHY UNDER "EVIL" and then they were all really German and angry all the time. The End." ***Johanna Kirsch***

[5] Not to be confused with phrenology.

Johann Fichte: The Science of Knowledge

The Ego

We have to search for the absolute, first, and unconditioned fundamental principle of human knowledge. It cannot be proven, nor determined if it is to be absolute first principle.

This principle is to express that deed-act which does not occur among the empirical determinations of our consciousness, nor can so occur, since it is rather the basis of all consciousness, and first and alone makes consciousness possible. In representing this deed-act it is not so much to be feared that my readers will not think what they ought to think, as that they will think what they ought not to think. This renders necessary a reflection on what may perhaps for the present be taken for that deed-act, and an abstraction from all that does not really belong to it.

Even by means of this abstracting reflection, that deed-act, which is not empirical fact of consciousness, cannot become fact of consciousness: but by means of this abstracting reflection we may recognize so much; that this deed-act must necessarily be thought as the basis of all consciousness.

The laws according to which this deed-act must necessarily be thought as basis of human knowledge, or, which is the same, the rules according to which that abstracting reflection proceeds, have not yet been proven as valid, but are for the present tacitly presupposed as well known and agreed upon. As we proceed we shall deduce them from that fundamental principle, the establishment whereof is correct only if they are correct. This is a circle, but an unavoidable circle. And since it is unavoidable and freely admitted, it is also allowable to appeal to all the laws of general logic in establishing this highest fundamental principle.

In undertaking this abstracting reflection, we must start from some proposition which everyone will admit without dispute. Doubtless there are many such. We choose the one which seems to us to open the shortest road to our purpose. In admitting this proposition, the deed-act, which we intend to make the basis of our whole science of knowledge, must be admitted; and the reflection must show that this deed-act is admitted the moment that proposition is admitted.

Our course of proceeding in this reflection is as follows: Any fact of empirical consciousness, admitted as such valid proposition is taken hold of, and from it we separate one of its empirical determinations after the other, until only that remains, which can no longer be separated and abstracted from.

As such admitted proposition we take this one: A is A.

Every one admits this proposition, and without the least hesitation. It is recognized by all as completely certain and evident.

If anyone should ask a proof of its certainty, no one would enter upon such a proof, but would say: This proposition is absolutely (that is, without any further ground) certain; and by saying this would ascribe to himself the power of absolutely positing something.

In insisting on the in-itself certainty of the above proposition, you posit not that A is. The proposition A is A is by no means equivalent to A is. Being when posited without predicate is something quite different from being when posited with a predicate. Let us suppose A to signify a space enclosed

within two straight lines, then the proposition A is A would still be correct; although the proposition A is would be false, since such a space is impossible.

But you posit by that proposition: If A is, then A is. The question whether A is at all or not, does not, therefore, occur in it. The content of the proposition is not regarded at all: merely its form. The question is not whereof you know, but what you know of any given subject. The only thing posited, therefore, by that proposition is the absolutely necessary connection between the two A's. This connection we shall call X.

In regard to A itself nothing has as yet been posited. The question, therefore, arises: Under what condition is A?

X at least is in the Ego, and posited through the Ego, for it is the Ego, which asserts the above proposition, and so asserts it by virtue of X as a law, which X or law must, therefore, be given to the Ego; and, since it is asserted absolutely, and without further ground, must be given to the Ego through itself.

Whether and how A is posited we do not know; but since X is to designate a connection between an unknown positing of A (of the first A in the proposition A is A) and a positing of the same A, which latter positing is absolute on condition of the first positing, it follows that A, at least in so far as that connection is posited, is posited in and through the Ego, like X. Proof: X is only possible in relation to an A; now X is really posited in the Ego; hence, also, A must be posited in the Ego, in so far as X is related to it.

X is related to that A, in the above proposition, which occupies the logical position of subject, and also to that A which is the predicate, for both are united by X. Both, therefore, are posited in the Ego, in so far as they are posited; and the A of the predicate is posited absolutely if the first one is posited. Hence the above proposition may be also expressed: If A is posited in the Ego, then it is posited, or then it is.

Hence, by means of X, the Ego posits; that A is absolutely for the asserting Ego, and is simply because it is posited in the Ego: or that there is something in the Ego which always remains the same, and is thus able to connect or posit: and hence the absolutely posited X may also be expressed, Ego=Ego, or I am I.

Thus we have already arrived at the proposition I am; not as expression of a deed-act, it is true, but, at least, as expression of a fact.

For X is absolutely posited; this is a fact of empirical consciousness, as shown by the admitted proposition. Now X signifies the same as I am I; hence, this proposition is also absolutely posited.

But Ego is Ego, or I am I, has quite another significance than A is A. For the latter proposition had content only on a certain condition, namely, if A is posited. But the proposition I am I is unconditionally and absolutely valid, since it is the same as X; it is valid not only in form but also in content. In it the Ego is posited not on condition, but absolutely, with the predicate of self-equality; hence, it is posited, and the proposition may also be expressed, I am.

Excerpted from *Science of Knowledge,* by Johann Gottlieb Fichte

Thought Point	Points of Thought
What is Fichte talking about?	
Now we know why the empiricists hated the rationalists?	
Is this a 'proof' for the mind, or the ego or whatever you want to call it?	
What is 'A'?	
What is 'X'?	
What is the connection between 'A' and 'X'?	
Does Fichte prove his point?	
Is Fichte nuts?	

The Nineteenth Century

So now we seem to be moving by centuries, which yes, is another arbitrary demarcation of philosophical thought. Still, the accelerated movement of thought, based on the proliferation of information and the struggle about the nature of being human which started in the 1500's is very obvious in this arbitrary time frame. In addition we really begin to see a marked development of *ideologies* as well as *philosophies*.

The Enlightenment is pretty much coming to a head and on its way into decline due to the rise of a more, shall we say non-rational sentiment. The Enlightenment's scientific focus and epistemological thought has changed the focus of philosophy and efficiently and completely wrested morality from theology to the effect, as we have seen so far, moral thinking has taken on several paths. So just where is the center of meaning?

The Players

Dates	Philosophers	Main Points
1788 -1860	Arthur Schopenhauer	*Kant and Buddha; the Will and the will to live*
1803 -1882	Ralph Waldo Emerson	*Transcendentalism; individual over the society*
1806 -1873	John Stuart Mill	*Liberty; Utilitarianism; experimentation over induction*
1813 -1855	Soren Kierkegaard	*Anti-Hegel; subjectivity; Leap of Faith; Father of Existentialism, both atheistic and theistic variations; concrete over ideal*
1817 -1862	Henry David Thoreau	*Pastoral anarchist*
1818 -1883	Karl Marx	*Urban anarchist*
1821 -1881	Fyodor Dostoyevsky	*Anti-nihilist existentialist*
1828 -1910	Leo Tolstoy	*Anarchist*
1839 -1914	Charles Sanders Peirce	*American; Pragmatism;*
1842 -1910	William James	*American; Bro of Henry; Pragmatism;*
1844 -1900	Frederick Nietzsche	*Existentialist; the superman; art and progress*
1848 -1925	Gottlob Frege	*Mathematician, Logician; father of modern Logic*
1859 -1938	Edmund Husserl	*Father of Phenomenology*
1859 -1952	John Dewey	*Instrumentalism (pragmatist)*
1856 -1939	Sigmund Freud	*Used philosophy to start psychology*
1864 -1937	F.C.S. Schiller	*German Pragmatist; opposed absolute idealism and logical positivism; eugenicist*

Table 2: Nineteenth Century Players

The Players (Alternate Take)

Dates	Philosophers	Main Points
1803-1882	Ralph Waldo Emerson	*Platonic sense of societal organization masked within the American dream*
1806-1873	John Stuart Mill	*Of his own free will on a half pint of shanty was particularly ill*
1813-1855	Soren Kierkegaard	*Too smart for anyone else, and agonized by it*
1817-1862	Henry David Thoreau	*Having someone else do his laundry masked as self-sufficiency*
1818-1883	Karl Marx	*Materialization of philosophy for the sake of the worker*
1844-1900	Frederick Nietzsche	*Just wanted to make friends*

Table 29a: Nineteenth Century Players, as described by Johanna Kirsch, BA Phil.

Ideology vs. Philosophy

For all you know there is no better place to start. As the idea of philosophy as a science in itself begins to be picked apart so does the idea of what philosophy is in the general language. The word itself was coined (not surprisingly) during the French Revolution and after that time the understanding of Ideology begins to develop, becoming to mean the body of doctrines or beliefs which drive social or political action. The American system, as we discussed earlier is not Locke-ism or Adam-ism or Franklin-ism but the enacting of the philosophic musings of these individuals. They are the ideas behind the policy.

Philosophies may develop into Ideologies, but they in and of themselves are not philosophy, merely active reflections of it.

Ideology And Philosophy

That said, we know that, philosophically, Ideology is also a way of looking at reality with Ideas being generated from sensations (Locke, Hume), and should not be confused with what is normally thought of as an ideology.

Dogmatism vs. Skepticism

Another contentious outbreak is the rising condemnations between dogmatism and skepticism. *Philosophical skepticism* is the system which questions the notion that absolutely certain knowledge is possible, while *philosophical dogmatism* maintains that a certain positive statements are authoritative, absolutely certain, and true.

In the end these two probably are not at odds, as many skeptics tend to be very dogmatic in their philosophy and the dogmatic tend to be skeptical of any other idea. Still the pejorative nature of the thinking places one against the other and places accusations at the feet of opponents worthy of the conservative vs. liberal battle. But we wish to avoid the ideology vs. philosophy trap, so we will just practice a bit of denial when it comes to these two elements.

Go East Young Man!

In order to avoid total denial, then probably one last look at the East is in order here. Historically, at the same time Western America is 'opening up' to the Eastern US, the East is 'opening up'[6] to the West.

[6] Or, if you prefer, creating economic ties, or if you prefer, signing treaties, or if you prefer, being colonized, or if you prefer, being ground beneath the heel of ruthless expansionist empires, or if you prefer….

Suffice it to say, the effects are, as when the Alexandrian Greeks met the East (*Chapter 24*), a two-way street. The tendency of Eastern mystics toward detachment and the almost total lack of a central God, or power also has some resonance with the thinkers of this time.

Perhaps a bit late to mention, but only because I just stumbled on him, the ninth century Indian philosopher Samkara (or Adi Shankara) needs to be heard. His main teachings are based on the unity of the soul and Brahman, something which will come to bear in a moment, but for now let us take a short moment and look at some of his thinking.

First, he says the one unchanging entity (Brahman) alone exists (absolute), and that changing beings (like us) do not have absolute existence, much as the ocean's waves have no existence in separation from the ocean. “Brahman is the only truth, the spatio-temporal world is an illusion, and there is ultimately no difference between Brahman and individual self.” (*Vivekachudamani*,)

The Human Element

Okay, all that said, let us move fully into the 19th century, and to do that let me just throw out a word: Humanism. Thought we had dropped that one? Well think again. In fact think of nothing else. We are reaching a point in time where the meaning for the word is closer to what we think of as its meaning: that of antagonism between the human intellect and human spirituality, or as some might put it, between vile and wretched mind control and the godless comanists[7].

We have had glimpses of the new thinking about humanity. We are also seeing the struggle between perceived atheism and perceived intellectual freedom. Philosophy is beginning to struggle with the concepts of physics and Darwin, and with its own decline as *the* science. **Philosophic Moment**: If Hegel and Fichte have pushed rationalism back into the lime-light, in opposition to ‘Science’, pressing a metaphysics which seems based more and more in less and less, then what is the natural reaction to this?

Kant is being pushed back into the background, or more exactly being told to stand in the corner and not come out. He is being perceived as ‘just plain wrong’, that is, that every time he speaks against too much rationalism or empiricism, he runs into a whole pocketful of ‘shush’ and is re-assigned to the corner.

Still his re-introduction of the ‘mind’ and his designation of individual necessity to the idea of knowledge is being embraced, but for different reasons and to different results. The 1800’s is a time of great expansion, of a peace on the seas (and for the most part between countries – though not within) with major advances in ship design and construction which is allowing everything from the exploration of the holes at the poles leading into an inner world to the Galapagos Islands and a similarly outrageous idea of the origins of species.

So just what it means to be human, and what are the limits/reaches of the human intellect are far outpacing any metaphysical framework, and attempts at placing it within some philosophical framework are also developing in an attempt to keep up[8].

Mill

John Stuart Mill gets just a quick mention here. If you look, Mill seems to be a conglomeration of many of the thinkers we have seen so far and yet he manages to codify several ideas into contemporary thought. He was a proponent of individual liberty, feminism, *Falsifiability*, and *Utilitarianism*. It is the latter two on which we will briefly touch.

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[7] Ha, ha. Ideology reference.

[8] Metaphysically and theologically it is probably experiencing some re-entrenching.

We start with *Falsifiability* because it is a logic system. Technically it is the scientific notion that things can be 'proved' false through scientific experimentation. It seems then, that we are dealing with '*better skepticism through empiricism*', but it is more. It is not so much about true and false as it is about an argument or line of thought worthy of thought. We can argue that "No human lives forever" since it does not seem possible to prove wrong. It implies that one would have to observe a single human living *forever* in order to prove or disprove the claim. On the other hand, "All humans live forever" is *falsifiable* since we just have to produce one dead person to prove the statement wrong. So, how is that different you ask. Well, a claim may be both true and *falsifiable*; if "All humans live forever" were true, we would never actually find a dead person, and yet that claim could still be falsifiable because we can at least *imagine* the observation that would prove it wrong. That is, the possibility exists for a person to die; all that has to happen is that there be the possibility that an assertion could be shown false by a particular observation or physical experiment.

Confused? Do not worry too much about it because we will be promptly moving on. For our second glance we look at an actual work of Mill's: *Utilitarianism*. It echoes Bentham (*Chapter 40*) and Kant (*Chapter 45*) to a point, and is the ethical system which holds that one must always act so as to produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people, within reason. Understanding the 'greatest happiness' though is based on, well, how smart you are. Simple pleasures appeal to many because they have not experience anything better. So the best judges are really those with the better experience. Now this is not to say that the rich know better than the poor because, frankly 'stupid is as stupid does'. Education not class, Mill purports, is the true measure.

Will Someone Get That?

Okay, so that does not sound so new, so just what are these new trends? When we talk about what it means to be human, along with 'reason' a word that has popped up over time has been 'will', not the will/shall kind of will, as in 'I swear I will be human today', but that action, that volition of the human which is indicative of the individual or communal expression of one's self. For the Stoics, Virtue was the Will in tune with Natural Law (*Chapter 23*). Augustine spoke of freewill (*Chapter 27*) which placed the human will in terms of the Will, God. For the most part, the will is some form of the exercise of human reason, or at least is desires ruled by reason (and so is placed within the function and realm of reason).

We can observe from other aspects of human nature that we have explored recently then, that we are entering a time when the will is no longer seen in relationship to something else, as in human will versus The Will, or some universal law which binds and limits the human will. If being human means that we are the center, the engines of meaning, the means of new knowledge, then the will must originate from or be compared to something else, something internal as opposed to external. If rationalism and empiricism are still fighting about the nature of human nature (in the philosophical, not ideological or 'scientific' way) what effect does that have on the discussion of 'will'?

Schopenhauer

In a not so abrupt segue, let us begin to answer that question starting with Arthur Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer was born in what is now Gdansk Poland, but at the time was still Prussia, so while in a sense he is our first Polish philosopher, he is still deeply German. But that and looking at this guy's dates one could ask if should he not be in the last section? Yes and no, well, no. He really is a 19th century guy, and while beholden to those immediately before him, he stands with the big boys of this time and becomes a big influence on it. His big work is *The World as Will and Representation*

(sometimes translated as Idea) which is divided into four books. Book One places him squarely in the world of idealism, describing the world as *representation* or *idea*. Similar to Kant the world is described as an object of experience and science and per reasoning similar to Leibniz's there is a principle of sufficient reason[9] good enough for him to prove that it exists. Book Two describes the world as the *will*, explaining how the will is manifested in the world. Book Three discusses the Platonic Form, which is different from innate or abstract ideas in that it does not depend on the principle of sufficient reason. Book Four discusses the *ethical* implications of the affirmation or denial of the will-to-live.

On the personal note, Schopenhauer is the original '60's flower child. When you see that video of the Beatles all hanging around with their guru, Arthur had probably been there for years, and if you look closely you might just see him sitting in the background. Ha, thought that last section and the *Empiricism And The East* thing in Chapter 40 were just tossed out there. But more on that later.

Gloating (and the impact of the above) aside, we saw from Hume the idea that the unknowable is not just unknowable but not knowable because it does not exist. Rejecting Hume and feeding off Kant, Fichte, and Hegel, Schopenhauer takes the next step and says that we *can* know reality in itself, but only from within, through self-knowledge, that is, from the realization that *we are 'will'* which he understands as the striving nature of conscious beings. In other words, we are our own dialectic, actively 'striving' or driven, if you will, into self-actualization by our very nature as sentient humans, which of course make us more sentient.

All of this knowledge must add up to something. So unlike Hume, it is more than being a *collection* of things but unlike Fichte it is not a substance/thing-in-itself either. This something, Arthur calls the 'Mind' (*conscious and unconscious*) which he defines as *will*, the inner force of human life. He justifies this view of humanity because to him it is the nature of reality as well. We can see the whole Hegelian argument of inner and outer reflection, that is, the subjective reflects the objective and the objective reflects the subjective. The effect? *There is within everything will*. We see it all around us: impulse, persistence, determination, striving, and conflict. Ultimately from this he concludes all reality is will and that so much so to the point where there is really only *one universal will*.

Brain and brain, what is brain*?*[10]

This means that there is a *subjective* and an *objective* aspect to the will. So if the '*Mind*' (who we are, the subjective), is *will*, then will is the true substance of the body. Just as Hegel proposed the dialectic as the nature of everything and helps us to understand the Absolute in which everything participates and from Kant that our mind is the means of understanding reality (though not in-itself, *noumena*-ally) we can assume that this substance/body (the will, the mind) exists in space and time.

Objectively, the Will is the inner reality of *every* natural phenomenon (what we can perceive and understand), which is why we can understand it. Will then, is everything. It is the substance of not only each individual but of all reality itself.

So what is the meaning of this? How does it change or extend the idealism we have seen proffered so far? Kant thought of the synthetic *a priori* as giving meaning to everything, that is, it is what was best about being human, and ultimately defined us. Hegel placed that squarely on the shoulders of the dialectic, which defined *everything*. Schopenhauer takes it that next step and creates a more seemingly mindless leviathan. Perhaps that is a bit harsh. After all, does he not call

[9] This is fourfold in nature: a physical form, a mathematical form, a logical form, and a moral form.

[10] Kara, from the *Star Trek* episode *Spock's Brain* (season3, episode 1) – and is it just me or does that word really look strange when you see it three times in a row? Which, incidentally, may explain the really rotten nature of this episode, but not of this section.

the subjective will the Mind? Well, to reuse a phrase, yes and no. There are consequences to this all-encompassing will. Just as the dialectic drives everything for Hegel, so the will drives everything for Schopenhauer.

In fact it drives everything to the extent that we become victims of our insatiable will's success. If we want to reach way back (and we do) to Socrates and then work our way back, we can think of the moral nature/consequences of knowledge and thought. In ancient or classical philosophy, so often knowledge and virtue are considered one. In 'modern' philosophy a similar result exists, knowledge and thinking define who we are, and that drives our behavior. *We act because we know and our actions take us to deeper knowledge*. The Will is no different. The Will and acting are one. The result though, is not really virtue, but more of an Epicurean, Stoic, Skeptic, and (this is where that Eastern discussion come into play) Buddhist and Zen-like, disaster.

May The Circle Be Broken…

The will's striving, the constant urge for achievement of ever more ambitious goals causes human unhappiness. In the old problem of 'the more money you get the more you want'/'you never have enough money', strife comes from striving; there is never a point where the will can be satisfied, because by its very nature it must keep developing. In an echo of all those early naysayers, our unhappiness springs from the fact that we are either bored because our will is not acting or frustrated because we can't achieve what our will desires. The will therefore becomes the origin of our sufferings which in the fashion of the day also means that the less you "will", the less you suffer. Salvation depends upon turning from self to others which requires "the euthanasia of the will" (*The World as Will and Representation*, Volume 4). This never-ending cycle of willing and suffering can be broken only by stymieing the will through the ceasing of the striving, i.e. Buddhist-like (Brahmin) resignation/contemplation.

The resurgence of metaphysics through Kant and Hegel means that the mindless, driven chaos of life in the will has a way to approach it outside of that mere chaos. As Kant professes, we are more than just the sum of external influence and internal laws. The will *is*, but it is not immune to itself. This may be confusing (or at least I may be making it confusing). We can over-objectify the will, that is, we can think of the will as this behemoth, which controls everything, to the exclusion of the subjective. Because of this we could also view the will as neutral, neither good nor evil, or that good and evil are just a natural result of the will. But Schopenhauer also shows that there is a subjective nature to the will. Unhappiness is a motivator and as we can see it as part/result of the will, we gain 'power' over the will.

The Rest Is Silence.[11]

So, it is a two-edged sword. Moral virtue is a way to reduce the 'evil' power of will but it is also a way to realize that individuals are ultimately an illusion, (not in a Hume way but in the Hegel Absolute) and that only 'Will' (the one shared will) exists. This conclusion comes about when we realize that we are driven to do things by the will, yet we eventually die; what's up with that? For Schopenhauer this is a central question of philosophy. In fact, Freud cites him as an inspiration, as the first philosopher to really discuss the meaning of death in terms of life[12].

"Nature does not act otherwise with man than with the brutes. Therefore its declaration extends also to man: the life and death of the individual are indifferent to it. Accordingly, in a certain sense, they ought also to be indifferent to us, for we ourselves are indeed nature. Certainly, if only we saw

[11] *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare

[12] Especially if you ignore so much of Christian philosophy, or at least debunk it.

deep enough, we would agree with nature, and regard life and death as indifferently as it does….In fact, it is also only small, limited minds that fear death quite seriously as their annihilation, and persons of decidedly superior capacity are completely free from such terrors." (*The World as Will and Representation,* Book 4, *On Death*)

As for Epicurus, Christians and the Buddhists, the fear of death, once removed becomes the avenue of happiness. But not merely because no afterlife exists, as for Epicurus, but because "by means of reflection, we must attribute that carelessness and indifference of nature towards the life of the individuals to the fact that the destruction of such a phenomenon does not in the least affect its true and proper nature." (*ibid*) That is to say, death is not the end. Ultimately it is the surrender of the individual (i.e. will) which brings about true happiness.

This thinking really reflects the addition of the Buddhist and Hindu worldviews, which Schopenhauer *integrated* into his thought. I stress integration as opposed to opposition or holding it up as better. Schopenhauer tries to bring all of human thought on the subject to the table, and as he states, will be shown to be correct to the mind that even tries to grasp it.

Ideal Behavior

While some may see those statements of Schopenhauer's as bad form, Behavior, by default from the will-is-action notion, may show us the Will and may allow us to glimpse our will. We can feel in ourselves and see in others the effects of the will, but we cannot judge every action to be that of the will. Sometimes we just have bad judgment, following what we may perceive as the will but is in fact merely a faulty perception of or desire substituted for the will.

Schopenhauer's philosophy is the antithesis (no pun intended) of that of Hegel. For Hegel, reality and rationality ultimately coincide in the Absolute. All things, good, bad, indifferent, ultimately combine in the higher synthesis. This is seen in the all-things-balance-out-in-the-end long view of history. Schopenhauer, though, proposes a neutral (or blind if you will) reality that is essentially irrational and evil. Love, progress, history, or any other measure do not justify or ameliorate misery; they are deceits and illusions behind which the neutral, non-sentient will masks itself, for this will constantly driven regardless of the consequences.

So only by suppressing the will can moral action be judged and that judgment is not anything to write home about. This is a pessimistic suppression not a crowning achievement of the human spirit. This brings up a word we have not used in a while: *ascetics*. If you recall from chapter 29, asceticism is the practice of self-denial in order to accomplish a higher goal. There were three stages, if you will, to control of the will; Art, Ethics, and Ascetics. Art suspends the will by distracting us with beauty; ethics mortifies it because it causes us to leave our self-centeredness and reach out or at least acknowledge the other; ascetics nullifies it by completely denying it. So ascetics was the ultimate practice.[13]

Transcendental Meditation

[13] The difference is that Schopenhauer thought that the Christian idea of asceticism, especially as practiced by the Saints of the Church was the same as the Eastern one, that of total detachment which implies indifference. On a professional note, to the contrary, the Saints of the Church rarely practiced an asceticism which took them away from the world, but more one which opened them up to the world; its practice only led one to turn to others and immerse oneself into the world, as we discussed of the Desert Fathers (again, Chapter 29). It is easy to see how Schopenhauer may choose to interpret their actions this way, but it is incorrect.

Transcending the world is everything, and that is perfectly reasonable because that is what we do. This is all understood in the beyond-ness of things, so finally, and by way of transition, Schopenhauer builds on Kant's description of transcendental idealism as a "distinction between the phenomenon and the thing in itself, and the recognition that only the phenomenon is accessible to us"; "we do not know either ourselves or things as they are in themselves, but merely as they appear." (*Parerga and Paralipomena*, Vol. 2, *Sketch of a History of the Doctrine of the Ideal and the Real*) "*Transcendental* is the philosophy that makes us aware of the fact that the first and essential laws of this world that are presented to us are rooted in our brain and are therefore known *a priori*. It is called *transcendental* because it *goes beyond* the whole given phantasmagoria to the origin thereof. Therefore, as I have said, only the *Critique of Pure Reason* and generally the critical (that is to say, Kantian) philosophy are transcendental." (*Parerga and Paralipomena*, Vol. I, *Fragments for the History of Philosophy*)

That understood, Schopenhauer goes on to contrast Kant's transcendental critical philosophy with Leibniz's dogmatic philosophy. "With Kant the *critical philosophy* appeared as the opponent of this entire method [of dogmatic philosophy]. It makes its problem just those eternal truths (principle of contradiction or antinomies, principle of sufficient reason) that serve as the foundation of every such dogmatic structure, investigates their origin, and then finds this to be in man's head. Here they spring from the forms properly belonging to it, which it carries in itself for the purpose of perceiving and apprehending the objective world. Thus here in the brain is the quarry furnishing the material for that proud, dogmatic structure. Now because the critical philosophy, in order to reach this result, had to go *beyond* the eternal truths, on which all the previous dogmatism was based, so as to make these truths themselves the subject of investigation, it became *transcendental* philosophy. From this it follows also that the objective world as we know it does not belong to the true being of things-in-themselves, but is its mere *phenomenon*, conditioned by those very forms that lie *a priori* in the human intellect (i.e., the brain); hence the world cannot contain anything but phenomena." (*The World as Will and Representation*, Volume I, *Appendix: Criticism of the Kantian Philosophy*)

This preference for the transcendental over the dogmatic is a growing trend that…oops! Look at the time! We have already covered that, have we not?

Phenomenology

Well, Mr. Schopenhauer seems to have taken up more time than I expected. I swear that I limited him to five minutes but you know how these guys can be once they get going. So briefly let us look at the new 'trends' in philosophy. And first down the runway, wearing a stunning collection of images which hint of the reality behind them, is phenomenology.

Though it may not seem as more than an aspect of all of these recent thinkers, phenomena are a way of looking at reality and defining it.

Existentialism

If the 18th century was about epistemology, the next big movement is the examination of being, or *existentialism*. Existentialism is really a broad term, almost like saying 'Greek', and just as epistemological terms like 'empirical' and 'rationalism' can in some way be applied throughout philosophical history.

But that is not our point here. This is about this period of philosophical time and no other; in fact I am not sure this can be applied to anything other than…oh, sorry, got caught up in existential angst.

Pragmatism

Practically speaking, we have wasted a lot of time hemming and hawing about things which really have no practical bearing. Pragmatists want to correct that, by clarifying the argument. The base of pragmatism is formed from their maxim, basically, 'what do you *practically* mean'. Pragmatism is a system for revealing the substance of hypotheses by tracing their 'practical consequences'.

And One Final Word: Atheism

If the world is a place of indifference, whether we start with the Deist principles or look a Schopenhauer's will, then the triumph of atheism over humanism and theology is obvious. Not to be confused with agnosticism and it is not per se a philosophy (see the branches of philosophy in *Chapter 5*), but it becomes an underlying principle, which takes us back to the prime mover discussion.

Putting It Together

What are we looking at here? A lot, apparently. Kant produced a major turn in thinking and we are moving into a time when ideas collide and converge, in a Hegel-like dialectic. External and internal systems like Psychoanalysis, Existentialism and Evolution are producing waves that we are still riding today (hang ten, baby! Until of course, because of survival of the fittest, the curl collapses).

We are witnessing a coming together of thinking such that there is a blurring of the lines between systems – each one seems to have aspects of the other. Some older systems are gone. What we begin to see is the culmination of 'modern' philosophy into 'schools' of thought. We begin to think less and less of individuals and more and more of the systems to which they adhere.

Schopenhauer ushers in a bold way of thinking, mainly because any earlier and he would have been shown the door. The world as will, that steamroller of reality crushing anything that gets in its way and then dragging it along anyway is a concept that many are beginning to see empirically, as the social and political effects of the industrial revolution are being brought to light. What is the answer? Certainly religion has begun to lose relevance in an amoral world, where God is seemingly indifferent to the suffering caused by our own hand, the result our desire for more and more. If not God, then what? What can stop the suffering, the immorality, the cruelty? The will must be controlled. If we look at history, as Hegel tells us we should, then we will see the answer: only those who bucked the 'system', who denied all achieve happiness. Schopenhauer sees this as the *raison d'être*[14] for all humans. This call to action and view of self-control has a big influence on the time to come.

And Schopenhauer shows us once again that only the Germans could come up with a system where art and conflict drive the world.

"We often hear complaints against the shallowness of thought in our own time, and the decay of sound knowledge. But I do not see that sciences which rest on a solid foundation, such as mathematics, physics, etc., deserve this reproach in the least. On the contrary, they maintain their old reputation of solidity, and with regard to physics, even surpass it. The same spirit would manifest itself in other branches of knowledge, if only their principles had first been properly determined. Till that is done, indifferentism and doubt, and

[14] Ha, ha. I used French with Schopenhauer…oh…this will become funnier.

ultimately severe criticism, are rather signs of honest thought. Our age is, in every sense of the word, is the age of criticism and everything must submit to it. Religion, on the strength of its sanctity, and law, on the strength of its majesty, try to withdraw themselves from it; but by so doing they arouse just suspicions, and cannot claim that sincere respect which reason pays to those only who have been able to stand its free and open examination". (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Preface footnote)

Arthur Schopenhauer: *The World As Will And Representation*

Chapter XLI

ON DEATH AND ITS RELATION TO THE INDESTRUCTIBILITY OF OUR TRUE NATURE

DEATH is the true inspiring genius, or the muse of philosophy, wherefore Socrates has defined the latter as *thanatou melete.* Indeed without death men would scarcely philosophize. Therefore it will be quite in order that a special consideration of this should have its place here at the beginning of the last, most serious, and most important of our books.

The brute lives without a proper knowledge of death; therefore the individual brute enjoys directly the absolute imperishableness of the species, for it is only conscious of itself as endless. In the case of men the terrifying certainty of death necessarily entered with reason. But as everywhere in nature with every evil a means of cure, or at least some compensation, is given, the same reflection which introduces the knowledge of death also assists us to *metaphysical* points of view, which comfort us concerning it, and of which the brute has no need and is incapable. All religious and philosophical systems are principally directed to this end, and are thus primarily the antidote to the certainty of death, which the reflective reason produces out of its own means. Yet the degree in which they attain this end is very different, and certainly *one* religion or philosophy will, far more than the others, enable men to look death in the face with a quiet glance. Brahmanism and Buddhism, which teach man to regard himself as himself, the original being, the Brahm, to which all coming into being and passing away is essentially foreign, will achieve much more in this respect than such as teach that man is made out of nothing, and actually begins at birth his existence derived from another. Answering to this we find in India a confidence and a contempt for death of which one has no conception in Europe. It is, in fact, a hazardous thing to force upon a man, by early imprinting them, weak and untenable conceptions in this important regard, and thereby making him forever incapable of taking up correct and stable ones. For example, to teach him that he recently came out of nothing, and consequently through an eternity has been nothing, but yet for the future will be imperishable, is just the same as to teach him that although he is through and through the work of another, yet he will be held responsible through all eternity for his actions. If, then, when the mind ripens and reflection appears, the untenable nature of such doctrines forces itself upon him, he has nothing better to put in its place, nay, is no longer capable of understanding anything better, and thus loses the comfort which nature had destined for him also, as a compensation for the certainty of death. In consequence of such a process, we see even now in England (1844), among ruined factory hands, the Socialists, and in Germany, among ruined students, the young Hegelians, sink to the absolutely physical point of view, which leads to the result: *edite, bibite, post mortem nulla voluptas*,* and so far may be defined as bestialism.

However, after all that has been taught concerning death, it cannot be denied that, at least in Europe, the opinion of men, nay, often even of the same individual, very frequently vacillates between the conception of death as absolute annihilation and the assumption that we are, as it were, with skin and hair, immortal. Both are equally false: but we have not so much to find a correct mean as rather to gain the higher point of view from which such notions disappear of themselves.

In these considerations I shall first of all start from the purely empirical standpoint. Here there primarily lies before us the undeniable fact that, according to the natural consciousness, man not only fears death for his own person more than anything else, but also weeps violently over the death of those that belong to him, and indeed clearly not egotistically, for his own loss,

but out of sympathy for the great misfortune that has befallen them. Therefore he also censures those who in such a case neither weep nor show sadness as hard-hearted and unloving. It is parallel with this that revenge, in its highest degree, seeks the death of the adversary as the greatest evil that can be inflicted. Opinions change with time and place; but the voice of nature remains always and everywhere the same, and is therefore to be heeded before everything else. Now here it seems distinctly to say that death is a great evil . In the language of nature death means annihilation. And that death is a serious matter may be concluded from the fact that, as everyone knows, life is no joke. We must indeed deserve nothing better than these two.

In fact, the fear of death is independent of all knowledge; for the brute has it, although it does not know death. Everything that is born brings it with it into the world. But this fear of death is *a priori* only the reverse side of the will to live, which indeed we all are. Therefore in every brute the fear of its destruction is inborn, like the care for its maintenance. Thus it is the fear of death, and not the mere avoidance of pain, which shows itself in the anxious carefulness with which the brute seeks to protect itself, and still more its brood, from everything that might become dangerous. Why does the brute flee, trembling, and seek to conceal itself? Because it is simply the will to live, but, as such, is forfeited to death, and wishes to gain time. Such also, by nature, is man. The greatest evil, the worst that can anywhere threaten, is death; the greatest fear is the fear of death. Nothing excites us so irresistibly to the most lively interest as danger to the life of others; nothing is so shocking as an execution. Now the boundless attachment to life which appears here cannot have sprung from knowledge and reflection; to these it rather appears foolish, for the objective worth of life is very uncertain, and at least it remains doubtful whether it is preferable to not being, nay, if experience and reflection come to be expressed, not being must certainly win. If one knocked on the graves, and asked the dead whether they wished to rise again, they would shake their heads. Such is the opinion of Socrates in Plato's *Apology*, and even the gay and amiable Voltaire cannot help saying, *"On aime la vie; mais le niant ne laisse pas d'avoir du ton;"* and again, *"Je ne saispas ce que c'est que la vie iternelle, mais celle-ci est une mauvaise plaisanterie."* Besides, life must in any case soon end; so that the few years which perhaps one has yet to be vanish entirely before the endless time when one will be no more. Accordingly it appears to reflection even ludicrous to be so anxious about this span of time, to tremble so much if our own life or that of another is in danger, and to compose tragedies the horror of which has its strength in the fear of death. That powerful attachment to life is therefore irrational and blind; it can only be explained from the fact that our whole inner nature is itself will to live, to which, therefore, life must appear as the highest good, however embittered, short, and uncertain it may always be; and that that will, in itself and originally, is unconscious and blind. Knowledge, on the contrary, far from being the source of that attachment to life, even works against it, for it discloses the worthlessness of life, and thus combats the fear of death. When it conquers, and accordingly the man faces death courageously and composedly, this is honored as great and noble, thus we hail then the triumph of knowledge over the blind will to live, which is yet the kernel of our own being. In the same way we despise him in whom knowledge is defeated in that conflict, and who therefore clings unconditionally to life, struggles to the utmost against approaching death, and receives it with despair;[1] and yet in him it is only the most original being of ourselves and of nature that expresses itself. We may here ask, in passing, how could this boundless love of life and Endeavour to maintain it in every way as long as possible be regarded as base, contemptible, and by the adherents of every religion as unworthy of this, if it were the gift of good gods, to be recognized with thankfulness *1* And how could it then seem great and noble to esteem it lightly? Meanwhile, what is confirmed by these considerations is — 1) that the will to live is the inmost nature of man; 2) that in itself it is unconscious and blind; 3) that knowledge is an adventitious principle, which is originally foreign to the will; 4) that knowledge conflicts with the will, and that our judgment applauds the victory of knowledge over the will.

If what makes death seem so terrible to us were the thought of not being, we would necessarily think with equal horror of the time when as yet we were not. For it is irrefutably certain that not being after death cannot be different from not being before birth, and consequently is also no more deplorable. A whole eternity has run its course while as yet we were not, but that by no means disturbs us. On the other hand, we find it hard, nay, unendurable, that after the momentary intermezzo of an ephemeral existence, a second eternity should follow in which we shall no longer be. Should, then, this thirst for existence have arisen because we have now tasted it and have found it so delightful? As was already briefly explained above, certainly not; far sooner could the experience gained have awakened an infinite longing for the lost paradise of non-existence. To the hope, also, of the immortality of the soul there is always added that of a “better world” — a sign that the present world is not much good. Notwithstanding all this, the question as to our state after death has certainly been discussed, in

books and verbally, ten thousand times oftener than the question as to our state before birth. Yet theoretically the one is just as near at hand and as fair a problem as the other; and besides, whoever had answered the one would soon see to the bottom of the other. We have fine declamations about how shocking it would be to think that the mind of man, which embraces the world, and has so many very excellent thoughts, should sink with him into the grave; but we hear nothing about this mind having allowed a whole eternity to pass before it came into being with these its qualities, and how the world must have had to do without it all that time. Yet no question presents itself more naturally to knowledge, uncorrupted by the will, than this: An infinite time has passed before my birth; what was I during this time? Metaphysically, it might perhaps be answered, " I was always I; that is, all who during that time said I, were just L" But let us look away from this to our present entirely empirical point of view, and assume that I did not exist at all. Then I can console myself as to the infinite time after my death, when I shall not be, with the infinite time when I already was not, as a well-accustomed, and indeed very comfortable, state. For the eternity *a parte post* without me can be just as little fearful as the eternity *a parte ante* without me, since the two are distinguished by nothing except by the interposition of an ephemeral dream of life. All proofs, also, for continued existence after death may just as well be applied *in partem ante,* where they then demonstrate existence before life, in the assumption of which the Hindus and Buddhists therefore show themselves very consistent. Kant's ideality of time alone solves all these riddles. But we are not speaking of that now. This, however, results from what has been said, that to mourn for the time when one will be no more is just as absurd as it would be to mourn over the time when as yet one was not; for it is all the same whether the time which our existence does not fill is related to that which it does fill, as future or as past.

But, also, regarded entirely apart from these temporal considerations, it is in and for itself absurd to look upon not being as an evil; for every evil, as every good, presupposes existence, nay, even consciousness: but the latter ceases with life, as also in sleep and in a swoon; therefore the absence of it is well known to us, and trusted, as containing no evil at all: its entrance, however, is always an affair of a moment. From this point of view Epicurus considered death, and therefore quite rightly said, "*o thanatos meden pros emas*" (Death does not concern us); with the explanation that when we are death is not, and when death is we are not *(Diog. Laert.,* x. 27). To have lost what cannot be missed is clearly no evil. Therefore ceasing to be ought to disturb us as little as not having been. Accordingly from the standpoint of knowledge there appears absolutely no reason to fear death. But consciousness consists in knowing; therefore, for consciousness death is no evil. Moreover, it is really not this *knowing* part of our *ego* that fears death, but the *fuga mortis* proceeds entirely and alone from the blind *will,* of which everything living is filled. To this, however, as was already mentioned above, it is essential, just because it is will to live, whose whole nature consists in the effort after life and existence, and which is not originally endowed with knowledge, but only in consequence of its objectification in animal individuals. If now the will, by means of knowledge, beholds death as the end of the phenomenon with which it has identified itself, and to which, therefore, it sees itself limited, its whole nature struggles against it with all its might. Whether now it has really something to fear from death we will investigate further on, and will then remember the real source of the fear of death, which has been shown here along with the requisite distinction of the willing and the knowing part of our nature.

Corresponding to this, then, what makes death so terrible to us is not so much the end of life—for this can appear to no one specially worthy of regret—but rather the destruction of the organism; really because this is the will itself exhibiting itself as body. But we only really feel this destruction in the evils of disease or of old age; death itself, on the other hand, consists for the *subject* only in the moment when consciousness vanishes because the activity of the brain ceases. The extension of the stoppage to all the other parts of the organism which follows this is really already an event after death. Thus death, in a subjective regard, concerns the consciousness alone. Now what the vanishing of this may be everyone can to a certain extent judge of from going to sleep; but it is still better known to whoever has really fainted, for in this the transition is not so gradual, nor accompanied by dreams, but first the power of sight leaves us, still fully conscious, and then immediately the most profound unconsciousness enters; the sensation that accompanies it, so far as it goes, is anything but disagreeable; and without doubt, as sleep is the brother of death, so the swoon is its twin-brother. Even violent death cannot be painful, for even severe wounds are not felt at all till

some time afterwards, often not till the outward signs of them are observed. If they are rapidly mortal, consciousness will vanish before this discovery; if they result in death later, then it is the same as with other illnesses. All those also who have lost consciousness in water, or from charcoal fumes, or through hanging are well known to say that it happened without pain. And now, finally, the death which is properly in accordance with nature, death from old age, euthanasia, is a gradual vanishing and sinking out of existence in an imperceptible manner. Little by little in old age, the passions and desires, with the susceptibility for their objects, are extinguished; the emotions no longer find anything to excite them; for the power of presenting ideas to the mind always becomes weaker, its images fainter; the impressions no longer cleave to us, but pass over without leaving a trace, the days roll ever faster, events lose their significance, everything grows pale. The old man stricken in years totters about or rests in a comer now only a shadow, a ghost of his former self. What remains there for death to destroy? One day a sleep is his last, and his dreams are. They are the dreams which Hamlet inquires after in the famous soliloquy. I believe we dream them even now.

I have here also to remark that the maintenance of the life process, although it has a metaphysical basis, does not go on without resistance, and consequently not without effort. It is this to which the organism yields every night, on account of which it then suspends the brain function and diminishes certain secretions, the respiration, the pulse, and the development of heat. From this we may conclude that the entire ceasing of the life process must be a wonderful relief to its motive force; perhaps this has some share in the expression of sweet contentment on the faces of most dead persons. In general the moment of death may be like the moment of awaking from a heavy dream that has oppressed us like a nightmare.

Up to this point the result we have arrived at is that death, however much it may be feared, can yet really be no evil. But often it even appears as a good thing, as something wished for, as a friend. All that have met with insuperable obstacles to their existence or their efforts, that suffer from incurable diseases or inconsolable griefs, have as a last refuge, which generally opens to them of its own accord, the return into the womb of nature, from which they arose for a short time, enticed by the hope of more favorable conditions of existence than have fallen to their lot, and the same path out of which constantly remains open. That return is the *cessio bonorum*[2] of life. Yet even here it is only entered upon after a physical and moral conflict: so hard does one struggle against returning to the place from which one came out so lightly and readily, to an existence which has so much suffering and so little pleasure to offer. The Hindus give the god of death, Yama, two faces; one very fearful and terrible, and one very cheerful and benevolent. This partly explains itself from the reflections we have just made.

At the empirical point of view at which we still stand, the following consideration is one which presents itself of its own accord, and therefore deserves to be accurately defined by illustration, and thereby referred to its proper limits. The sight of a dead body shows me that sensibility, irritability, circulation of the blood, reproduction, &c., have here ceased….

The considerations which have brought us to this point, and to which the further explanations link themselves on, started from the remarkable fear of death which fills all living beings. But now we will change the standpoint and consider how, in contrast to the individual beings, the *whole* of nature bears itself with reference to death. In doing this, however, we still always remain upon the ground of experience.

Certainly we know no higher game of chance than that for death and life. Every decision about this we watch with the utmost excitement, interest, and fear; for in our eyes all in all is at stake. On the other hand, nature, which never lies, but is always straightforward and open, speaks quite differently upon this theme, speaks like Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita. What it says is: The death or the life of the individual is of no significance. It expresses this by the fact that it exposes the life of every brute, and even of man, to the most insignificant accidents without coming to the rescue. Consider the insect on your path; a slight, unconscious turning of your step is decisive as to its life or death. Look at the wood-snail, without any means of flight, of defense, of deception, of concealment, a ready prey for all. Look at the fish carelessly playing in the still open net; the frog restrained by its laziness from the flight which might save it; the bird that does not know of the falcon that soars above it; the sheep which the wolf eyes and examines from the thicket. All these, provided with little foresight, go about guilelessly among the dangers that threaten their existence every moment. Since now nature exposes its organisms, constructed with such inimitable skill, not only to the predatory

instincts of the stronger, but also to the blindest chance, to the humor of every fool, the mischievousness of every child without reserve, it declares that the annihilation of these individuals is indifferent to it, does it no harm, has no significance, and that in these cases the effect is of no more importance than the cause. It says this very distinctly, and it does not lie; only it makes no comments on its utterances, but rather expresses them in the laconic style of an oracle. If now the all-mother sends forth her children without protection to a thousand threatening dangers, this can only be because she knows that if they fall they fall back into her womb, where they are safe ; therefore their fall is a mere jest. Nature does not act otherwise with man than with the brutes. Therefore its declaration extends also to man: the life and death of the individual are indifferent to it. Accordingly, in a certain sense, they ought also to be indifferent to us, for we ourselves are indeed nature. Certainly, if only we saw deep enough, we would agree with nature, and regard life and death as indifferently as it does. Meanwhile, by means of reflection, we must attribute that carelessness and indifference of nature towards the life of the individuals to the fact that the destruction of such a phenomenon does not in the least affect its true and proper nature

If we further ponder the fact, that not only, as we have just seen, are life and death dependent upon the most trifling accidents, but that the existence of the organized being in general is an ephemeral one, that animal and plant arise to-day and pass away to-morrow, and birth and death follow in quick succession, while to the unorganized things which stand so much lower an incomparably longer duration is assured, and an infinite duration to the absolutely formless matter alone, to which, indeed, we attribute this *a priori,*—then, I think, the thought must follow of its own accord, even from the purely empirical, but objective and unprejudiced comprehension of such an order of things, that this is only a superficial phenomenon, that such a constant arising and passing away can by no means touch the root of things, but cau only be relative, nay, only apparent, in which the true inner nature of that thing is not included, the nature which everywhere evades our glance and is thoroughly mysterious, but rather that this continues to exist undisturbed by it; although we can neither apprehend nor conceive the manner in which this happens, and must therefore think of it only generally as a kind of *tour de passe-passe* which took place there. For that, while what is most imperfect, the lowest, the unorganized, continues to exist unassailed, it is just the most perfect beings, the living creatures, with their infinitely complicated and inconceivably ingenious organizations, which constantly arise, new from the very foundation, and after a brief span of lime absolutely pass into nothingness, to make room for other new ones like them coming into existence out of nothing—this is something so obviously absurd that it can never be the true order of things, but rather a mere veil which conceals this, or, more accurately, a phenomenon conditioned by the nature of our intellect. Nay, the whole being and not being itself of these individuals, in relation to which death and life are opposites, can only be relative. Thus the language of nature, in which it 1s given us as absolute, cannot be the true and ultimate expression of the nature of things and of the order of the world, but indeed only *a. patois du pays, i.e.,* something merely relatively true, — something to be understood *cum grano scdis,* or, to speak properly, something conditioned by our intellect; I say, an immediate, intuitive conviction of the kind which I have tried to describe in words will press itself upon every one ; *i.e.,* certainly only upon every one whose mind is not of an utterly ordinary species, which is absolutely only capable of knowing the particular simply and solely as such, which is strictly limited to the knowledge of individuals, after the manner of the intellect of the brutes. Whoever, on the other hand, by means of a capacity of an only somewhat higher power, even just begins to see in the individual beings their universal, their Ideas, will also, to a certain extent, participate in that conviction, and that indeed as an immediate, and therefore certain, conviction. In fact, it is also only small, limited minds that fear death quite seriously as their annihilation, and persons of decidedly superior capacity are completely free from such terrors. Plato rightly bases the whole of philosophy upon the knowledge of the doctrine of Ideas, *i.e.,* upon the perception of the universal in the particular. But the conviction here described, which proceeds directly from the comprehension of nature, must have been exceedingly vivid in those sublime authors of the Upanishads of the Vedas, who can scarcely be thought of as mere men, for it speaks to us so forcibly out of an innumerable number of their utterances that we must ascribe this immediate illumination of their mind to the fact that these wise men, standing nearer the origin of our race in time, comprehended the nature of things more clearly and profoundly than the already deteriorated race, *oioi nun eisin,*[3] is able to do. But certainly their comprehension is assisted by the natural world of India, which is

endowed with life in a very different degree from our northern world. However, thorough reflection, as pursued by Kant's great mind, leads by another path to the same result, for it teaches us that our intellect, in which that phenomenal world which changes so fast exhibits itself, does not comprehend the true ultimate nature of things, but merely its phenomenal manifestation, and indeed, as I add, because it is originally only destined to present the motives to our will, *i.e.,* to be serviceable to it in the pursuit of its paltry ends.

Let us, however, carry our objective and unprejudiced consideration of nature still further. If I kill a living creature, whether a dog, a bird, a frog, or even only an insect, it is really inconceivable that this being, or rather the original force by virtue of which such a marvelous phenomenon exhibited itself just the moment before, in its full energy and love of life, should have been annihilated by my wicked or thoughtless act. And again, on the other hand, the millions of animals of every kind which come into existence every moment, in infinite variety, full of force and activity, can never, before the act of their generation, have been nothing at all, and have attained from nothing to an absolute beginning. If now in this way I see one of these withdraw itself from my sight, without me knowing where it goes, and another appear without me knowing whence it comes; if, moreover, both have the same form, the same nature, the same character, and only not the same matter, which yet during their existence they continually throw off and renew; then certainly the assumption, that that which vanishes and that which appears in its place are one and the same, which has only experienced a slight alteration, a renewal of the form of its existence, and that consequently death is for the species what sleep is for the individual; this assumption, I say, lies so close at hand that it is impossible not to light upon it, unless the mind, perverted in early youth by the imprinting of false views, hurries it out of the way, even from a distance, with superstitious fear. But the opposite assumption that the birth of an animal is an arising out of nothing, and accordingly that its death is its absolute annihilation, and this with the further addition that man, who has also originated out of nothing, has yet an individual, endless existence, and indeed a conscious existence, while the dog, the ape, the elephant, are annihilated by death, is really something against which the healthy mind revolts and which it must regard as absurd. If, as is sufficiently often repeated, the comparison of the results of a system which the utterances of the healthy mind is supposed to be a touchstone of its truth, I wish the adherents of the system which was handed down from Descartes to the pre-Kantian eclectics, nay, which even now is still the prevailing view of the great majority of cultured people in Europe, would apply this touchstone here. `

Throughout and everywhere the true symbol of nature is the circle, because it is the schema or type of recurrence. This is, in fact, the most universal form in nature, which it carries out in everything, from the course of the stars down to the death and the genesis of organized beings, and by which alone, in the ceaseless stream of time, and its content, a permanent existence, *i.e.,* a nature, becomes possible….

So everything lingers but a moment, and hastens on to death. The plant and the insect die at the end of the summer, the brute and the man after a few years: death reaps unwearied. Yet notwithstanding this, nay, as if this were not so at all, everything is always there and in its place, just as if everything were imperishable. The plant always thrives and blooms, the insect hums, the brute and the man exist in youth not wasted, and the cherries that have already been enjoyed a thousand times we have again before us every summer. The nations also exist as immortal individuals, although sometimes their names change; even their action, what they do and suffer, is always the same; although history always pretends to relate something different: for it is like the kaleidoscope, which at every turn shows a new figure, while we really always have the same thing before our eyes. What then presses itself more irresistibly upon us than the thought that that arising and passing away does not concern the real nature of things, but this remains untouched by it, thus is imperishable, and therefore all and each that *wills* to exist actually exists continuously and without end. Accordingly at every given point of time all species of animals, from the gnat to the elephant, exist together complete. They have already renewed themselves many thousand times, and withal have remained the same. They know nothing of others like them, who have lived before them, or will live after them; it is the species which always lives, and in the consciousness of the imperishable nature of the species and their identity with it the individuals cheerfully exist. The will to live manifests itself in an endless present, because this is the form of the life of the species, which, therefore, never grows old, but remains always young. Death is for it what sleep is for the individual, or what winking is for the eye, by the absence of which the Indian gods are known, if they appear in human form. As through the entrance of night the world vanishes, but yet does not for a

moment cease to exist, so man and brute apparently pass away through death, and yet their true nature continues, just as undisturbed by it. Let us now think of that alternation of death and birth as infinitely rapid vibrations, and we have before us the enduring objectification of the will, the permanent Ideas of being, fixed like the rainbow on the waterfall. This is temporal immortality. In consequence of this, notwithstanding thousands of years of death and decay, nothing has been lost, not an atom of the matter, still less anything of the inner being, that exhibits itself as nature. Therefore every moment we can cheerfully cry, " In spite of time, death, and decay, we are still all together ! " Perhaps we would have to except whoever had once said from the bottom of his heart, with regard to this game, "I want no more." But this is not yet the place to speak of this.

But we have certainly to draw attention to the fact that the pain of birth and the bitterness of death are the two constant conditions under which the will to live maintains itself in its objectification, *i.e.,* our inner nature, untouched by the course of time and the death of races, exists in an everlasting present, and enjoys the fruit of the assertion of the will to live. This is analogous to the fact that we can only be awake during the day on condition that we sleep during the night; indeed the latter is the commentary which nature offers us for the understanding of that difficult passage.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY R. B. HALDANE, M.A. *AND* J. KEMP, M.A

*'Eat, drink for after death there is no pleasure!'

[1] *In gUidiatoriia pvgnia timidos et animotos, et te aeriter ipnot morti mpplices, et, vt vitere liceat, obseeran- offerenlea terrare eupimut (*Cicero, *pro Milone* 36.92). – "In gladiatorial conflicts we usually abhor and abominate the cowards who beg and implore us to let them live. On the other hand, we seek to preserve the lives of the brave, the courageous, and those who of their own free will impetuously face death,"

[2] 'good end'

[3] *Homer*: 'such men as live in these degenerate days.'

Thought Point	Points of Thought
What is Schopenhauer talking about?	
How does the will fit into this?	
In what does he base his thoughts?	
What does death teach us about life?	
Is death an evil to be feared or a good to be embraced?	
What is the greatest fear about death?	
How do we work out the paradox of life?	
Why does a German keep using so much French?	

Existentialism

This is really not a new subject, if you stop and think about it. What was Avicenna thinking about or Descartes? When we take the time to reflect, being is the essential focus of most of our thought. The movement toward individualism, sparked by medieval humanism, skepticism and passing through Descartes and Locke like a Hot Wheels car through foam accelerators vaults over Kant's synthetic *a priori* until it comes to rest at the feet of Schopenhauer's will.

The Players

Dates	Philosophers	Main Points
1813 -1855	Soren Kierkegaard	*The mid-wife of Existentialism. Existence is everything; Choice leads to angst, commitment to faith, happiness*
1821 -1881	Fyodor Dostoyevsky	*Author, considered by some to be the first existential write.*
1844 -1900	Frederick Nietzsche	*Nihilism, the will to power, morality is a ploy of the weak*

Table 3: 19th Century Existentialist Players

Thinking About Being

So let us get this out of the way. Pop culture references to Existentialism are limited to *angst*, the superman, Rand, and Sartre. The broadness of the thought is reduced to clichés and meaninglessness. Fortunately we are looking deeper than just this pop culture level.[15]

Since we are looking for a deeper relationship, let us get to it and just pop the question: To be or not to be, is that the question of Existentialism? No, not really. Actually it is somewhat hard to nail down; some would point to the emphasis on death, some to the emphasis on individuality, and others to the atheism. In a way it is also about all of these things and more. For our little foray, it comes down to what does it *mean* to exist, *to be*? What is the meaning of *being*?

To Be Or Not To Be

Alright then, since we have an idea of what it is and is not, just what makes something Existentialism? We have talked about *being* in many different contexts. Existentialist philosophers look at being as the be-all and the end-all[16]; that is to say, they want to not just understand existence, they want to give *meaning* to existence. And that is to say, once we understand what *be-ing* is, we ask why there is be-*ing* at all? What is the first form of *be-ing*? Is there a *be-ing*/prime mover for/of *be-ing*? How do we make sense of *be-ing*?

I would like to say, let us tackle each of these questions in order, but that would take too long. Still, we have talked about this sort of thing already. If being is the active form of our *essence*, substance or whatever moniker we have seen over time that we want to call it, then why? What is its purpose? Why is there being in the first place? In a sense many of our thinkers have already been talking about this. Things being what they are[17], Aristotle meant that you are what you are, that is, you can be nothing else (a dog is a dog or else it would be something else). So being and essence/substance are equal.

[15] Admittedly not much deeper, but still…
[16] Forgive any pun…
[17] Pun intended this time.

Aquinas, following Aristotle's lead[18], states that everything has two principles that explains its being, *essence* and *existence*. In all beings (except for God, of course), these principles of potential and actual are both required in order for the actually existing individual thing to be. Though logically derived, each is distinct from the other in a very real way. Essence may be described as the '*what'* of a thing, its *quiddity*, as Thomas would say. For him *what* a thing *is* and the actuality *that* it *is* are completely different things. Essence therefore does not guarantee that a thing is, that is that it *exists*. Existence is the *act* of being and the essence is the abstract notion of the thing.

Like Aquinas, Kant sees essence as abstracted by the human intellect, that is, he too says that existence is not part of the thing, and is therefore not a guarantee of the existence of the object. Being cannot be predicated on a thing he tells us. [If we look at it as an argument, as in [Centaurs are half-man half-horse, Centaurs *exist* in myths, therefore they *exist*].] This is because we can never know the thing in itself (noumena) only the phenomena related to it.

Hegel keeps up this line of reasoning and definitively states that Existence is not equal to Essence. This is due to the dialectic of being and nothing constantly leading to the synthesis of becoming. In that sense, we are always becoming, that our being, our potential is never fully realized except in The Absolute.

Along that line and to the point, Existentialists maintain that Existence *precedes* Essence, that is to say, the two are different but that it is the opposite of Aquinas. That is to say *existence* is established first rather than the essence of the thing being established, and its potential moving to an actual instance of the thing; I believe we can almost hear Descartes 'I think therefore I am' echoing in the background.[19] I am, therefore I may have essence but it is not necessary.

Because of this, Existentialists maintain that we create our own nature, that is, in the now long line of humanism, from our existence, we designate our essence; once we decide *that* we are, we then decide *what* we are.

I Am I Cried….

So what drives us? Schopenhauer began the process by focusing on the question of death. What is its meaning? What is the meaning of life that ends in death? What does death mean in the light of the drive of the will? In light of the existentialist movement which followed, this really shows the transitional nature of his thought. Death defines us, in a way. Nature, for Schopenhauer, is indifferent to whether we live or die, and we share that nature, but we are not bound up with it; the will continues and drives on whether we exist or not or even choose to participate in it.

Schopenhauer said 'get used to it'. Meaning (morality) derives from letting go of of personal meaning, even the idea of existence and our strength lies in defeating or suppressing the will.

Existentialism will draw on these ideas, but not the Eastern inspired submission aspect.

Categories Of Being

Okay. All that said the basics of existentialism are still somewhat hard to nail down. As articulated earlier, existentialists *presuppose* the priority of existence over essence and emphasize the distinctive *human-ness* of the individual, effectively arguing that human nature really has no essence but only a timeline, that is, the moment to moment existence – hence the existentialist moniker. This emphasis on the 'human condition' highlights aspects or categories such as *anguish*, *contradiction*, *nothingness*, and *absurdity*, that is, the 'states' of being in which we find ourselves.

[18] Not too badly really, though I understand he did step on his toes every once in a while.
[19] Or is that just the sound reflecting off the multi-faceted nature of existentialism?

So, another way to think about it is to 'categorize' being, that is, make a distinction between the categories of Being (okay, since we are talking about Germans I am going to give you the German term *sein* which translates to *Being*, but has become a 'standard existentialist term' for Being and we will see it again soon) and Existence (*existenz* which is not as widespread in use). So, since *sein* precedes existence, we can look at them as different things, or states, and discuss a thing within the category of *sein*, or the category of existence. We can do this because we can argue that *sein* cannot be grasped through rational thought and perception, but only through personal *existence*.

Obviously for existentialism these 'categories' are less like Aristotle's and more like a list of ontological subjects.[20] This is a subtle shift in thinking away from metaphysics without really abandoning metaphysics or even needing to champion it. Even God may be discussed in terms of existence alone. Philosophy seems to be more about answering the questions of life rather than an exploration of thought.

Kierkegaard

Søren Kierkegaard, is considered the father of modern existentialism, at least in the form we would recognize. Taking his cue from Kant perhaps, he led a somewhat uneventful if not short life which involved few trips away from his beloved Copenhagen. His one brief stint in Berlin as a student seemed to convince him that traveling to hear the thoughts of others was insufficient to hearing his own thoughts, hence there was no real need to leave home again.

His own thoughts were that the very reason that we are interested in philosophy (that is, in asking questions in order to understand our existence) is *because* we exist, somewhat similar to Descartes' thinking, but without starting from skepticism – more of a 'common sense' approach. Along that line, Kierkegaard in keeping with these new norms felt that the thinker was the center of the equation. To him, Hegel[21] was wrong because he made the philosopher a detached, external observer of human existence. To the contrary he pointed out, while each of us is the center, we are also *part* of that which we observe. Existence is both the object and the state of the thinker.

Hopefully you can begin to see the *idea* of Existentialism. It is not just thinking about existence in general or thinking about my own existence; it is both because they are linked. This differs from say Aquinas who used existence as a postulate, as a part or reason of the whole. For Kierkegaard, it *is* the whole. In opposition to Aristotle, he points to the hardship of *existing* as the truth that matters, not the truth which is established by Logic. That is to say, logical truth is insignificant next to the power of the truth which comes to us from existing[22] or the idea of street smarts over book smarts, one might say. This is because, he felt, Logic is defined by *necessity*, but existence is dominated by *possibility*. Now this is different than the necessity and possibility we have seen before, because it is tied to existence at a different level. Necessity is a feature of *being* while possibility is a feature of *becoming*, neither of which have much to do with essence.

Okay, I know…what does that mean? Think of it this way. Kierkegaard is looking at the idea of *possibility* not as Aquinas does *potentiality* but as the idea that 'life gives us many possibilities'. Remember, we are not dealing with essence, as is Thomas, but existence. Existence therefore is not the potential but the choice; not as in 'a choice' but as in constant choosing, between one possibility and another.

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[20] This does not mean that the classical understandings of categories are ignored, but just not in the same way as they are for Aristotle and Kant.

[21] One might say that he really hated Hegel, but hate might be a strong word…Kierkegaard would have been much more poetic about it.

[22] With apologies to George Lucas and Darth Vadar.

Necessity, is the thing as it is, you might say. Logic only serves things that are, not things which can be. So in a sense he is talking like Kant and saying that logic, like empirical data alone, really cannot speak to the things beyond it. Being is in that sense the 'necessarily so'. Possibility on the other hand is the thing which is not necessarily so, and in that way, logic is unable to speak to them – it becomes speculation and not logic. The word 'if' creeps in, and while Avicenna would say that is fine, Kierkegaard would say not for qualifying the possible.

Kierkegaard sees human being as a combination of these two sides of existence; that the one cannot do without the other. We are a combination of the finite and the infinite, the possible and the necessary. We are who we are, but we must become who we should be, or in a sense *are*, or better yet, who we ultimately are.

> "*Just as finitude is the limiting aspect in relation to infinitude, so also necessity is the constraint in relation to possibility. Inasmuch as the self as the self as a synthesis of finitude and infinitude is established, it kata dunamin* [potential]*, in order to become itself it reflects itself in the medium of imagination, and thereby the infinite possibility becomes manifest. The self is kata dunamin* [potentially] *just as possible as it is necessary, for it is indeed itself, but it has the task of becoming itself. Insofar as it is itself, it is necessary, and insofar as it has the task of becoming itself, it is a possibility.*" (*Sickness Unto Death*, Chapter 3).

This means that becoming is not a direction or a narrowing of possibilities, but the opening of possibilities within who we are. Basically you grow where you are planted. A rose is a rose is a rose and a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. We are who we are, which means that I am not you nor are you me and we will never be each other. That in itself is a 'finitude', but it opens up all possibility for 'who *I* am'. To not become who I am is the problem.

Adolescent Angst

Here, in Kierkegaard, not only do we have the beginnings of Existentialism, we have the earliest reference to that great existentialist German word *angst* (in his work *The Concept of Anxiety*). Possibility without necessity causes *angst*. If you think about it, the everyday grind of plowing through situations, often for the very first time and often with little or no experience or knowledge to guide you is a source of great consternation. There is almost an empirical feel about this, is there not, with a heaping dose of Hume thrown in.

According to Kierkegaard, just as logic only deals with what already is, there are no universal or objective standards to decide one's behavior and so, in the end, the choice is *subjective*. Worse, each possible existence cannot be described it can only be lived, meaning that there is no rational way to decide or tell others what is good behavior (recall that logic merely deals with the necessary not the possible). This is because communication, that means by which we might actually be able to describe the possible is a contradiction (an oxymoron if you will) because due to the necessary being unrelated to the possible, the meaning is clouded and skewed by the experience of the subject who is trying to relate it. Talk about your bad day – oh wait, you cannot.

Fortunately "Man is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite" Unfortunately, each individual struggles to maintain that synthesis, and the struggle causes unhappiness.

> "*Despair is a Sickness in the Spirit, in the Self, and So It May Assume a Triple Form: in Despair at Not Being Conscious of Having a Self (Despair Improperly So Called); in Despair at Not Willing to Be Oneself; in Despair at Willing to Be Oneself.*
>
> *Man is spirit. But what is spirit? Spirit is the self. But what is the self? The self is a relation which relates itself to its own self, or it is that in the relation* [which accounts for it] *that the relation relates itself to its own self; the self is not the relation but*

> [consists in the fact] *that the relation relates itself to its own self. Man is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity, in short it is a synthesis. A synthesis is a relation between two factors. So regarded, man is not yet a self.*" (*Sickness Unto Death*, Chapter 1)

So basically, the problem is that until we become ourselves we will have problems and therefore *angst*.

Ten Lords A Leaping

But how do we become ourselves? There is only one way and surprisingly it is Christianity. Kierkegaard's brother was actually a high churchman in the Danish Lutheran Church, and you know how brothers can be: they violently disagreed. Kierkegaard felt that the Church had become too liberal and had lost its way when spreading the message. He had definite opinions and was not afraid to share them. When it came to God, he thought that people just were not getting to the level of faith required to *really* be Christian and thereby *them-self*.

According to Kierkegaard, we move through stages of existence:

- ***Untruth*** (aesthetic stage): the individual lives in the moment. Think of this as our adolescence, when we pretty much live for ourselves and in the moment, the ultimate Bohemians. We think we know everything; for the most part we are incorrect about our assumptions, not that that stops us. The ultimate problem here is that the person at this stage is paralyzed by the multiple possibilities presented to them.
- ***Ethical*** (ethical stage): the individual lives according to principles. Eventually we grow up and take on responsibilities (family, society, and the like). We place ourselves under certain restraints and disciplines, subjecting some of ourselves to external controls and limitations. The problem with this stage is that the person is committed to one possibility.
- ***In truth*** (religious stage): the individual lives according to faith in God. This is a level of subjection which truly frees us to be who we truly are. We truly open to all the possibilities of who I am, as created by God, as opposed to the previous stage which is determined outside of me.

From this we can see that the Leap *of* Faith idea with which he is credited is actually the Leap *to* Faith from things which may seem like Faith but are not. The Christian God in Jesus is an "absolute paradox" because he is "something that thought cannot think" (*Philosophical Fragments*, Chapter 3) and by default therefore requires a leap of/to Faith in order to encounter and understand. To Kierkegaard Christianity is a *communication of existence*, that is, it goes beyond words and communicates to us what it is to exist – the meaning of existence.

The reason it is so 'improbable' is that it does not fall under the idea of necessity, and therefore cannot be logically proven. However to reach this stage is to enter into the realm of possibility and truly become your '*self*', and understand existence.

Dostoyevsky

Fyodor Dostoyevsky (not to be confused with Frodo Baggins), like others we have looked at, is not really a philosopher in most people's book but is considered more of a writer of his own books. Still, oddly enough, this actually does play into the whole existential thing.

Many literati consider him one of the first 'existential writers'. Dostoevsky's writings include characters whose natures and ruminations could classify them as focusing on the existential. He should probably be considered more as an adherent to religious mysticism than to existential philosophy (we can see some of the confusion of philosophy and ideology as we have spoken of before). In the end, and because of this, literary existentialism should not be interpreted to mean any book which is depressing or obsessive or dealing with the dark aspects of human nature. As Freud would say, "sometimes a cigar is just a cigar" and Dostoevsky's fascination with the dark side of the human will is really just a fascination with the dark side of the human will.

Anyway, the use of literature to explore existential ideas, and to expound on and disseminate existential philosophical views becomes common, and it is easy to see why Dostoyevsky might be thought of as a writer who uses literature to espouse philosophical notions, considering folks like Camus, and Sartre. But what is true for them is not as true of Fyodor, though many see him as the inspiration for later existentialists. In the end he is probably more like Thomas More and less like Camus.

Putting It Together

So just what is the purpose of life? Well it may seem odd that people just seem to be getting around to that question. Actually though it is not that people are just getting around to it, it is more that it is becoming the only question to be answered. Existentialism is less about that question and more about exploring the aspects of existence and of discovering one's existence.

Existentialism is like empiricism without the empiricism. The world is reduced to the experienced (not just the perceived) that is to say, our everyday existence is the meat of it. There are no universals or metaphysics but then there are no random concepts either.

This sense of nihilism, of 'nothingness', is the signature of existentialism and we will see more of it in the thinkers to come. It is view of the world as a possible place of chaos and darkness can lead to despair. Angst takes place within existence, that is to say, your existence defines the angst you have. Not to be stereotypical but for exemplary purposes that this means is that I will experience angsts related to being a white middle-class male that a poor black woman. You hear it all the time: teen-age angst, Jewish angst, white angst, etc. Ultimately, angst is the feeling you get when you are not becoming yourself.

Kierkegaard opens the door to this exploration and focuses on becoming. This idea of becoming yourself, of reaching the potential of who you are will take many forms few of which are in the same Jesus is the answer vein as Soren.

WOODY ALLEN: That's quite a lovely Jackson Pollock, isn't it?
GIRL: Yes it is.
WOODY ALLEN: What does it say to you?
GIRL: It restates the negativeness of the universe, the hideous lonely emptiness of existence, nothingness, the predicament of man forced to live in a barren, godless eternity, like a tiny flame flickering in an immense void, with nothing but waste, horror, and degradation, forming a useless bleak straightjacket in a black absurd cosmos.
WOODY ALLEN: What are you doing Saturday night?
GIRL: Committing suicide.
WOODY ALLEN: What about Friday night?
GIRL: [leaves silently]

"*Play It Again, Sam*", Paramount Pictures, 1972

Soren Kierkegaard: *Selected Readings*

Fear And Trembling

Chapter 3: Problem One: Is There Such a Thing as a Teleological Suspension of the Ethical?

The ethical as such is the universal, it applies to everyone, and the same thing is expressed from another point of view by saying that it applies every instant. It reposes immanently in itself, it has nothing without itself which is its *telos,* but is itself *telos* for everything outside it, and when this has been incorporated by the ethical it can go no further. Conceived immediately as physical and psychical, the particular individual is the particular which has its *telos* in the universal, and its task is to express itself constantly in it, to abolish its particularity in order to become the universal. As soon as the individual would assert himself in his particularity over against the universal he sins, and only by recognizing this can he again reconcile himself with the universal. Whenever the individual after he has entered the universal feels an impulse to assert himself as the particular, he is in temptation (*Anfechtung*), and he can labor himself out of this only by abandoning himself as the particular in the universal. If this be the highest thing that can be said of man and of his existence, then the ethical has the same character as man's eternal blessedness, which to all eternity and at every instant is his *telos,* since it would be a contradiction to say that this might be abandoned (i.e. teleologically suspended), inasmuch as this is no sooner suspended than it is forfeited, whereas in other cases what is suspended is not forfeited but is preserved precisely in that higher thing which is its *telos.*

If such be the case, then Hegel is right when in his chapter on "The Good and the Conscience," he characterizes man merely as the particular and regards this character as ''a moral form of the evil" which is to be annulled in the teleology of the moral, so that the individual who remains in this stage is either sinning or subjected to temptation (*Anfechtung*). On the other hand, he is wrong in talking of faith, wrong in not protesting loudly and clearly against the fact that Abraham enjoys honor and glory as the father of faith, whereas he ought to be prosecuted and convicted of murder.

For faith is this paradox, that the particular is higher than the universal -- yet in such a way, be it observed, that the movement repeats itself, and that consequently the individual, after having been in the universal, now as the particular isolated himself as higher than the universal. If this be not faith, then Abraham is lost, then faith has never existed in the world . . . because it has always existed. For if the ethical (i.e. the moral) is the highest thing, and if nothing incommensurable remains in man in any other way but as the evil (i.e. the particular which has to be expressed in the universal), then one needs no other categories besides those which the Greeks possessed or which by consistent thinking can be derived from them. This fact Hegel ought not to have concealed, for after all he was acquainted with Greek thought.

One not infrequently hears it said by men who for lack of losing themselves in studies are absorbed in phrases that a light shines upon the Christian world whereas a darkness broods over paganism. This utterance has always seemed strange to me, inasmuch as every profound thinker and every serious artist is even in our day rejuvenated by the eternal youth of the Greek race. Such an utterance may be explained by the consideration that people do not know what they ought to say but only that they must say something. It is quite right for one to say that paganism did not possess faith, but if with this one is to have said something, one must be a little clearer about what one understands by faith, since otherwise one falls back into such phrases. To explain the whole of existence and faith along with it is easy, and that man does not make the poorest calculation in life who reckons upon admiration when he possesses such an explanation; for, as Boileau says, *''un sot trouve toujours un plus sot qui l'admire.*" [A fool always finds a greater fool to admire him.]

Faith is precisely this paradox, that the individual as the particular is higher than the universal, is justified over against it, is not subordinate but superior -- yet in such a way, be it observed, that it is the particular individual who, after he has been subordinated as the particular to the universal, now through the universal becomes the individual who as the particular is superior to the universal, for the fact that the individual as the particular stands in an absolute relation to the absolute. This position cannot be mediated, for all mediation comes about precisely by virtue of the universal; it is and remains to all eternity a paradox, inaccessible to thought. And yet faith is this paradox -- or else (these are the logical deductions which I would beg the reader to have *in mente* at every point, though it would be too prolix for me to reiterate them on every occasion) -- or else there never has been faith . . .precisely because it always has been. In other words, Abraham [the biblical patriarch] is lost.

That for the particular individual this paradox may easily be mistaken for a temptation (*Anfechtung*) is indeed true, but one ought not for this reason to conceal it. That the whole constitution of many persons may be such that this paradox repels them is indeed true, but one ought not for this reason to make faith something different in order to be able to possess it, but ought rather to admit that one does not possess it, whereas those who possess faith should take care to set up certain criteria so that one might distinguish the paradox from a temptation (*Anfechtung*).

Now the story of Abraham contains such a teleological suspension of the ethical. There have not been lacking clever pates and profound investigators who have found analogies to it. Their wisdom is derived from the pretty proposition that at bottom everything is the same. If one will look a little more closely, I have not much doubt that in the whole world one will not find a single analogy (except a later instance which proves nothing), if it stands fast that Abraham is the representative of faith, and that faith is normally expressed in him whose life is not merely the most paradoxical that can be thought but so paradoxical that it cannot be thought at all. He acts by virtue of the absurd, for it is precisely absurd that he as the particular is higher than the universal. This paradox cannot be mediated; for as soon as he begins to do this he has to admit that he was in temptation (*Anfechtung*), and if such was the case, he never gets to the point of sacrificing Isaac, or, if he has sacrificed Isaac, he must turn back repentantly to the universal. By virtue of the absurd he gets Isaac again. Abraham is therefore at no instant a tragic hero but something quite different, either a murderer or a believer. The middle term which saves the tragic hero, Abraham has not. Hence it is that I can understand the tragic hero but cannot understand Abraham, though in a certain crazy sense I admire him more than all other men.

Abraham's relation to Isaac, ethically speaking, is quite simply expressed by saying that a father shall love his son more dearly than himself. Yet within its own compass the ethical has various gradations. Let us see whether in this story there is to be found any higher expression for the ethical such as would ethically explain his conduct, ethically justify him in suspending the ethical obligation toward his son, without in this search going beyond the teleology of the ethical.

When an undertaking in which a whole nation is concerned is hindered, when such an enterprise is brought to a standstill by the disfavor of heaven, when the angry deity sends a calm which mocks all efforts, when the seer performs his heavy task and proclaims that deity demands a young maiden as a sacrifice -- then will the father heroically make the sacrifice. He will magnanimously conceal his pain, even though he might wish that he were "the lowly man who dares to weep," not the king who must act royally. And though solitary pain forces its way into his breast, he has only three confidants among the people, yet soon the whole nation will be cognizant of his pain, but also cognizant of his exploit, that for the welfare of the whole he was willing to sacrifice her, his daughter, the lovely young maiden. O charming bosom! O beautiful cheeks! O bright golden hair! (v.687). And the daughter will affect him by her tears, and the father will turn his face away, but the hero will raise the knife. -- When the report of this reaches the ancestral home, then will the beautiful maidens of Greece blush with enthusiasm, and if the daughter was betrothed, her true love will not be angry but be proud of sharing in the father's deed, because the maiden belonged to him more feelingly than to the father.

When the intrepid judge who saved Israel in the hour of need in one breath binds himself and God by the same vow, then heroically the young maiden's jubilation, the beloved daughter's joy, he will turn to sorrow, and with her all Israel will lament her maiden youth; but every free-born man will every stout-hearted woman will admire Jephtha [*Judges* 11; 11:31 specifically], and every maiden in Israel will wish to act as did his daughter. For what good would it do if Jephtha were victorious by reason of his vow if he did not keep it? Would not the victory again be taken from the nation?....

The difference between the tragic hero and Abraham is clearly evident. The tragic hero still remains within the ethical. He lets one expression of the ethical find its *telos* in a higher expression of the ethical; the ethical relation between father and son, or daughter and father, he reduces to a sentiment which has its dialectic in the idea of morality. Here there can be no question of a teleological suspension of the ethical.

With Abraham the situation was different. By his act he overstepped the ethical entirely and possessed a higher *telos* outside of it, in relation to which he suspended the former. For I should very much like to know how one would bring Abraham's act into relation with the universal, and whether it is possible to discover any connection whatever between what Abraham did and the universal . . . except the fact that he transgressed it. It was not for the sake of saving a people, not to maintain the idea of the state, that Abraham did this, and not in order to reconcile angry deities. If there could be a question of the deity being angry, he was angry only with Abraham, and Abraham's whole action stands in no relation to the universal, is a purely personal undertaking. Therefore, whereas the tragic hero is great by reason of his moral virtue, Abraham is great by reason of a personal virtue. In Abraham s life there is no higher expression for the ethical than this, that the father shall love his son. Of the ethical in the sense of morality there can be no question in this instance. In so far as the universal was present, it was indeed cryptically present in Isaac, hidden as it were in Isaac's loins, and must therefore cry out with Isaac's mouth, "Do it not! Thou art bringing everything to naught."

Why then did Abraham do it? For God's sake, and (in complete identity with this) for his own sake. He did it for God's sake because God required this proof of his faith; for his own sake he did it in order that he might furnish the proof. The unity of these two points of view is perfectly expressed by the word which has always been used to characterize this situation: it is a trial, a temptation (*Fristelse*). A temptation -- but what does that mean? What ordinarily tempts a man is that which would keep him from doing his duty, but in this case the temptation is itself the ethical...which would keep him from doing God's will.

Abraham cannot be mediated, and the same thing can be expressed also by saying that he cannot talk. So soon as I talk I express the universal, and if I do not do so, no one can understand me. Therefore if Abraham would express himself in terms of the universal, he must say that his situation is a temptation (*Anfechtung*), for he has no higher expression for that universal which stands above the universal which he transgresses.

Therefore, though Abraham arouses my admiration, he at the same time appalls me. He who denies himself and sacrifices himself for duty gives up the finite in order to grasp the infinite, and that man is secure enough. The tragic hero gives up the certain for the still more certain, and the eye of the beholder rests upon him confidently. But he who gives up the universal in order to grasp something still higher which is not the universal -- what is he doing? Is it possible that this can be anything else but a temptation (*Anfechtung*)? And if it be possible . . . but the individual was mistaken -- what can save him? He suffers all the pain of the tragic hero, he brings to naught his joy in the world, he renounces everything . . . and perhaps at the same instant debars himself from the sublime joy which to him was so precious that he would purchase it at any price. Him the beholder cannot understand nor let his eye rest confidently upon him. Perhaps it is not possible to do what the believer proposes, since it is indeed unthinkable. Or if it could be done, but if the individual had misunderstood the deity -- what can save him? The tragic hero has need of tears and claims them, and where is the envious eye which would be so barren that it could not weep with Agamemnon; but where is the man with a soul so bewildered that he would have the presumption to weep for Abraham? The tragic hero accomplishes his act at a definite instant in time, but in the course of time he does something not less significant, he visits the man whose soul is beset with sorrow, whose breast for stifled sobs cannot draw breath, whose thoughts pregnant with tears weigh heavily upon him, to him he makes his appearance, dissolves the sorcery of sorrow, loosens his corslet, coaxes forth his tears by the fact that in his sufferings the sufferer forgets his own. One cannot weep over Abraham. One approaches him with a *horror religiosus,* as Israel approached Mount Sinai. -- If then the solitary man who ascends Mount Moriah, which with its peak rises heaven-high above the plain of Aulis, if he be not a somnambulist who walks securely above the abyss while he who is stationed at the foot of the mountain and is looking on trembles with fear and out of reverence and dread dare not even call to him -- if this man is disordered in his mind, if he had made a mistake! Thanks and thanks again to him who proffers to the man whom the sorrows of life have

assaulted and left naked -- proffers to him the fig-leaf of the word with which he can cover his wretchedness. Thanks be to thee, great Shakespeare, who art able to express everything, absolutely everything, precisely as it is -- and yet why didst thou never pronounce this pang? Didst though perhaps reserve it to thyself -- like the loved one whose name one cannot endure that the world should mention? For the poet purchases the power of words, the power of uttering all the dread secrets of others, at the price of a little secret he is unable to utter . . . and a poet is not an apostle, he casts out devils only by the power of the devil.

But now when the ethical is thus teleologically suspended, how does the individual exist in whom it is suspended? He exists as the particular in opposition to the universal. Does he then sin? For this is the form of sin, as seen in the idea. Just as the infant, though it does not sin, because it is not as such yet conscious of its existence, yet its existence is sin, as seen in the idea, and the ethical makes its demands upon it every instant. If one denies that this form can be repeated [in the adult] in such a way that it is not sin, then the sentence of condemnation is pronounced upon Abraham. How then did Abraham exist? He believed. This is the paradox which keeps him upon the sheer edge and which he cannot make clear to any other man, for the paradox is that he as the individual puts himself in an absolute relation to the absolute. Is he justified in doing this? His justification is once more the paradox; for if he is justified, it is not by virtue of anything universal, but by virtue of being the particular individual.

How then does the individual assure himself that he is justified? It is easy enough to level down the whole of existence to the idea of the state or the idea of society. If one does this, one can also mediate easily enough, for then one does not encounter at all the paradox that the individual as the individual is higher than the universal -- which I can aptly express also by the thesis of Pythagoras, that the uneven numbers are more perfect than the even. If in our age one occasionally hears a rejoinder which is pertinent to the paradox, it is likely to be to the following effect: "It is to be judged by the result." A hero who has become a to his contemporaries because they are conscious that he is a paradox who cannot make himself intelligible, will cry out defiantly to his generation, "The result will surely prove that I am justified." In our age we hear this cry rather seldom, for as our age, to its disadvantage, does not produce heroes, it has also the advantage of producing few caricatures. When in our age one hears this saying, "It is to be judged according to the result," a man is at once clear as to who it is he has the honor of talking with. Those who talk thus are a numerous tribe, whom I will denominate by the common name of *Docents*. In their thoughts they live secure in existence, they have a *solid* position and *sure* prospects in a well-ordered state, they have centuries and even millenniums between them and the concussions of existence, they do not fear that such things could recur -- for what would the police say to that! and the newspapers! Their life-work is to judge the great, and to judge them according to the result. Such behavior toward the great betrays a strange mixture of arrogance and misery: of arrogance because they think they are called to be judges; of misery because they do not feel that their lives are even in the remotest degree akin to the great. Surely a man who possesses even a little *erectioris ingenii* has not become entirely a cold and clammy mollusk, and when he approaches what is great it can never escape his mind that from the creation of the world it has been customary for the result to come last, and that, if one would truly learn anything from great actions, one must pay attention precisely to the beginning. In case he who should act were to judge himself according to the result, he would never get to the point of beginning. Even though the result may give joy to the whole world, it cannot help the hero, for he would get to know the result only when the whole thing was over, and it was not by this he became a hero, but he was such for the fact that he began.

Philosophical Fragments

INTERLUDE:

1. Coming into Existence

In what sense is there change in that which comes into existence? Or, what is the nature of the coming-into-existence kind of change*?* All other change presupposes the existence of that which changes, even when the change consists in ceasing to exist But this is not the case with coming into existence. For if the subject of coming into existence does not itself remain unchanged during the change of coming into existence, that which comes into existence is not *this* subject which comes into existence, but something else. Then the question involves a in that the inquirer in the given case either sees another change co-present with the change of coming into existence, which confuses the question for him, or he mistakes the nature of what is

coming into existence and therefore is not in position to ask the question. If a plan in coming into existence [in being fulfilled or carried out] is in itself changed, it is not this plan which comes into existence; but if it comes into existence without being changed, what then is the change of coming into existence? This coming-into-existence kind of change, therefore, is not a change in essence but in being and is a transition from not existing to existing. But this non-being which the subject of coming into existence leaves behind must itself have some sort of being. Otherwise "the subject of coming into existence would not remain unchanged during the change of coming into existence," unless it had not been at all, and then the change of coming into existence would for another reason be absolutely different from every other kind of change, since it would be no change at all, for every change always presupposes something which changes. But such a being, which is nevertheless a non-being, is precisely what possibility is; and a being which is being is indeed actual being or actuality; and the change of coming into existence is a transition from possibility to actuality.

Can the necessary come into existence? Coming into existence is a change, but the necessary cannot be changed, since it always relates itself to itself and relates itself to itself in the same way. All coming into existence is a *suffering,* and the necessary cannot suffer; it cannot undergo the suffering of the actual, which is that the possible (not only the excluded possibility but also the accepted possibility) reveals itself as nothing in the moment it becomes actual, for the possible is made into nothing by the actual. Everything which comes into-existence proves precisely by coming into existence that it is not necessary, for the only thing which cannot come into existence is the necessary, because the necessary *is.*

Is not necessity then a synthesis of possibility and actuality? What could this mean? Possibility and actuality do not differ in essence but in being; how could there from this difference be formed a synthesis constituting necessity, which is not a determination of being but a determination of essence, since it is the essence of the necessary to be. If possibility and actuality could be united to become necessity, they would become an absolutely different essence, which is not a kind of change; and in becoming necessity or the necessary, they would become that which alone of all things excludes coming into existence, which is just as impossible as it is self-contradictory. (Compare the Aristotelian principle: "it is possible," "it is possible that not," "it is not possible." -- The theory of true and false propositions -- Epicurus -- tends only to confuse the issue here, since essence and not being is reflected upon, and in this way no help is given with respect to the characterization of the future.)

The necessary is a category entirely by itself. Nothing ever comes into existence with necessity; likewise the necessary never comes into existence and something by coming into existence never becomes the necessary. Nothing whatever exists because it is necessary, but the necessary exists because it is necessary or because the necessary Is. The actual is no more necessary than the possible, for the necessary is absolutely different from both. (Compare Aristotle's doctrine of the two kinds of possibility in relationship to the necessary. His mistake lies in his beginning with the principle that everything necessary is possible. In order to avoid having to assert contradictory and even self-contradictory predicates about the necessary, he helps himself out by two kinds of possibility, instead of discovering that his first principle is incorrect, since possibility cannot be predicated of the necessary.)

The change involved in coming into existence is actuality; the transition takes place with freedom. No coming into existence is necessary. It was not necessary before the coming into existence, for then there could not have been the coming into existence, nor after the coming into existence, for then there would not have been the coming into existence.

All coming into existence takes place with freedom, not by necessity. Nothing comes into existence by virtue of a logical ground, but only by a cause. Every cause terminates in a freely effecting cause. The illusion occasioned by the intervening causes is that the coming into existence seems to be necessary; the truth about intervening causes is that just as they themselves have come Into existence they point back ultimately to a freely effecting cause. Even the possibility of deducing consequences from a law of nature gives no evidence for the necessity of any coming into existence, which is clear as soon as one reflects definitively on coming into existence. The same is the case with manifestations of freedom, provided we do not let ourselves be deceived by the manifestations of freedom but reflect upon the coming into existence….

APPENDIX: APPLICATION

What has here been said applies to the historical in the direct and

ordinary sense, whose only contradiction is that it has come into existence, which contradiction is implicit in all coming into existence.* Here again one must guard against the illusion of supposing that it is easier to understand after the event than before the event. Whoever thinks this does not yet grasp the fact that what he apprehends has come into existence; he has before him only the present content of a sensory and cognitive immediacy, in which coming into existence is not contained. Let us now return to our story, and to our hypothesis that the God *has been.* As far 'as the direct and ordinary form of the historical is concerned, we have seen that this cannot become historical for immediate sensation or cognition, either for a contemporary or for a successor. But this historical fact which is the content of our hypothesis has a peculiar character, since it is not an ordinary historical fact, but a fact based on a self-contradiction. (This is sufficient to show that in relation to this fact there is no difference between an immediate contemporary and a successor; for over against a self-contradiction, and the risk involved in giving it assent, an immediate contemporaneity can yield no advantage.) Yet it is an historical fact, and only for the apprehension of Faith. Faith is here taken first in the direct and ordinary sense [belief], as the relationship of the mind to the historical; but secondly also in the eminent sense, the sense in which the word can be used only once, i.e., many times, but only in one relationship. From the eternal point of view, one does not *have Faith* that the God exists [eternally is], even if one assumes that he does exist. The use of the word Faith in this

connection enshrines a misunderstanding. Socrates did not have faith that the God existed. What he knew about the God he arrived at by way of Recollection; the God's existence was for him by no means historical existence. If his knowledge of the God was imperfect in comparison with his who according to our supposition receives the condition from the God himself, this does not concern us here; for Faith does not have to do with essence, but with being [historical existence], and the assumption that the God is determines him eternally and not historically. The historical fact for a contemporary is that the God has *come into existence;* for the member of a later generation the historical fact is that the God has been present through *having come into existence.* Herein precisely lies the contradiction. No one

can become immediately contemporary with this historical fact, as has been shown in the preceding; it is the object of Faith, since it concerns coming into existence. No question is here raised as to the true content of this; the question is if one will give assent to the God's having come into existence, by which the God's eternal essence is inflected in the dialectical determinations of coming into existence.

**The word "contradiction" must not here be taken in the frothy sense into which Hegel has beguiled himself and others and the concept -- that it has the power to produce something. As long as nothing has come into existence, the contradiction is merely the impulsive power in the passion of wonder, its nisus; but it is not the nisus of the process of coming into existence itself. When the process of coming into existence has occurred, the contradiction is 'again present as the nisus of the wonder in the passion which reproduces the coming into existence.*

Fear and Trembling. Translated by Walter Lowrie

Philosophic Fragments, Translated by David F. Swenson, revised by Howard V. Hong. Both originally published .by Princeton University Press.

Thought Point	Points of Thought
What does he mean by teleological suspension?	
What does anxiety (angst) have to do with sin?	
What is the relation of the individual to the universal?	
How does all of this prove that essence does not come before existence?	
What is the change of coming into existence?	
Is being necessary or free?	
Is God the Prime Mover?	
If we have nothing to say should we really say nothing?	

Nietzsche

As pop-philosophy goes, Friedrich Nietzsche has probably had the worst case of being reduced to a slogan, worse even than Socrates and that 'know thyself' thing. As philosophy goes, Nietzsche is a controversial figure.

Being Nietzsche

Nietzsche was born on October 15, the birthday of Kaiser Friedrich Wilhelm IV, and with the addition of the fact that his father owed his job to said Kaiser, was named for him. He was born into a household of Lutheran ministers and theologians but at age five, with the death of his father, he moved with his mother into the home of his grandmother and father's sisters. In fact, in a situation with which I can ~~sympathize~~ identify, he grew up in a completely matriarchic home.[23]

He was steeped in the German Romantic literature of his day and, as bit of a composer himself, he became acquainted with Richard Wagner's works and was for a while, one of his biggest proponents. One day he ran into Schopenhauer's *The World As Will And Representation*, and he never looked back.

After an injury from a riding accident during his short stint with military service, he settled in Leipzig where he got to meet and befriend his idol Wagner, as well as Wagner's wife, but let us not dwell on such things. Wagner too was taken with Schopenhauer's philosophy but the shared love of that thought and of German Romantic music was not sufficient to overcome their often tempestuous relationship. Though he always looked back wistfully to the days spent with Wagner, he eventually wrote thinly-veiled attacks on him and his music.

After his break with Wagner, Nietzsche began drifting about and writing furiously. Finally, while in Turin, Italy, Nietzsche experienced a mental breakdown which, in an ugly feat of irony, rendered him an invalid for the rest of his life. The story goes that Nietzsche, upon witnessing a horse being whipped, broke down weeping, threw his arms about the horse's neck and collapsed, completely broken and of questionable sanity. While some attribute the insanity to syphilis, others to brain tumors and yet others to drug use, the end result was the same and he never recovered, dying 11 years later of a probable combination of stroke and pneumonia.

His sister, in whose care he eventually died, was a big promoter of his works and thought, though most would argue not a good editor of them.

All The World's A Stage

Inspired by the Romantic movement of his day, Nietzsche started his philosophic journey as a philologist (the humanistic study of the historic development of linguistics, considering both form and meaning within linguistic expression or the meaning within context – made especially popular in the Biblical scholarship during this time) but he was extremely familiar with earlier thinking. Might as well start at the beginning in order to understand all of human thought, right? This Romantic esteem of the earlier thinkers also included the artists and playwrights (surprise!) and it is from Greek tragedy that he developed his concept that there are two complementary aesthetic principles: an *Apollonian* element from the plot, and a *Dionysian* element from the chorus. Now we did not really get into the use of the images of Apollonian (*light, intellect*) versus Dionysian (*chaos,*

[23] In fact, and in a totally inappropriate and unnecessary discussion of the fact, it might explain why he was so confused about women, thinking that he understood them and they turning out not being as he understood them.

emotions) in Greek philosophical thought, but my guess is by now you can see where Plato stood on it.

According to Nietzsche, the Apollonian plot creates the *illusion* that the hero's will determines his actions and the Dionysian chorus reveals the *reality* of the situation: that the hero, much to his dismay, is only a small cog in the primordial universal design. **Philosophical Moment**: Take some time and place that idea within what we have seen so far, you can reach far back if you want but especially within the thought of Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard. In what ways does this thought rise from their thought? How is this thought different? (go ahead, I will wait….)

Okay let us add to that. Nietzsche sees deeper parallels in these aesthetic principles. The Apollonian principle involves visions, is physical (substantive), evoking the ideals of civilization, and yet is oddly individualistic. So for Nietzsche, the Apollonian, for all of its seemingly broad focus, is narrow and short sighted. On the other hand, the Dionysian, while it involves intoxication,[24] is very symbolic, savage, yet it is holistic. It looks beyond the individual and even civilizations to the *real* big picture.

There is also the feel of the 'survival of the fittest' going on here; that the savagery and bad luck[25] of the short term really plays out for the best in the long term.

In the end we associate the Apollonian element with optimism and alternately Dionysian with pessimism (the hero always thinks he can and 'reality' often shows he cannot).

A Poor Player That Struts And Frets or Eat, Drink, Die

Yet, in a sense, pessimism is the new skepticism. Nietzsche says, contrary to what you might think, it is this Dionysian insight into nature that helps us understand the ultimate meaning of life. But if that is true then in the long view, we end up with Schopenhauer's 'just give up' attitude, right? A true but insufficient conclusion Nietzsche says, because trying to live by that thinking alone would eventually destroy us. Fortunately, he continues, it is tempered by that Apollonian *illusion* of order. And it is this illusion that gives us a 'reason to live', that is, a drive to answer the will. But that illusion of order is just that: *an illusion*. It is only *Dionysian pessimism* which provides the key to overcoming the limits of the human condition caused by pursuing the illusion. Pessimism shows the truth, not that dangerous, false *Apollonian optimism* which stagnates and drag us downward, because, as the chorus shows us we will never be able to overcome our fate.[26]

Ergo, we can only learn to accept and love our fate. But this fate is not necessarily a dark meaningless existence. Building on Schopenhauer, Nietzsche tells us that human behavior is caused not by the *will to life* but by what he calls the *will to power*. In fact he has a book about it compiled by his sister called *The Will To Power* (except in German). He defines this *will to power* as each urge within each of us to *determine the course* of our experiences and thereby *determining our existence* (recall that existence precedes essence and therefore our experiences define our existence). That is to say, each of us is engaged in the struggle of bending experience to match our desired outcome of our life. This perhaps can be seen as a look back to Aristotle's hierarchy of being with the subtle modern aspect of Schopenhauer's will added in. All living beings strive to better their lot in life and to overcome their present lot's limitations. So technically in this *will to power* he does not so much expand as extends Schopenhauer's *will to live*, giving it direction not by overcoming it but by controlling it. In this he seems to falls prey to the thinking which Schopenhauer was trying to avoid about the drive of the will. But by pointing out and emphasizing that drive, taking it to the next level,

[24] And what philosopher is not on board for that?
[25] And inebriation, I suppose.
[26] There's that word again; remember? (*Chapters 9*, *27*).

he echoes Hegel's dialectic and Darwin's survival of the fittest, transforming it into not Schopenhauer's impersonal, external drive but a power struggle (surprise again).

All of this still seems pretty dark, though. By reverting the will back to what Schopenhauer considered its negative (pessimistic) aspect, Nietzsche presents a somewhat dog eat dog class system where life in and of itself has no meaning. Any meaning is supplied by our personal, individual will to power. The sense that life is without objective meaning, purpose, or intrinsic value is called *nihilism*, from the Latin word which we recognize *nihlio*, which if you recall Augustine used to talk about creation (*ex nihilo*) . For Kierkegaard, nihilism was that subverting of the will, that loss of person and individuality in order to gain control over the will. Nihilism in Nietzsche's sense is the view of human existence as a world empty of meaning, purpose, truth, or value. This condition is the character of the Western world.

Human, All Too Human

So what is the meaning of life then? For Schopenhauer it is the control of the will with humans really being the only ones who can do that. For Kierkegaard it is also the rising above it all through faith. But for Nietzsche, it is about immersing oneself into it, and by means of that bending it to a purpose. So, if the nature of life (existence) is the struggle to be on top then what is the nature of human endeavor?

As Nietzsche sees the principles of nature reduced to two principles found in the Greek plays, so he also finds the two main human activities are seen in the two most prominent activities: Philosophy (art) and Science, in a kind of rationalist/empirical, physics/metaphysics split. This is because philosophy, art and history have an infinite scope, that is to say, they cover every aspect or every subject is open to them. Science, on the other hand, has a finite scope in that it is merely an interpretation or exegesis of the world, similarly to the way Kant viewed science.

Think back to Kierkegaard and his division of the world into the necessary and the possible. He also speaks of an infinite/finite division. Nietzsche sees the world as a place where there are no facts, only interpretations, that is there are no divisions. We operate not on facts but interpretation, that is, how I see it, or as Stephen Colbert might phrase it '*truthiness*'. This is the step beyond, towards Schopenhauer, because like Schopenhauer, everything, in the end is reduced not to knowledge but the will, or as for Nietzsche, the will to power. He holds to this because truth and knowledge are Apollonian in nature, i.e. are illusion (sounds a bit like Hume, eh?) but as said, even that provides a certain amount of meaning. So we do have a bit of wiggle room per the above thinking, allowing that truth and knowledge have some substance *relative* to how useful they are to our will to power (that whole reason-to-live thing).

So what does it mean to be human? Nietzsche sharply criticized the Greek tradition's over-emphasis on reason and its dangerous reliance on optimism. Reliance on abstract concepts in a quest for absolute truth, he supposed, is merely a symptom of the degenerate personalities of philosophers like Socrates. From this Nietzsche concluded that traditional philosophy and religion are both erroneous and harmful for human life; they weaken and degrade our innate capacity for achievement by distracting us from our purpose.

Progress beyond the stultifying influence of philosophy and religion, then, requires a thorough shifting away from the traditional views or as he said it a "revaluation of values" (*Twilight of the Idols, or How to Philosophize with a Hammer*). Nietzsche vehemently decried the 'slave' morality enforced by societal control and religious guilt. Forcing people to seek the optimistic, illusionary universal, as following Socrates or Jesus (or at least Christianity) would do, made people slaves to external forces, unable to bend the will, merely be slaves to it as Schopenhauer observed. Only rare,

superior individuals — the 'noble ones', or *Übermenschen*[27] — can rise above all standard moral distinctions to achieve a heroic life of truly human worth.

Beyond Good And Evil

Okay, so what effect does this have on how we live, because, after all, existence is what this is all about right? Especially if we hold to Kierkegaard's idea that it is both being and becoming. Suffice it to say Schopenhauer's submission of the will and Kierkegaard's religious submission do not suit Nietzsche. Honestly, submitting does not really fit into the will to power now does it?

We end up it seems back at that dark, dead-end aspect of life. Nietzsche sees this, not as part of his thought but of the thinking of the world, that is, part of the reason for nihilism is how we are tied to the world – through experience. Our existence is based in interpretation of our experiential or *observational* nature, that is we are always observing, and it is we alone who observe (we do not see dogs pondering the things around them). We filter the observations of the world through various experiences like morality or science or religion or whatever. These filters or perspectives are the source of meaning for us, that is, they give meaning to the experiences we have. The problem with this being, Nietzsche tell us, is that knowledge is *metaphorical*, that is it is *illusory*, in a state of flux and is not set or universal. We have determined observed things to be true and they are not. Anyone who wants to fix the truth, so to speak, is fooling themselves *and* anyone who follows them.

What we must realize is that we created these things – they do not exist on their own and just because we believe them does not make them true. Only those few who realize this, and move beyond it (the *ubermensch*), are capable of truly living. Many pop-philosophizers want to assign this to the master/cattle relationship of the *ubermensch* to other people. To be frank, Nietzsche used the term cattle not as a description of most folks, but as a pejorative against anyone whom he deemed, well, stupid.[28] Beasts are shallow and blind. "*Observe the herd which is grazing beside you. It does not know what yesterday or today is. It springs around, eats, rests, digests, jumps up again, and so from morning to night and from day to day, with its likes and dislikes closely tied to the peg of the moment, and thus neither melancholy nor weary. To witness this is hard for man, because he boasts to himself that his human race is better than the beast and yet looks with jealousy at its happiness. For he wishes only to live like the beast, neither weary nor amid pains, and he wants it in vain, because he does not will it as the animal does. One day the man demands of the beast: 'Why do you not talk to me about your happiness and only gaze at me?' The beast wants to answer, too, and say: 'That comes about because I always immediately forget what I wanted to say.' But by then the beast has already forgotten this reply and remains silent, so that the man wonders on once more.*" (*On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*, Part I)

Some also want to attribute this to the idea of some sort of genetic superiority or a new species of humans but he called those who think that way "learned cattle who had suspected him of Darwinism." (*Ecce Homo*) Instead it is "*Not what shall take the place of humanity in the successive order of beings is the problem I propose — man is an end; but what type of man we shall train, shall wish for as one of higher value, worthier of life, surer of the future. The more valuable type has often enough existed, but as a happy chance, an exception, never as something willed. Instead of this it*

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[27] We often see this translated as 'over-men' or 'supermen' but if you know your Yiddish, *mensch* is more than just 'man', but more like 'good guy', hence the idea of noble or heroic. For that reason I prefer not to translate it. As Johanna puts it: there is also a certain quality of community to the idea of the *ubermensch* – Prof. Ameriks pointed out that the usual American interpretation of the overman is of a solitary, CLIMB-THAT – MOUNTAIN-BY-YOURSELF-AND-TRIUMPH-OVER-ALL man, when what the overman really wants, as noted, is to solve the problems of the world, and seeks community and companions (even if he sucks at finding them – see Zarathustra) to help him accomplish that.

[28] Granted, this could be anyone who did not think as he did, which granted could be most folks.

has been something feared almost the fearful thing — and from motives of fear the contrasted type has been willed, trained, attained: man the domestic animal, the social animal, the sick animal — the Christian." (*The Antichrist* and *Will to Power*)

We can see from this quote that in fact, it is *behavior* not genetics or brainpower that he is talking about, but how we live. In that sense the idea of morality is not the way in which we interact. Morality is a device invented by the weak to assert their will to power over the strong. Christian values are a "slave morality", a morality of the weak to prevent the strong from achieving the will to power. The words we use, the beliefs we have, especially as summed up in Christianity, are the veil which must be pierced. We must move beyond what we understand as good and evil.

The new morality is the morality of the *übermensch*, who is above the enslaved masses because he has seen past the repressive thinking and is interested in solving the problems of this world, not of the otherworld. They can be solved because the thinking which creates and perpetuates them has been overcome. The *übermensch* fulfills the will to power and brings about change. But the will to power is not owned only by those who rise above. As said, as with Schopenhauer's will to live, it is everything. Christianity, in that light, is also an expression of the will the power, but only the will to power of the weak who are full of resentment. Christian values are obsolete and just another example of the Man keeping us down.

Reports Of My Death Have Been Greatly Exaggerated.[29]

So with no universals, and the debunking of all belief systems, God becomes redundant. Did Nietzsche kill God? As we have seen, the rising atheistic sentiment did not start with Nietzsche. Nietzsche though, did give voice to the 500 pound gorilla in the room.

"*God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?*" (*The Gay Science,* Section 125)

In light of this, Nietzsche contemplates the ramifications of the system that remains after such a thing. If there is no God (whether there is – he would still be irrelevant – or ever was), that is, no universal system of values, what does that mean? The problem becomes the construction of a system of values in the absence of a divine order and the lack of universals (all of those things which are false). The movement beyond God allows for the discovery of true morality.

The 'death of God' thing, seems brutal and harsh to many, but his point is that we made God, made him wrong, screwed up all of the thinking about what he would want us to do and finally made others have to follow it, even killing them when they did not. This is what must change. On top of that, those of us who figure it out cannot expect everyone to get it. Many cling to the bad thinking, claiming tradition or historical precedence or just plain fear (either of change or from the fear that comes from those same developed falsehoods), but they are wrong. We must become what we have substituted God for. Our existence (which is what this is all about right?) depends upon our ability to rise above and take the responsibility which we have transferred to God, in spite of the fact that most people will not do it. This can cause some friction between the supermen and the cattle, uh, I mean the *ubermensch* and everyone else.

[In this light, Nietzsche's atheism is probably the closest thing to a true a-theism (no belief in God as opposed to belief in no God), and not that which has developed as a pop-culture anti-Christianity/religion thing. In a kind of anti-Deism, Nietzsche makes God unnecessary, not because

[29] ***Mark Twain***

God wound up the clock and walked away but because we got all wound up and walked away from God. Nietzsche was very interested in overcoming the God-think, echoing Epicurus. Christianity was the enemy of free action. God is a construct which perpetuates slavery. This is bigger than just bitching about people you do not like or agree with.][30]

In a somewhat interesting side discussion, Nietzsche acting on something he read in Hume, put forth the idea of eternal recurrence. Perhaps taking a cue from Schopenhauer's Eastern bent, he took up an idea which we have seen before (perhaps we could say he resurrected it, but that is a play on words and ideas best left to another time) whereas the universe is actually a recurring chain of events which will continue to recur in a self-similar way an infinite number of times.

Putting It Together

What did Nietzsche really give us? There are some who argue that his thought is too disjointed and rambling to really be considered philosophy, and that any sense made of it came from people who compiled it later or wrote books interpreting it. I personally do not know how to answer those accusations, but I can say that no matter how the thinking comes to us (a similar argument could be made about Socrates after all) the main elements still stand as influential, even if only in their reduced, pop-culture way. It is the psyche of the time to which we are the heirs, perhaps.

As a personal observation, Nietzsche's immersion into 19th century Romanticism may have done more than just merely influence him. Looking at his life, everything brave and romantic seems to have led to disappointment for him. Music, war, and women all seem to have followed a path other than the romanticized ideal of it ever indicated. In the end even his intellect was taken from him. The legacy of Nietzsche as a philosopher may be in question, but his legacy as a human being presents many opportunities for thought, and to ponder how psychology and philosophy are intertwined. He was witty, insightful and blunt, but he also turned that against even philosophy itself – probably the one unredeemable sin.

Ultimately it is the *ubermensch* which is the true legacy of Nietzsche, but not the superman of pop-culture. Nietzsche did not champion every-man-for-himself, though it can certainly be interpreted that way. The fact that he abandons much of his early thought is also very confusing when we want to understand what he is getting at. Along those lines, if we could perchance make his story even sadder, we can point out that personally he was really hoping to get a community of his own going, not of followers but of fellow thinkers, and together they would move the world, but 'he failed – a lot. In fact when he went insane it was at a time when no one was buying his books, he had no friends and it looked like he had *totally* failed. Two years later when suddenly Richard Strauss and some other guys pick up the books and the Nietzsche Club is suddenly *the club*, well ironically and sadly, its founder was a drooling idiot who never knew his own success.'[31] Though he did apparently become a successful side show for those who wanted to come and see him.

"A work of art works because it is true, not because it is real." **Yann Martel**, *Beatrice and Virgil*

*"*p.s. feel free to tell your students that my entire class on Nietzsche started off with a bunch of us being like, "psh, Nietzsche, what a joker," and ended with all of us writing papers that, to some extent, attempted to defend his views against, you know, *reality*. HE IS SNEAKY LIKE THAT. Also I feel like you should, to balance

[30] This bracketed set of thoughts is in need of some revision, but I have been unable to come up with a good one; suggestions are welcomed. As Johanna said, "I like that, except for that paragraph." Unfortunately (or surprisingly – I will leave that up to you) I have been unable to come up with a better statement.

[31] Paraphrased from observations made by Johanna Kirsch.

out the whole "crazy random stuff that can't really be called philosophy" (and in the end he had totally abandoned any system he had started out with, so yeah) thing with the fact that some of his writing is quite pretty.” **Johanna Kirsch**

Friedrich Nietzsche: *Selected Readings and Comments*

The Antichrist

Preface

This book belongs to the most rare of men. Perhaps not one of them is yet alive. It is possible that they may be among those who understand my "Zarathustra": how *could* I confound myself with those who are now sprouting ears? — First the day after tomorrow must come for me. Some men are born posthumously.

The conditions under which any one understands me, and *necessarily* understands me — I know them only too well. Even to endure my seriousness, my passion, he must carry intellectual integrity to the verge of hardness. He must be accustomed to living on mountain tops — and to looking upon the wretched gabble of politics and nationalism as *beneath* him. He must have become indifferent; he must never ask of the truth whether it brings profit to him or a fatality to him. . . . He must have an inclination, born of strength, for questions that no one has the courage for; the courage for the *forbidden;* predestination for the labyrinth. The experience of seven solitudes. New ears for new music. New eyes for what is most distant. A new conscience for truths that have hitherto remained unheard. *And* the will to economize in the grand manner – O hold together his strength, his enthusiasm….Reverence for self; love of self; absolute freedom of self. . . .

Very well, then! of that sort only are my readers, my true readers, my readers foreordained: of what account are the *rest?* — The rest are merely humanity. — One must make one's self superior to humanity, in power, in *loftiness* of soul, — in contempt.

2.

What is good?—Whatever augments the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself, in man.

What is evil?—Whatever springs from weakness.

What is happiness?—The feeling that power *increases*—that resistance is overcome.

Not contentment, but more power; *not* peace at any price, but war; *not* virtue, but efficiency (virtue in the Renaissance sense, *virtu,* virtue free of moral acid).

The weak and the botched shall perish: first principle of *our* charity. And one should help them to it

What is more harmful than any vice? — Practical sympathy for the botched and the weak — Christianity. . . .

3.

The problem that I set here is not what shall replace mankind in the order of living creatures (—man is an end—): but what type of man must be *bred,* must be *willed,* as being the most valuable, the most worthy of life, the most secure guarantee of the future.

This more valuable type has appeared often enough in the past: but always as a happy accident, as an exception, never as deliberately *willed.* Very often it has been precisely the most feared; hitherto it has been almost *the* terror of terrors;—and out of that terror the contrary type has been willed, cultivated and *attained:* the domestic animal, the herd animal, the sick brute-man — the Christian. . . .

4.

Mankind surely does *not* represent an evolution toward a better or stronger or higher level, as progress is now understood. This "progress" is merely a modern idea, which is to say, a false idea. The European of today, in his essential worth, falls far below the European of the Renaissance; the process of evolution does *not* necessarily mean elevation, enhancement, strengthening.

True enough, it succeeds in isolated and individual cases in various parts of the earth and under the most widely different cultures, and in these cases a *higher* type certainly manifests itself; something which, compared to mankind in the mass, appears as a sort of superman. Such happy strokes of high success have always been possible, and will remain possible, perhaps, for all time to come. Even whole races, tribes and nations may occasionally represent such lucky accidents.

5.

We should not deck out and embellish Christianity: it has waged a war to the death against this *higher* type of man, it has put all the deepest instincts of this type under its ban, it has developed its concept of evil, of the Evil One himself, out of these instincts—the strong man as the typical reprobate, the "outcast among men." Christianity has taken the part of all the weak, the low, the botched; it has made an ideal out of *antagonism* to all the self-preservative instincts of sound life; it has corrupted even the faculties of those natures that are intellectually most vigorous, by representing the highest intellectual values as sinful, as misleading, as full of temptation. The most lamentable example: the corruption of Pascal, who believed that his intellect had been destroyed by original sin, whereas it was actually destroyed by Christianity!—

6.

It is a painful and tragic spectacle that rises before me: I have drawn back the curtain from the *rottenness* of man. This word, in my mouth, is at least free from one suspicion: that it involves a moral accusation against humanity. It is used — and I wish to emphasize the fact again — without any moral significance: and this is so far true that the rottenness I speak of is most apparent to me precisely in those quarters where there has been most aspiration, hitherto, toward "virtue" and "godliness." As you probably surmise, I understand rottenness in the sense of *decadence:* my argument is that all the values on which mankind now fixes its highest aspirations are *decadence-values.*

7.

Christianity is called the religion of *pity*. — Pity stands in opposition to all the tonic passions that augment the energy of the feeling of aliveness: it is a depressant. A man loses; power when he pities. Through pity that drain upon strength which suffering works is multiplied a thousand fold. Suffering is made contagious by pity; under certain circumstances it may lead to a total sacrifice of life and living energy — a loss out of all proportion to the magnitude of the cause (—the case of the death of the Nazarene). This is the first view of it; there is, however, a still more important one. If one measures the effects of pity by the gravity of the reactions it sets up, its character as a menace to life appears in a much clearer light. Pity thwarts the whole law of evolution, which is the law of natural selection. It preserves whatever is ripe for destruction; it fights on the side of those disinherited and condemned by life; by maintaining life in so many of the botched of all kinds, it gives life itself a gloomy and dubious aspect. Mankind has ventured to call pity a virtue (—in every *superior* moral system it appears as a weakness—); going still further, it has been called *the* virtue, the source and foundation of all other virtues—but let us always bear in mind that this was from the standpoint of a philosophy that was nihilistic, and upon whose shield *the denial of life* was inscribed. Schopenhauer was right in this: that by means of pity life is denied, and made *worthy of denial.*— pity is the technic of nihilism. Let me repeat: this depressing and contagious instinct stands against all those instincts which work for the preservation and enhancement of life: in the role of *protector* of the miserable, it is a prime agent in the promotion of decadence — pity persuades to extinction.... Of course, one doesn't say "extinction": one says "the other world," or "God," or "the *true* life," or Nirvana, salvation, blessedness. . . . This innocent rhetoric, from the realm of religious-ethical balderdash, appears *a good deal less innocent* when one reflects upon the tendency that it conceals beneath sublime words: the tendency to *destroy life.* Schopenhauer was hostile to life: that is why pity appeared to him as a virtue. . . . Aristotle, as everyone knows, saw in pity a sickly and dangerous state of mind, the remedy for which was an occasional purgative: he regarded tragedy as that purgative. The instinct of life should prompt us to seek some means of puncturing any such pathological and dangerous accumulation of pity as that appearing in Schopenhauer's case (and also, alack, in that of our whole literary *decadence,* from St. Petersburg to Paris, from Tolstoy to Wagner), that it may burst and be discharged. . . . Nothing is more unhealthy, amid all our unhealthy modernism, than Christian pity. To be the doctors *here,* to be unmerciful *here,* to wield the knife *here*—all this is *our* business, all this is *our* sort of humanity, by this sign we are philosophers….

10.

Among Germans I am immediately understood when I say that theological blood is the ruin of philosophy. The Protestant pastor is the grandfather of German philosophy; Protestantism itself is its *peccatum originate* [original sin]. Definition of Protestantism: hemiplegic paralysis of Christianity—*and* of reason. . . . One need only utter the words "Tubingen School" to get an understanding of what German philosophy is at bottom—a very artful form of theology. . . . The Suabians are the best liars in Germany; they lie innocently. . . . Why all the rejoicing over the appearance of Kant that went through the learned world of Germany, three-fourths of which is made up of the sons of preachers and teachers—why the German conviction still echoing, that with Kant came a change for the *better?* The theological instinct of German scholars made them see clearly just *what* had become possible again. ... A backstairs leading to the old ideal stood open; the concept of the "true world," the concept of morality as the *essence* of the world (—the two most vicious errors that ever existed!), were once more, thanks to a subtle and wily skepticism, if not actually demonstrable, then *at least* no longer *refutable.* . . . *Reason,* the *prerogative* of reason, does not go so far. . . . Out of reality there had been made "appearance"; an absolutely false world, that of being, had been turned into reality. . . . The success of Kant is merely a theological success; he was, like Luther and Leibnitz, but one more impediment to German integrity, already far from steady.—

11.

A word now against Kant as a moralist. A virtue must be *our* invention; it must spring out of *our* personal need and defense. In every other case it is a source of danger. That which does not belong to our life *menaces* it; a virtue which has its roots in mere respect for the concept of "virtue," as Kant would have it, is pernicious. "Virtue," "duty," "good for its own sake," goodness grounded upon impersonality or a notion of universal validity—these are all chimeras, and in them one finds only an expression of the decay, the last collapse of life, the Chinese spirit of Konigsberg. Quite the contrary is demanded by the most profound laws of self-preservation and growth: to wit, that every man find his *own* virtue, his *own* categorical imperative. A nation goes to pieces when it confounds *its* duty with the general concept of duty. Nothing works a more complete and penetrating disaster than every "impersonal" duty, every sacrifice before the Moloch of abstraction.—To think that no one has thought of Kant's categorical imperative as *dangerous to life!* . . . The theological instinct alone took it under protection!—An action prompted the life-instinct proves that it is a right action by the amount of pleasure that goes with it: and yet that Nihilist, with his bowels of Christian dogmatism, regarded pleasure as an *objection.* . . . What destroys a man more quickly than to work, think and feel without inner necessity, without any deep personal desire, without pleasure—as a mere automaton of duty? That is the recipe for *decadence,* and no less for idiocy. . . . Kant became an idiot. —And such a man was the contemporary of Goethe! This calamitous spinner of cobwebs passed for *the* German philosopher—still passes today! ... I forbid myself to say what I think of the Germans. . . . Didn't Kant see in the French Revolution the transformation of the state from the inorganic form to the *organic?* Didn't he ask himself if there was a single event that could be explained save on the assumption of a moral faculty in man, so that on the basis of it, "the tendency of mankind toward the good" could be *explained,* once and for all time? Kant's answer: "That is revolution." Instinct at fault in everything and anything, instinct as a revolt against nature, German *decadence* as a philosophy—*that is Kant!*—

Contemporary Commentary on Nietzsche: *Nietzsche and Other Proponents of Individualism* by Paul Caras, 1914

Nietzsche was most assuredly very ingenious; he was unusually talented but he was not a genius in the full sense of the word. He was abnormal, titanic in his pretensions and aims, and erratic. Breaking down under the burden of his own thought, he ended his tragical career in an insane asylum.

The mental derangement of Nietzsche may be an unhappy accident but it appears to have come as the natural result of his philosophy. Nietzsche, by nature modest and tractable, almost submissive, was, as a thinker, too proud to submit to anything, even to truth. Schopenhauer had taught him that the intellect, with its comprehension of truth, is a mere slave of the will, *ancilla voluntatis* [literally: slave of will]. Our cognition of the truth has a purpose; it must accommodate itself to our own interest. But the self is sovereign; the self wants to assert itself; the self alone has a right to exist; and the self that does not dare to be itself is a servile, menial creature. Therefore Nietzsche preaches the ethics of self-assertion and pride. He is too proud to recognize the duty of inquiry, the duty of adapting his mind to the world, or of recognizing the cosmic order of the universe as superior to his self. He feels bigger than the cosmos; he is himself; and he wants to be himself. His own self is sovereign; and if the world is not satisfied to submit to his will, the world may go to ruin. If the world breaks to pieces, it will only cause him to laugh; on the other

hand, if his very self is forced to the wall in this conflict, he will still, from sheer pride, not suffer himself to abandon his principle of the absolute sovereignty of selfhood. He will not be a man, human and humane, but an overman *(Uebermensch)*, a superhuman despiser of humanity and humaneness. The multitudes are to him like cattle to be used, to be milked, fleeced and butchered, and Nietzsche calls them herds, animals of the flock, *Heerdentiere*.

Nietzsche's philosophy is unique in being throughout the expression of an emotion—the proud sentiment of a self-sufficient sovereignty of self. It rejects with disdain both the methods of the intellect, which submit the problems of life to an investigation, and the demands of morality, which recognize the existence of duty.

Other philosophers have claimed that rights imply duties and duties, rights. Nietzsche knows of rights only. Nietzsche claims that there is no objective science save by the permission of the sovereign self, nor is there any "ought," except for slaves and fools. He prides himself on being "the first Unmoralist," implying the absolute sovereignty of man—of the overman — and the foolishness as well as falsity of moral maxims.

Contemporary Commentary on Nietzsche: *The Philosophy of Fredrich Nietzsche* from *The American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education*, Volume 4 by Johannes Broene, 1911

Duringer claims that time and again he has learned of cases in which the writings of Nietzsche caused profound estrangement between husband and wife. In one case a man proceeded to beat his wife while calling upon Nietzsche to justify his brutality (21, p. 74).

Poor Nietzsche! To what a pass have his teachings come. "Mine enemies have grown strong and have distorted the face of my teaching" (74, VIII, p. 112), complains Zarathustra, but it is his friends that make Nietzsche ludicrous. He would have been the last to practice such coarseness and yet the outcome is precisely what was to be expected. It avails nothing to say that were he alive to-day Nietzsche would promptly cast off the allegiance of most of his followers. They are merely putting his theories into practice. No man can denounce society, altruism, morality, religion, no man can preach the revaluation of all values in order to put them on a purely egoistic basis which places might above right, and then justly turn upon those who seek to carry out his most cherished plans.

I trust this much will suffice to indicate the range of Nietzsche's influence and to at least hint at its nature. Instead of losing myself in a mass of details I shall now select a few specially striking examples that may serve as types for the rest.

First, then, we have the remarkable example of Nietzsche's influence upon music in Richard Strauss's famous orchestral poem "*Also Sprach Zarathustra."* A mighty conflict has raged about Strauss. He has been denounced, he has been lauded; he has been excommunicated, he has been deified; yet, differ as the critics may, not even his most energetic opponents deny that Strauss is the leading composer of his time. Pratt declares that Strauss "is at present the most conspicuous figure in both the orchestral and the operatic fields. His command of every technical resource is phenomenal, his ambition and energy impressive, and his originality and artistic daring unquestioned" (85, p. 638). Inspired by Nietzsche Strauss has given us an *opus* which by some is declared a masterpiece that ranks with the best that has yet been done, although there are not lacking those who protest that it is not music at all. Strauss does not profess to give us a musical representation of Nietzsche's philosophy. He says expressly:

"I did not intend to write philosophical music, or to portray Nietzsche's great work musically. I meant to convey in music an idea of the development of the human race from its origin, through the various phases of development, religious as well as scientific, up to Nietzsche's idea of the *Uebermensch*" (101, p. 327).

The Antichrist TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY H. L. Mencken (with some linguistic enhancement and Latin translation by Stephen Kirsch)

Thought Point	Points of Thought
What is Nietzsche's point?	
What is 'will'?	
What is 'rottenness'?	
What is 'good'?	
What is 'evil'?	
What is morality?	
What then, is the role of the *ubermensch*?	
Do you agree with his assessment of Schopenhauer? Of Kant? Aristotle?	
How is Nietzsche viewed by his two contemporaries and what does that say about his thought?	

Pragmatism

Practical philosophy? What's up with that? Well, dang it you ol' cow-poke, what else would you expect Americans to come up with? Some frou-frous, lacy thang?

Ahem.

The Players

Dates	Philosophers	Main Points
1839 -1914	Charles Sanders Peirce	*American; 'practical' concepts – meaning is found in the concept;*
1842 -1910	William James	*American; truth; habits lead to belief; the religious experience*
1859 -1952	John Dewey	*American; 'instrumentalism'; influenced educational theory*
1864 -1937	F.C.S. Schiller	*German-English; 'humanism'*
1868 -1963	W.E.B. Du Bois	*American; materialist; social philosopher; race problems*

Table 4: Pragmatic Players

Practical Sidebar

Warning: more author introduced babble ahead! Before we delve too deeply into this next movement, I want to take a moment to once again do something that perhaps only my mother could accept and love me for and that is the speculation about the dispersion of thought. We have witnessed the movement from the oral to the written to the printed; from the stoa to church from church to university; we are now seeing the movement from the university to lecture circuit.

At this time, the lecture circuit becomes the money-making machine we know it to be today. Mark Twain survived on it, using it to recover from many bad investments. Scientists, psychologists, political scientists, you name it, all began to run a circuit of appearances set up and promoted by the up and coming/expanding middle class with cash to burn. Social visibility aside, this phenomenon pulled thinkers from every discipline out of the classroom and into a venue approachable and available to so many who would otherwise have had no exposure to the ideas (like, say, women) as well as direct access to the thinker themselves.

The parlor becomes the new classroom. Think of the parlor societies which produced *Frankenstein*; authors, poets, scientists, businessmen, and, well you get the idea. This is the airing of ideas across a broad range of disciplines, affecting the thinking of a broad range of disciplines. Certainly the rise and the number of technical journals, newspapers and other print media allow for the dissemination of ideas, but it is the opinion of this humble writer,[32] that the broadening of the base of and integration of these ideas into society accelerates due to this activity.

Practical Thinking

Okay, enough of that; let us get back to business. While Nietzsche seemed to be a very practical sort of thinker, we turn now to a group who apparently were even more practical, so much so that they made it their name. So just what is pragmatism? Pragmatism (or Pragmaticism as it was later called by Peirce) is that uniquely American thing, that is to say, this is the first philosophy we can

[32] As opposed to the humble opinion of this writer

classify as 'American' as in having originated in America by American born citizens. Now we might say that we see some inklings of it in Benjamin Franklin, but he was still heavily based in European thought.

Okay, yeah, but what is it? Well, to start with, Charles Peirce borrowed the term from Kant, who in his work *Critique of Practical Reason*, used the term *pragmatic* to distinguish something which was arrived at through or applied to experience from those *a priori* or logically derived things (remember all of that?).

Alright, as for what it is, why not let its proponents tell us that?

Peirce

Charles Peirce physicist, mathematician and all around deep – yet practical, though unsuccessful – thinker is the father of Pragmatism.

The basis of this thought was stated innocently enough within a small two-part article in the January 1878 issue of *The Popular Science Monthly*[33] (what we know now as *Popular Science*) titled *Illustrations of the Logic of Science II: How To Make Our Ideas Clear*. He was very concerned with the precision of the language science was using to convey ideas (or 'concepts') and so he looks at what makes an idea 'clear' or 'obscure'. While he concedes that clearness is based in logic, he found that most thinkers had fallen back on flawed logic. Peirce closely associates the clearness of something with logic but it is logic as Peirce understood it, in an empirical, scientific experimentation way; "a clearness of thought of a far higher grade than the 'distinctness' of the logicians." (*Illustrations of the Logic of Science, Part 2*). If we think about the predicate nature of Aristotelian logic, then really something is clear once its *definition* is definitively known. Empirical 'logic' on the other hand is based in experience, that is, what we can know. I know, I know, empirical logic seems like an oxymoron on the order of military intelligence but it is an attempt to make science seem logical or at least give what seem to be logical reasons for thinking this way. The thing is we would probably think of it more as 'procedural' than 'logical' (think of the 'logical' design of a scientific experiment).

That in mind, the main kernel of his thinking is that the meaning of something was based in conception and experimentation. Not so much along the lines of the scientific method, but more in keeping with the idea of clarity, or simplicity or understandability if you will. If you want to keep with the lingo of Aristotelian logic then we can use the word *definition*. The definition or understanding of any concept is the sum of the experimental occurrences implied in that concept by logical meaning, that is, what something is, its definition, is what we know by experiencing it. We know that light has certain properties, let us say: bright, hot, and wavy. Through observation we also come to understand that it is a particle. It was light before we experienced the extra bit about the particle and it remains so afterwards, but what we understand as light is no longer just bright, hot, and wavy but also exhibits characteristics of particles.

Notice the use of the word 'experimental'. While he relies on and uses examples of a philosophic nature, Peirce is more concerned with clarity of the results of experimentation, or at least that is the angle of approach which he has. It will be up to our next guest to flesh it into the realm of philosophical thought.

In order to be more clear, Peirce is trying to avoid the mistakes of past thinking, so rather than talk of skepticism and certainty, Peirce uses the terms 'doubt' and 'belief' all the while acknowledging the fact that these words seem strong for a non-metaphysical system. He uses them, never the less, to make his point (I believe) in the strongest terms possible. Meaning that really, if

[33] In the same issue which looked at insanity and modern life, the growth of the steam engine, and an explanation of geysers. This is the same year which, a few months later would carry an article explaining Edison's 'Talking-Machine'.

we practically think about it, that is what we seek and in the end all that there is (that the strongest words/ideas are the clearest).

The ideas he developed did not really catch on until about 20 years after he put them forth, when our next candidate picked them up and tried to promote them for the benefit of himself and Peirce to whom he had great devotion, an effort which caused Peirce to rename his thinking to, as stated, *Pragmaticism* to differentiate it from James'. Peirce eventually died poor and unknown, with a multitude of unpublished and unpublishable works.

James

William James is the slightly younger, much more outgoing, stylish, good-looking friend of Peirce's who help to champion and develop Peirce's thinking, and in a sense was the one who really solidified philosophical Pragmatism as we understand it (and as said above, Peirce actually changed the name for his thought to distinguish it from James'). If Peirce is the father[34] then James is the mid-wife. The son of a well-known father and brother (Henries Sr. and Jr.), he held his own in the philosophical world. James met Peirce at the Harvard *Metaphysical Club*, along with other famous individuals, such as Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. and began a life-long friendship.

A moniker that is sometimes applied to his thought is that of '*radical empiricism*' (Preface of *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*) and though he coined the phrase, he made a distinction between the two thoughts.[35] For James, Pragmatism was not just about communicating but about behavior: values and morality. The purpose of philosophy was to understand what has value to us and why. James argued that ideas and beliefs have value to us only when they work. "*We have to live today by what truth we can get today and be ready tomorrow to call it falsehood.*" (*Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*) To put it simply: "*Truth is what works.*" (*Pragmatism*, *The Meaning of Truth*, and *The Will to Believe*) This is not meant to confuse the issue; James is not seeking Truth, but is explaining the rational for action. Like Peirce before him, truth is not a universal which can be arrived at or derived. It is the mechanism by which we make decisions. It is the 80/20 rule of management. For some this justifies the application of 'radical empiricism' to his thought, but in truth it is not an application of empiricism to truth but of empiricism to *action*.

"The great thing, then, in all education, is to *make automatic and habitual, as early as possible, as many useful actions as we can,* and to guard against the growing into ways that are likely to be disadvantageous to us, as we should guard against the plague. The more of the details of our daily life we can hand over to the infallible and effortless custody of automatism, the more our higher powers of mind will be set free for their own proper work. *There is no more miserable human being than one in whom nothing is habitual but indecision*, and for whom the lighting of every cigar, the drinking of every cup, the time of rising and going to bed every day, and the beginning of every bit of work, are subjects of express volitional deliberation. Full half the time of such a man goes to the deciding, or regretting, of matters which ought to have been so thoroughly ingrained in him as practically not to exist for his consciousness at all. If there be such daily duties not yet ingrained in any one of my readers, let him begin this very day to set the matter right." (*Popular Science Monthly: The Laws of Habit*, Feb 1887; emphasis mine)

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[34] Perhaps not so much the absent father as the unaware or absent-minded father…denying he ever had a child…at least the child the James introduced to the world.

[35] "T*o avoid one misunderstanding at least, let me say that there is no logical connection between pragmatism, as I understand it, and a doctrine which I have recently set forth as 'radical empiricism.' The latter stands on its own feet. One may entirely reject it and still be a pragmatist.*" (Preface, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*)

But life is more than just 'habit'. We are not machines, right? "*The 'I think' which Kant said must be able to accompany all my objects, is the 'I breathe' which actually does accompany them.*" "*Metaphysics means nothing but an unusually obstinate effort to think clearly.*" "*It is wrong always, everywhere, and for everyone, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence.*" In a sense we are still Kant's engines of meaning because it is up to us to not only think but to decide, to answer Gödel's insufficiency principle with a solid 'so what?' because we can always change our minds tomorrow. "*Action seems to follow feeling, but really action and feeling go together; and by regulating the action, which is under the more direct control of the will, we can indirectly regulate the feeling, which is not.*"

Action requires a certain amount of faith and faith, in an echo of Kierkegaard, is the thing which steps us outside of mere habit and automatonism but not in a surrender to it as Kierkegaard would have us do. Action is the key. "*Belief creates the actual fact.*" "*Faith means belief in something concerning which doubt is theoretically possible.*" (*The Will to Believe, and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*) That is to say, in a way we operate on the leap to faith level, not a faith in something, per se, but belief in the fact that even if I am wrong, I have done something, and that something was worth doing. I can always come along afterwards and adjust my thinking/behavior/habit to the actual experience. My faith is that even if I am not sure of something, I have enough information to act with confidence and not be paralyzed by indecision (a lack of faith). "*Those thoughts are truth which guide us to beneficial interaction with sensible particulars as they occur, whether they copy these in advance or not.*" "*The hell to be endured hereafter, of which theology tells, is no worse than the hell we make for ourselves in this world by habitually fashioning our characters in the wrong way.*" (Echoes of Nietzsche?)

Okay so it seems that this is all about how we look at the world, but not too much on how we see ourselves. Science has made some facts indisputable, like we have a brain and in that brain things happen which we call thought. Physiognomy rules! But we have to look at it practically. Why do we have a mind? The function of mind is to help the body to survive within the realm of our experience. So we needed some sort of mechanism to help us survive. Enter the brain. So as a physical object what can we say about it? The brain as an organ that evolved because of its usefulness for survival. So we have an organ which evolution decided we needed to stay alive – but it seems to do more than that. Okay well along with the physical organ there seems to be some other aspect to it, I mean sure it helps us to breathe but it seems to do more. We will give that more thing a name: Consciousness. Consciousness is a sequence of conscious mental states, each state being the experience of some content, meaning that consciousness is not a substance, a thing-in-itself, it is, as said, a process ("the stream of consciousness"). Okay. Our awareness of ourselves and the world around us is the result of an awareness of an experience of meaning. We know that that means we function by assigning truth to experiences, so that it all takes place within *praxis* (action) hence the name pragmatism. This all leads back to what we have already said, perception leads to action in the environment. This is not necessarily a conscious thing though, i.e. the 'fight or flight' kind of thing. We act on the fact that a tiger walks in front of us. Our brain has assigned meaning by providing context to the experience. We are aware that it is true that tigers eat us. We also are aware that it is true that we do not have to be eaten by tigers.

Schiller

Ferdinand Canning Scott Schiller was born in Germany but moved to England. While not considered a Pragmatist per se (he was not an American, after all), his theories, which he called 'Humanism', were very similar to James'. Concepts, he tells us, are "*tools slowly fashioned by the practical intelligence for the mastery of experience*" (*Studies in Humanism*). Concepts are not static

but dynamic in that they, kind of like Hegel's dialectic never get finalized. Every concept is re-evaluated and manipulated in the light of new experience.

For Schiller, each new experience must be subjected to this process, and the process *implies* the readjustment of all past experience. Hence, Schiller says, there are *truths* but there is no *truth*, similarly to James' idea that truth is not transcendent or universal but a moving target. No truth then, is finalized, written down, immutable, or outside experience, nor is it a precedence for any new truth. In a veiled reference to Heraclites, experience is a stream out of which we can never step.

This means that nothing is ever truly settled. There is no experience that can ever be verified once and for all, merely *provisionally*, and that even only for the moment because it must be verified again tomorrow, as by then I have acquired new experiences which may (do) affect it. Schiller states that *verifiability* and not *verification* is the test of experience, that is to say, it does not have to be perfect, just good enough to get by on. What that means though is that the work of a given concept, nay, of any and every concept has no definite end (think teleologically) and hence the whole 'slowly fashioned' thing.

Dewey

John Dewey is a name you might recognize, though not from philosophy. No I am not talking about the Dewey Decimal System though he did have influence on American education.

While Dewey did not really consider himself a pragmatist, he attempted to merge the thinking of the two men, describing pragmatism as the systematic exploration of "*the logic and ethics of scientific inquiry*." (*Later Works*) Similar to James, he states that knowledge, while tentative and dynamic, is a tool by which humans adapt to the world and transform it. In a more explicit stating than James, he posited that in the face of an 'unknown' or unfamiliar situation, we reach a *scientific* or *common-sense* explanation of the situation that provisionally reduces the original lack of knowledge through which we perceive the situation. That is to say, that experience, tempered by science or 'common-sense' temporarily reduces/removes our indecision such that we can act. It is not so much that we act from factual knowledge, but that we act in good faith on the best available, reasonably thought out or experimented explanation of the given, unfamiliar situation. That is not to say that experience and knowledge are the same things and in fact knowledge develops in a kind of Hegelian dialectic, sprinkled with a bit of Kierkegaardian anxiety.

Dewey agrees with James and Schiller on the meaning of concepts but goes farther by defining the path to updating truth. He states that we must be aware that things do not come to us in neat packages, that is, the experiences I have may have to be stored for a rainy day. We are in a constant state of acquiring new bits and pieces of knowledge which are not necessarily related to any previous bits of knowledge that we already have. Often it is only on reflection that we discover that there is some connection or contradiction among the bits of knowledge we have already acquired. This is where the angst comes in. Conflicting or incomplete information causes a strain or tension relieved only by the eradication of that conflict. Ideas are "a plan of action" (*Essays In Experimental Logic*), the relief valve on the pressure cooker of our brain. If an idea provides a relief, it is true. This is where Hegel's dialectic comes in. The old truth or truths already present in the mind and the new truth that has just entered the mind must be reconciled before we can have peace. We basically must understand what we believed before in terms of what we believe now in order to have any relief from the confusion. It is not so much an abandonment of earlier thinking for new, as it is the reconciliation of the two. Just the same, part of the process is that we must be aware of and comfortable with the fact that there is no static truth, much less any sort of absolute truth. All we

can really know, and this should help us reconcile differences, is that we operate on 'truths' and that these truths are constantly being made *truer*.

Dewey therefore provides a deeper reason for the nature of experience and knowledge as expounded by James. Early experience is not knowledge per-se. It is only with the addition of knowledge/experience do these conflicts arise resulting in doubt, or uneasiness, or a stress, or however you want to characterize the conflict. Anyway, it forces us to seek more experience or rummage through the stray ones we have running about our brains until we are able to construct an answer which satisfies us and takes away the conflict. If the plan of action leads to satisfaction, it is true, if it does not, it is false. For Dewey, as for James and Schiller, each adjustment means a going over and a reprocessing of all the previous collection of experience, or, at least, of those that are in any way relevant or connected to the freshly perceived bit.

From all this, Dewey also constructs a moral philosophy because of what he saw as all of the radical changes taking place which were unprecedented and therefore unaddressed by traditional morality.[36] For Dewey there is no ultimate end or supreme principle that can serve as the basis for ethical behavior or even one that can help us come to a decision about how we can go about determining or improving our ability to evaluate a method for improving our value judgments.

Dewey sees two distinct ideas of 'good', the immediate and the long term. He talks about *hedonism*, that is, things which are valued in the immediate, based on impulse and unreflective habit, and those valued because of reflective, intelligent desire. The better of the two Dewey insists, is the reflective method of inquiry. This does not mean (because nothing is truly settled) that in the end you arrive at some universal or fixed answer. So hedonism is out but other idealisms are also out.

His work *Art as Experience* is a fascinating topic which might be worth covering at another more practical time; it influences his understanding of education and psychology and is important to what we understand of the two today.

So What Is Truth?

Truth is perhaps the belabored point here, but we must come to understand this as a significant shift. Aristotle judged truth through logic. The rationalism associated with logic means that it is often ruled out as a viable means of determining truth for many an empiricist. Pragmaticism in a way calls for a type of 'logic' which rules out both rationalism and empiricism, yet encompasses both. Logic becomes *active*, a way of thinking and behaving based in experience. A premise or concept is judged true if, upon its use as a tool to filter, ruminate on or otherwise handle/give meaning to an experience, the results, or more specifically the *practical* results, are *satisfactory*; that is to say an experience can and may be filtered through several concepts until we find the one that best fits it. It is true if it *functions* well; in other words, if it *works*. There do not have to be universal truths, because frankly there is nothing which we can guarantee will happen the same way more than once. Empirically we know that things tend to work a certain way, we just cannot guarantee that they will always work that way (Remember Algazali, *Chapter 30*, for one?).

But for now, the conclusion we reach is a reasonable assumption and should be applied in order for us to act. So in a sense, like Socrates (and others) before him, knowledge is at the disposal of action. From this point of view, talk of Kant's *nomena* (things-in-themselves) of Nietzsche's "True World" forever hidden behind the veil of *phenomena* (our perception of things) — is really just a waste of time. Descartes' skeptical rationalism and Locke's *tabula rasa* do not play into pragmatism either. There is no need to re-invent the wheel by introducing doubt or wiping the slate clean to

[36] Think about all that happened in America during his lifetime…civil war, slavery, technology….you get the picture.

achieve knowledge. On the hand Kant's Categories, the means of interpreting the world, stand but they just are not immutable.

Putting It Together

This consummate of American philosophies is based in the Greek word *pragma*, meaning something which is done, a fact. In a sense this is just another form of Existentialism (and this is probably true of most of the systems we will be discussing). Experience dictates truth. It is somewhat different than Nietzsche's feeling that everything comes from within us, and from a pure empiricists' point of view that there is no reason and that external things dictate the truth of the thing. Here there is a bit of wiggle room for metaphysics and metaphysical subjects as well as science.

For the pragmatist, the truth or meaning of a word, an idea, proposition, scientific or concept (even metaphysical ones like ethics) lies in its observable, practical consequences rather than anything purely metaphysical. Because of this, the meaning of something can change. We can look back at Hume's relativism or how Kierkegaard understands existence, but it is still somewhat different. It is not so much that nothing has meaning because it is up to the individual experience to give it meaning, but more that as our understanding increases we give better and more precise meaning (clarity) to something; until then we just have to live with what we have, knowing that it will improve. If we wait until we have total proof or exact answers, we would have not made it to the moon.

The ultimate problem with pragmatism, like so many isms before it, is that everyone sees it a bit differently. Peirce was looking to make scientific thought more manageable and understandable. James saw a great marketing opportunity…I mean a great basis for exploring what thinking had value and Dewey was enamored with the ethical implications brought forth by James. This is empiricism without any rational interference.

Only the ends justify the means (with apologies to Aquinas), that is to say, the background to any thought, whether physical or metaphysical does not lie in anything which precedes it, but by the effects it has. To put it another way, if penicillin cures infection, what else do you need to know about that statement?

Peirce wanted to reform empiricism and the empirical method. Dewy and James wanted to show how ways of thinking, no matter what they form they take, are effective if they produce results, and by 'producing results' I mean help you to understanding reality. And not just once but in that old scientific 'repeatability' way, that is it has repeatable use, even if it has to be improved. "*Pragmatism is a temper of mind, an attitude; it is also a theory of the nature of ideas and truth; and finally, it is a theory about reality*" (James, *Journal of Philosophy*, V, 85).

This is not certainty but more of a working theory. You keep using a theory as long as it works. One could argue that Biblical Creationism worked well until Darwin introduced Evolution and Evolution will work until something better comes along. Innovation and new discoveries are made no matter what the basic operating theory, discoveries which hone or replace existing theories. We need to not fight about it and just be practical or pragmatic about it and move on. No effective human thought stymies progress, and we work with the data we have. When more data comes along, we need to adjust. Even now, Darwin's theory is being adjusted by findings in genetics at the molecular level that Darwin never dreamed about. One might say that the maxim of Pragmatism is actually: get over it and move on. We are active participants in a dynamic world and we must simply be aware of and be able to adapt. When we open ourselves up to the world, rather than wallow in internalized thinking, it will open itself up to us and we will understand it, at least well enough to

operate in it and keep our eyes open to the next revelation. In the end, this means that there are many ways to approach a problem and many solutions to a problem (pluralism).

In fairness to the Pragmatists it must be recorded that, when they claim to shift the center of philosophic inquiry from the theoretical to the practical, they explain that by "practical" they do not understand merely the "bread and butter" consequences, but include also among practical consequences such considerations as logical consistency, intellectual satisfaction, and harmony of mental content; and James expressly affirms that by "practical" he means "particular and concrete". Individualism or Nominalism is, therefore, the starting-point of the Pragmatist. Indeed Dr. Schiller assures us that the consequences which are the test of truth must be the consequences to someone, for some purpose. The Intellectualism against which Pragmatism is a revolt recognizes logical consistency among the tests of truth.

"*The only valid rule about the proper length of a statement is that it achieve its purpose effectively.*"
"*Against logic there is no armor like ignorance.*"

Laurence Peter (creator of '*The Peter Principle*'; *Peter's Quotations*: *Ideas for Our Times*)

Charles Peirce: *How To Make Our Ideas Clear*

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE LOGIC OF SCIENCE
By C. S. PEIRCE,
ASSISTANT IN THE UNITED STATES COAST SVRVET.

SECOND PAPER. — HOW TO MAKE OUR IDEAS CLEAR.

I.

WHOEVER has looked into a modern treatise on logic of the common sort, will doubtless remember the two distinctions between clear and obscure conceptions, and between distinct and confused conceptions. They have lain in the books now for nigh two centuries, unimproved and unmodified, and are generally reckoned by logicians as among the gems of their doctrine.

A clear idea is defined as one which is so apprehended that it will be recognized wherever it is met with, and so that no other will be mistaken for it. If it fails of this clearness, it is said to be obscure.

This is rather a neat bit of philosophical terminology; yet, since it is clearness that they were defining, I wish the logicians had made their definition a little more plain. Never to fail to recognize an idea, and under no circumstances to mistake another for it, let it come in how recondite a form it may, would indeed imply such prodigious force and clearness of intellect as is seldom met with in this world. On the other hand, merely to have such an acquaintance with the idea as to have become familiar with it, and to have lost all hesitancy in recognizing it in ordinary cases, hardly seems to deserve the name of clearness of apprehension, since after all it only amounts to a subjective feeling of mastery which may be entirely mistaken. I take it, however, that when the logicians speak of "clearness," they mean nothing more than such a familiarity with an idea, since they regard the quality as but a small merit, which needs to be supplemented by another, which they call distinctness.

A distinct idea is defined as one which contains nothing which is not clear. This is technical language; by the contents of an idea logicians understand whatever is contained in its definition. So that an idea is distinctly apprehended, according to them, when we can give a precise definition of it, in abstract terms. Here the professional logicians leave the subject; and I would not have troubled the reader with what they have to say, if it were not such a striking example of how they have been slumbering through ages of intellectual activity, listlessly disregarding the enginery of modern thought, and never dreaming of applying its lessons to the improvement of logic. It is easy to show that the doctrine that familiar use and abstract distinctness make the perfection of apprehension has its only true place in philosophies which have long been extinct; and it is now time to formulate the method of attaining to a more perfect clearness of thought, such as we see and admire in the thinkers of our own time.

When Descartes set about the reconstruction of philosophy, his first step was to (theoretically) permit skepticism and to discard the practice of the schoolmen of looking to authority as the ultimate source of truth. That done, he sought a more natural fountain of true principles, and professed to find it in the human mind; thus passing, in the directest way, from the method of authority to that of apriority, as described in my first paper, Self-consciousness was to furnish us with our fundamental truths, and to decide what was agreeable to reason. But since, evidently, not all ideas are true, he was led to note, as the first condition of infallibility, that they must be clear. The distinction between an idea seeming clear and really being so, never occurred to him. Trusting to introspection, as he did, even for a knowledge of external things, why should he question its testimony in respect to the contents of our own minds? But then, I suppose, seeing men, who seemed to be quite clear and positive, holding opposite opinions upon fundamental principles, he was further led to say that clearness of ideas is not sufficient, but that they need also to be distinct, i. e., to have nothing unclear about them. What he probably meant by this (for he did not explain himself with precision) was, that they must sustain the test of dialectical examination;

that they must not only seem clear at the outset, but that discussion must never be able to bring to light points of obscurity connected with them.

Such was the distinction of Descartes, and one sees that it was precisely on the level of his philosophy. It was somewhat developed by Leibnitz. This great and singular genius was as remarkable for what he failed to see as for what he saw. That a piece of mechanism could not do work perpetually without being fed with power in some form, was a thing perfectly apparent to him; yet he did not understand that the machinery of the mind can only transform knowledge, but never originate it, unless it be fed with facts of observation. He thus missed the most essential point of the Cartesian philosophy, which is, that to accept propositions which seem perfectly evident to us is a thing which, whether it be logical or illogical, we cannot help doing. Instead of regarding the matter in this way, he sought to reduce the first principles of science to formulas which cannot be denied without self-contradiction, and was apparently unaware of the great difference between his position and that of Descartes. So he reverted to the old formalities of logic, and, above all, abstract definitions played a great part in his philosophy. It was quite natural, therefore, that on observing that the method of Descartes labored under the difficulty that we may seem to ourselves to have clear apprehensions of ideas which in truth are very hazy, no better remedy occurred to him than to require an abstract definition of every important term. Accordingly, in adopting the distinction of clear and distinct notions, he described the latter quality as the clear apprehension of everything contained in the definition; and the books have ever since copied his words. There is no danger that his chimerical scheme will ever attain be overvalued. Nothing new can ever be learned by analyzing definitions. Nevertheless, our existing beliefs can be set in order by this process, and order is an essential element of intellectual economy, as of every other. It may be acknowledged, therefore, that the books are right in making familiarity with a notion the first step toward clearness of apprehension, and the defining of it the second. But in omitting all mention of any higher perspicuity of thought, they simply mirror a philosophy which was exploded a hundred years ago. That much-admired "ornament of logic" the doctrine of clearness and distinctness may be pretty enough, but it is high time to relegate to our cabinet of curiosities the antique bijou, and to wear about us something better adapted to modern uses.

The very first lesson that we have a right to demand that logic shall teach us is, how to make our ideas clear; and a most important one it is, depreciated only by minds who stand in need of it. To know what we think, to be masters of our own meaning, will make a solid foundation for great and weighty thought. It is most easily learned by those whose ideas are meager and restricted; and far happier they than such as wallow helplessly in a rich mud of conceptions. A nation, it is true, may, in the course of generations, overcome the disadvantage of an excessive wealth of language and its natural concomitant, a vast, unfathomable deep of ideas. "We may see it in history, slowly perfecting its literary forms, sloughing at length its metaphysics, and, by virtue of the untirable patience which is often a compensation, attaining great excellence in every branch ef mental acquirement. The page of history is not yet unrolled which is to tell us whether such a people will or will not in the long-run prevail over one whose ideas (like the words of their language) are few, but which possesses a wonderful mastery over those which it has. For an individual, however, there can be no question that a few clear ideas are worth more than many confused ones. A young man would hardly be persuaded to sacrifice the greater part of his thoughts to save the rest; and the muddled head is the least apt to see the necessity of such a sacrifice. Him we can usually only commiserate, as a person with a congenital defect. Time will help him, but intellectual maturity with regard to clearness comes rather late, an unfortunate arrangement of Nature, inasmuch as clearness is of less use to a man settled in life, whose errors have in great measure had their effect, than it would be to one whose path lies before him. It is terrible to see how a single unclear idea, a single formula without meaning, lurking in a young man's head, will sometimes act like an obstruction of inert matter in an artery, hindering the nutrition of the brain, and condemning its victim to pine away in the fullness of his intellectual vigor and in the midst of intellectual plenty. Many a man has cherished for years as his hobby some vague shadow of an idea, too meaningless to be positively false; he has, nevertheless, passionately loved it, has made it his companion by day and by night, and has given to it his strength and his life, leaving all other occupations for its sake, and in short has lived with it and for it, until it has become, as it were, flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone; and then he has waked up some bright morning to find it gone, clean vanished away like the beautiful Melusina of the fable, and the essence of his life gone with it. I have myself known such a man; and who can tell how many histories of circle-squarers, metaphysicians, astrologers, and what not, may not be told in the old German story?

II.

The principles set forth in the first of these papers lead, at once, to a

method of reaching a clearness of thought of a far higher grade than the "distinctness" of the logicians. "We have there found that the action of thought is excited by the irritation of doubt, and ceases when belief is attained; so that the production of belief is the sole function of thought. All these words, however, are too strong for my purpose. It is as if I had described the phenomena as they appear under a mental microscope. Doubt and Belief, as the words are commonly employed, relate to religious or other grave discussions. But here I use them to designate the starting of any question, no matter how small or how great, and the resolution of it. If, for instance, in a horse-car, I pull out my purse and find a five-cent nickel and five coppers, I decide, while my hand is going to the purse, in which way I will pay my fare. To call such a question Doubt, and my decision Belief, is certainly to use words very disproportionate to the occasion. To speak of such a doubt as causing an irritation which needs to be appeased, suggests a temper which is uncomfortable to the verge of insanity. Yet, looking at the matter minutely, it must be admitted that, if there is the least hesitation as to whether I shall pay the five coppers or the nickel (as there will be sure to be, unless I act from some previously contracted habit in the matter), though irritation is too strong a word, yet I am excited to such small mental activity as may be necessary to deciding how I shall act. Most frequently doubts arise from some indecision, however momentary, in our action. Sometimes it is not so. I have, for example, to wait in a railway station, and to pass the time I read the advertisements on the walls, I compare the advantages of different trains and different routes which I never expect to take, merely fancying myself to be in a state of hesitancy, because I am bored with having nothing to trouble me. Feigned hesitancy, whether feigned for mere amusement or with a lofty purpose, plays a great part in the production of scientific inquiry. However the doubt may originate, it stimulates the mind to an activity which may be slight or energetic, calm or turbulent. Images pass rapidly through consciousness, one incessantly melting into another, until at last, when all is over it may be in a fraction of a second, in an hour, or after long years we find ourselves decided as to how we should act under such circumstances as those which occasioned our hesitation. In other words, we have attained belief.

In this process we observe two sorts of elements of consciousness, the distinction between which may best be made clear by means of an illustration. In a piece of music there are the separate notes, and there is the air. A single tone may be prolonged for an hour or a day, and it exists as perfectly in each second of that time as in the whole taken together; so that, as long as it is sounding, it might be present to a sense from which everything in the past was as completely absent as the future itself. But it is different with the air, the performance of which occupies a certain time, during the portions of which only portions of it are played. It consists in an orderliness in the succession of sounds which strike the ear at different times; and to perceive it there must be some continuity of consciousness which makes the events of a lapse of time present to us. We certainly only perceive the air by hearing the separate notes; yet we cannot be said to directly hear it, for we hear only what is present at the instant, and an orderliness of succession cannot exist in an instant. These two sorts of objects, what we are *immediately* conscious of and what we are *mediately* conscious of, are found in all consciousness. Some elements (the sensations) are completely present at every instant so long as they last, while others (like thought) are actions having beginning, middle, and end, and consist in a congruence in the succession of sensations which flow through the mind. They cannot be immediately present to us, but must cover some portion of the past or future. Thought is a thread of melody running through the succession of our sensations.

We may add that just as a piece of music may both written in parts, each part having its own air, so various systems of relationship of succession subsist together between the same sensations. These different systems are distinguished by having different motives, ideas, or functions. Thought is only one such system, for its sole motive, idea, and function, is to produce belief, and whatever does not concern that purpose belongs to some other system of relations. The action of thinking may incidentally have other results; it may serve to amuse us, for example, and among dilettanti it is not rare to find those who have so perverted thought to the purposes of pleasure that it seems to vex them to think that the questions upon which they delight to exercise it may ever get finally settled; and a positive discovery which takes a favorite subject out of the arena of literary debate is met with ill-concealed dislike. This disposition is the very debauchery of thought. But the soul and meaning of thought, abstracted from the other elements which accompany it, though it may be voluntarily thwarted, can never be made to direct itself toward anything but the production of belief. Thought in action has for its only possible motive the attainment of thought at rest; and whatever does not refer to belief is no part of the thought itself.

And what, then, is belief? It is the demi-cadence which closes a musical phrase in the symphony of our intellectual life. We have seen that it has just three properties: First, it is something that we are aware of; second, it

appeases the irritation of doubt; and, third, it involves the establishment in our nature of a rule of action, or, say for short, a habit. As it appeases the irritation of doubt, which is the motive for thinking, thought relaxes, and comes to rest for a moment when belief is reached. But, since belief is a rule for action, the application of which involves further doubt and further thought, at the same time that it is a stopping-place, it is also a new starting place for thought. That is why I have permitted myself to call it thought at rest, although thought is essentially an action. The final upshot of thinking is the exercise of volition, and of this thought no longer forms a part; but belief is only a stadium of mental action, an effect upon our nature due to thought, which will influence future thinking.

The essence of belief is the establishment of a habit, and different beliefs are distinguished by the different modes of action to which they give rise. If beliefs do not differ in this respect, if they appease the same doubt by producing the same rule of action, then no mere differences in the manner of consciousness of them can make them different beliefs, any more than playing a tune in different keys is playing different tunes. Imaginary distinctions are often drawn between beliefs which differ only in their mode of expression; the wrangling which ensues is real enough, however. To believe that any objects are arranged as in Fig. 1, and to believe that they are arranged in Fig. 2, are one and the same belief; yet it is conceivable that a man should assert one proposition and deny the other. Such false distinctions do as much harm as the confusion of beliefs really different, and are among the pitfalls of which we ought constantly to beware, especially when we are upon metaphysical ground. One singular deception of this sort, which often occurs, is to mistake the sensation produced by our own unclearness of thought for a character of the object we are thinking. Instead of perceiving that the obscurity is purely subjective, we fancy that we contemplate a quality of the object which is essentially mysterious; and if our conception be afterward presented to us in a clear form we do not recognize it as the same, owing to the absence of the feeling of unintelligibility. So long as this deception lasts, it obviously puts an impassable barrier in the way of perspicuous thinking; so that it equally interests the opponents of rational thought to perpetuate it, and its adherents to guard against it.

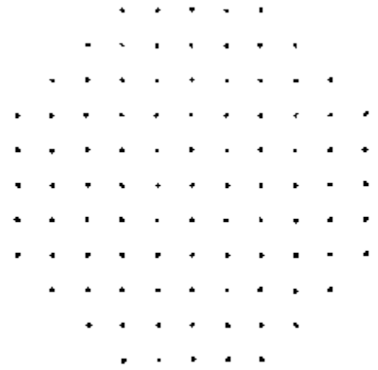

Fig. 1

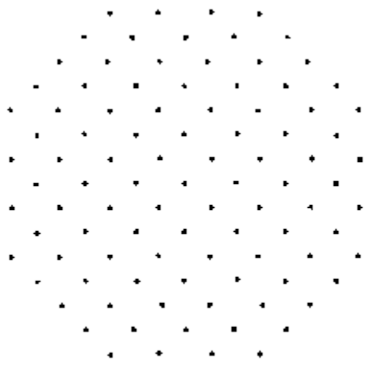

Fig. 2

Another such deception is to mistake a mere difference in the grammatical construction of two words for a distinction between the ideas they express. In this pedantic age, when the general mob of writers attend so much more to words than to things, this error is common enough. When I just said that thought is an action, and that it consists in a relation, although a person performs an action but not a relation, which can only be the result of an action, yet there was no inconsistency in what I said, but only a grammatical vagueness.

From all these sophisms we shall be perfectly safe so long as we reflect that the whole function of thought is to produce habits of action; and that whatever there is connected with a thought, but irrelevant to its purpose, is an accretion to it, but no part of it. If there be a unity among our sensations which has no reference to how we shall act on a given occasion, as when w T e listen to a piece of music, why we do not call that thinking. To develop its meaning, we have, therefore, simply to determine what habits it produces, for what a thing means is simply what habits it involves. Now, the identity of a habit depends on how it might lead us to act, not merely under such circumstances as are likely to arise, but under such as might possibly occur, no matter how improbable they may be. What the habit is depends on when and how it causes us to act. As for the when, every stimulus to action is derived from perception; as for the how, every purpose of action is to produce some sensible result. Thus, we come down to what is tangible and practical, as the root of every real distinction of thought, no matter how subtle it may be; and there is no distinction of meaning so fine

as to consist in anything but a possible difference of practice.

To see what this principle leads to, consider in the light of it such a doctrine as that of transubstantiation. The Protestant churches generally hold that the elements of the sacrament are flesh and blood only in a tropical sense; they nourish our souls as meat and the "juice of it would our bodies. But the Catholics maintain that they are literally just that; although they possess all the sensible qualities of wafer-cakes and diluted wine. But we can have no conception of wine except what may enter into a belief, either

1. That this, that, or the other, is wine; or,

2. That wine possesses certain properties.

Such beliefs are nothing but self-notifications that we should, upon occasion, act in regard to such things as we believe to be wine according to the qualities which we believe wine to possess. The occasion of such action would be some sensible perception, the motive of it to produce some sensible result. Thus our action has exclusive reference to what affects the senses, our habit has the same bearing as our action, our belief the same as our habit, our conception the same as our belief; and we can consequently mean nothing by wine but what has certain effects, direct or indirect, upon our senses; and to talk of something as having all the sensible characters of wine, yet being in reality blood, is senseless jargon. Now, it is not my object to pursue the theological question; and having used it as a logical example I drop it, without caring to anticipate the theologian's reply. I only desire to point out how impossible it is that we should have an idea in our minds which relates to anything but conceived sensible effects of things. Our idea of anything is our idea of its sensible effects; and if we fancy that we have any other we deceive ourselves, and mistake a mere sensation accompanying the thought for a part of the thought itself. It is absurd to say that thought has any meaning unrelated to its only function. It is foolish for Catholics and Protestants to fancy themselves in disagreement about the elements of the sacrament, if they agree in regard to all their sensible effects, here or hereafter.

It appears, then, that the rule for attaining the third grade of clearness of apprehension is as follows; Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object.

III.

Let us illustrate this rule by some examples; and, to begin with the simplest one possible, let us ask what we mean by calling a thing hard. Evidently that it will not be scratched by many other substances. The whole conception of this quality, as of every other, lies in its conceived, effects. There is absolutely no difference between a hard tiling and a soft thing so long as they are not brought to the test. Suppose, then, that a diamond could be crystallized in the midst of a cushion of soft cotton, and should remain there until it was finally burned up. Would it be false to say that that diamond was soft? This seems a foolish question, and would be so, in fact, except in the realm of logic. There such questions are often of the greatest utility as serving to bring logical principles into sharper relief than real discussions ever could. In studying logic we must not put them aside with hasty answers, but must consider them with attentive care, in order to make out the principles involved. We may, in the present case, modify our question, and ask what prevents us from saying that all hard bodies remain perfectly soft until they are touched, when their hardness increases with the pressure until they are scratched. Reflection will show that the reply is this : there would be no falsity in such modes of speech. They would involve a modification of our present usage of speech with regard to the words hard and soft, but not of their meanings. For they represent no fact to be different from what it is; only they involve arrangements of facts which would be exceedingly maladroit. This leads us to remark that the question of what would occur under circumstances which do not actually arise is not a question of fact, but only of the most perspicuous arrangement of them. For example, the question of free-will and fate in its simplest form, stripped of verbiage, is something like this: I have done something of which I am ashamed; could I, by an effort of the will, have resisted the temptation, and done otherwise? The philosophical reply is, that this is not a question of fact, but only of the arrangement of facts. Arranging them so as to exhibit what is particularly pertinent to my question namely, that I ought to blame myself for having done wrong it is perfectly true to say that, if I had willed to do otherwise than I did, I should have done otherwise. On the other hand, arranging the facts so as to exhibit another important consideration, it is equally true that, when a temptation has once been allowed to work, it will, if it has a certain force, produce its effect, let me struggle how I may. There is no objection to a contradiction in what would result from a false supposition. The *reductio ad absurdum* consists in showing that

contradictory results would follow from a hypothesis which is consequently judged to be false. Many questions arc involved in the free-will discussion, and I am far from desiring to say that both sides are equally right. On the contrary, I am of opinion that one side denies important facts, and that the other does not. But what I do say is, that the above single question was the origin of the whole doubt; that, had it not been for this question, the controversy would never have arisen; and that this question is perfectly solved in the manner which I have indicated.

Let us next seek a clear idea of Weight. This is another very easy case. To say that a body is heavy means simply that, in the absence of opposing force, it will fall. This (neglecting certain specifications of how it will fall, etc., which exist in the mind of the physicist who uses the word) is evidently the whole conception of weight. It is a fair question whether some particular facts may not account for gravity; but what we mean by the force itself is completely involved in its effects.

This leads us to undertake an account of the idea of Force in general. This is the great conception which, developed in the early part of the seventeenth century from the rude idea of a cause, and constantly improved upon since, has shown us how to explain all the changes of motion which bodies experience, and how to think about all physical phenomena; which has given birth to modern science, and changed the face of the globe; and which, aside from its more special uses, has played a principal part in directing the course of modern thought, and in furthering modern social development. It is, therefore, worth some pains to comprehend it. According to our rule, we must begin by asking what is the immediate use of thinking about force; and the answer is, that we thus account for changes of motion. If bodies were left to themselves, without the intervention of forces, every motion would continue unchanged both in velocity and in direction. Furthermore, change of motion never takes place abruptly; if its direction is changed, it is always through a curve without angles; if its velocity alters, it is by degrees. The gradual changes which are constantly taking place are conceived by geometers to be compounded together according to the rules of the parallelogram of forces. If the reader does not already know what this is, he will find it, I hope, to his advantage to endeavor to follow the following explanation; but if mathematics are insupportable to him, pray let him skip three paragraphs rather than that we should part company here.

A path is a line whose beginning and end are distinguished. Two paths are considered to be equivalent, which, beginning at the same point, lead to the same point. Thus the two paths, A B C D E and A F G II E, are equivalent. Paths which do not begin at the same point are considered to be equivalent, provided that, on moving either of them without turning it, but keeping it always parallel to its original position, when its beginning coincides with that of the other path, the ends also coincide. Paths are considered as geometrically added together, when one begins where the other ends; thus the path A E is conceived to be a sum of A B, B C, C Z>, and D E. In the parallelogram of Fig. 4 the diagonal A C is the sum of A B and B C; or, since A J) is geometrically equivalent to B C, A C is the geometrical sum of A B and A I>.

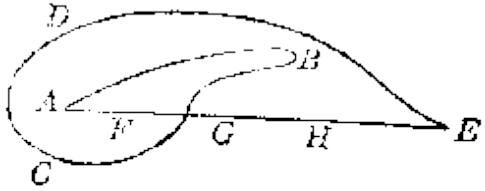

Fig. 3

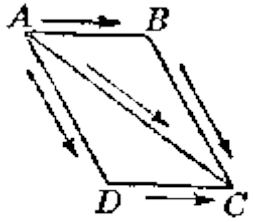

Fig. 4

All this is purely conventional. It simply amounts to this : that we choose to call paths having the relations I have described equal or added. But, though it is a convention, it is a convention with a good reason. The rule for geometrical addition may be applied not only to paths, but to any other things which can be represented by paths. Now, as a path is determined by the varying direction and distance of the point which moves over it from the starting-point, it follows that anything which from its beginning to its end is determined by a varying direction and a varying magnitude is capable of being represented by a line. Accordingly, velocities may be represented by lines, for they have only directions and rates. The same thing is true of accelerations, or changes of velocities. This is evident enough in the case of velocities; and it becomes evident for accelerations if we consider that precisely what velocities are to positions namely, states of change of them that accelerations are to velocities.

The so-called "parallelogram of forces" is simply a rule for compounding accelerations. The rule is, to represent the accelerations by paths, and then to geometrically add the paths. The geometers, however, not

only use the "parallelogram of forces" to compound different accelerations, but also to resolve one acceleration into a sum of several. Let A B (Fig. 5) be the path which represents a certain acceleration say, such a change in the motion of a body that at the end of one second the body will, under the influence of that change, be in a position different from what it would have had if its motion had continued unchanged such that a path equivalent to A B would lead from the latter position to the former. This acceleration may be considered as the sum of the accelerations represented by A C and C B. It may also be considered as the sum of the very different accelerations represented by A D and D B, where A B is almost the opposite of A C. And it is clear that there is an immense variety of ways in which A B might be resolved into the sum of two accelerations.

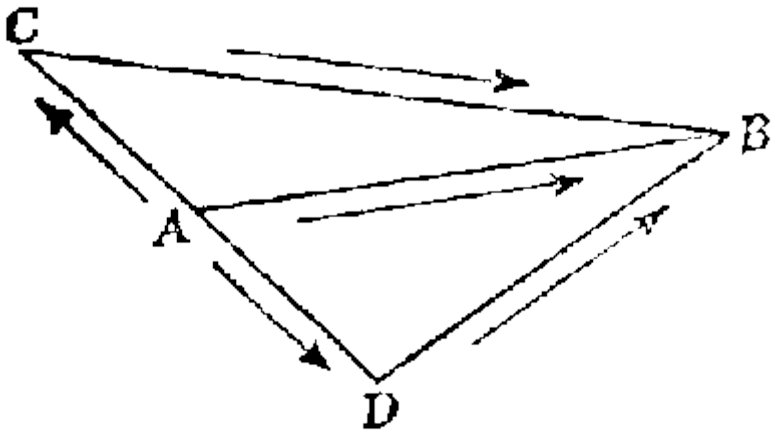

Fig. 5

After this tedious explanation, which I hope, in view of the extraordinary interest of the conception of force, may not have exhausted the reader's patience, we are prepared at last to state the grand fact which this conception embodies. This fact is that if the actual changes of motion which the different particles of bodies experience are each resolved in its appropriate way, each component acceleration is precisely such as is prescribed by a certain law of Nature, according to which bodies in the relative positions which the bodies in question actually have at the moment,[1] always receive certain accelerations, which, being compounded by geometrical addition, give the acceleration which the body actually experiences.

This is the only fact which the idea of force represents, and whoever will take the trouble clearly to apprehend what this fact is, perfectly comprehends what force is. Whether we ought to say that a force is an acceleration, or that it causes an acceleration, is a mere question of propriety of language, which has no more to do with our real meaning than the difference between the French idiom "il fait froic" and its English equivalent "It is cold" Yet it is surprising to see how this simple affair has muddled men's minds. In how many profound treatises is not force spoken of as a " mysterious entity," which seems to be only a way of confessing that the author despairs of ever getting a clear notion of what the word means ! In a recent admired work on " Analytic Mechanics " it is stated that we understand precisely the effect of force, but what force itself is we do not understand ! This is simply a self-contradiction. The idea which the word force excites in our minds has no other function than to affect our actions, and these actions can have no reference to force otherwise than through its effects. Consequently, if we know what the effects of force are, we are acquainted with every fact which is implied in saying that a force exists, and there is nothing more to know. The truth is, there is some vague notion afloat that a question may mean something which the mind cannot conceive; and when some hairsplitting philosophers have been confronted with the absurdity of such a view, they have invented an empty distinction between positive and negative conceptions, in the attempt to give their non-idea a form not obviously nonsensical. The nullity of it is sufficiently plain from the considerations given a few pages back; and, apart from those considerations, the quibbling character of the distinction must have struck every mind accustomed to real thinking.

IV.

Let us now approach the subject of logic, and consider a conception which particularly concerns it, that of reality. Taking clearness in the sense of familiarity, no idea could be clearer than this. Every child uses it with perfect confidence, never dreaming that he does not understand it. As for clearness in its second grade, however, it would probably puzzle most men,

even among those of a reflective turn of mind to arrive an abstract definition of the real. Yet such a definition may perhaps be reached by considering the points of difference between reality and its opposite, fiction. A figment is a product of somebody's imagination; it has such characters as his thought impresses upon it. That whose characters are independent of how you or I think is an external reality. There are, however, phenomena within our own minds, dependent upon our thought, which are at the same time real in the sense that we really think them. But though their characters depend on how we think, they do not depend on what we think those characters to be. Thus, a dream has a real existence as a mental phenomenon, if somebody has really dreamt it; that he dreamt so and so, does not depend on what anybody thinks was dreamt, but is completely independent of all opinion on the subject. On the other hand, considering, not the fact of dreaming, but the thing dreamt, it retains its peculiarities by virtue of no other fact than that it was dreamt to possess them. Thus we may define the real as that whose characters are independent of what anybody may think them to be.

But, however satisfactory such a definition may be found, it would be a great mistake to suppose that it makes the idea of reality perfectly clear. Here, then, let us apply our rules. According to them, reality, like every other quality, consists in the peculiar sensible effects which things partaking of it produce. The only effect which real things have is to cause belief, for all the sensations which they excite emerge into consciousness in the form of beliefs. The question therefore is, how is true belief (or belief in the real) distinguished from false belief (or belief in fiction). Now, as we have seen in the former paper, the ideas of truth and falsehood, in their full development, appertain exclusively to the scientific method of settling opinion. A person who arbitrarily chooses the propositions which he Avill adopt can use the word truth only to emphasize the expression of his determination to hold on to his choice. Of course, the method of tenacity never prevailed exclusively; reason is too natural to men for that. But in the literature of the dark ages we find some fine examples of it. When Scotus Erigena is commenting upon a poetical passage in which hellebore is spoken of as having caused the death of Socrates, he does not hesitate to inform the inquiring reader that Helleborus and Socrates were two eminent Greek philosophers, and that the latter having been overcome in argument by the former took the matter to heart and died of it! What sort of an idea of truth could a man have who could adopt and teach, without the qualification of a perhaps, an opinion taken so entirely at random? The real spirit of Socrates, who I hope would have been delighted to have been "overcome in argument," because he would have learned something by it, is in curious contrast with the naive idea of the glossist, for whom discussion would seem to have been simply a struggle. When philosophy began to awake from its long slumber, and before theology completely dominated it, the practice seems to have been for each professor to seize upon any philosophical position he found unoccupied and which seemed a strong one, to entrench himself in it, and to sally forth from time to time to give battle to the others. Thus, even the scanty records we possess of those disputes enable us to make out a dozen or more opinions held by different teachers at one time concerning the question of nominalism and realism. Read the opening part of the "Historia Calamitatum" of Abelard, who was certainly as philosophical as any of his contemporaries, and see the spirit of combat which it breathes. For him, the truth is simply his particular stronghold. When the method of authority prevailed, the truth meant little more than the Catholic faith. All the efforts of the scholastic doctors are directed toward harmonizing their faith in Aristotle and their faith in the Church, and one may search their ponderous folios through without finding an argument which goes any further. It is noticeable that where different faiths flourish side by side, renegades are looked upon with contempt even by the party whose belief they adopt; so completely has the idea of loyalty replaced that of truth-seeking. Since the time of Descartes, the defect in the conception of truth has been less apparent. Still, it will sometimes strike a scientific man that the philosophers have been less intent on finding out what the facts are, than on inquiring what belief is most in harmony with their system. It is hard to convince a follower of the a priori method by adducing facts; but show him that an opinion he is defending is inconsistent with what he has laid down elsewhere, and he will be very apt to retract it. These minds do not seem to believe that disputation is ever to cease; they seem to think that the opinion which is natural for one man is not so for another, and that belief will, consequently, never be settled. In contenting themselves with fixing their own opinions by a method which would lead another man to a different result, they betray their feeble hold of the conception of what truth is.

On the other hand, all the followers of science are fully persuaded that the processes of investigation, if only pushed far enough, will give one certain solution to every question to which they can be applied. One man may investigate the velocity of light by studying the transits of Venus and the aberration of the stars; another by the oppositions of Mars and the eclipses of Jupiter's satellites; a third by the method of Fizeau; a fourth by

that of Foucault; a fifth by the motions of the curves of Lissajoux; a sixth, a seventh, an eighth, and a ninth, may follow the different methods of comparing the measures of statical and dynamical electricity. They may at first obtain different results, but, as each perfects his method and his processes, the results will move steadily together toward a destined centre. So with all scientific research. Different minds may set out with the most antagonistic views, but the progress of investigation carries them by a force outside of themselves to one and the same conclusion. This activity of thought by which we are carried, not where we wish, but to a foreordained goal, is like the operation of destiny. No modification of the point of view taken, no selection of other facts for study, no natural bent of mind even, can enable a man to escape the predestinate opinion. This great law is embodied in the conception of truth and reality. The opinion which is fated[2] to be ultimately agreed to by all who investigate is what we mean by the truth, and the object represented in this opinion is the real. That is the way I would explain reality.

But it may be said that this view is directly opposed to the abstract definition which we have given of reality, inasmuch as it makes the characters of the real to depend on what is ultimately thought about them. But the answer to this is that, on the one hand, reality is independent, not necessarily of thought in general, but only of what you or I or any finite number of men may think about it; and that, on the other hand, though the object of the final opinion depends on what that opinion is, yet what that opinion is does not depend on what you or I or any man thinks. Our perversity and that of others may indefinitely postpone the settlement of opinion; it might even conceivably cause an arbitrary proposition to be universally accepted as long as the human race should last. Yet even that would not change the nature of the belief, which alone could be the result of investigation carried sufficiently far; and if, after the extinction of our race, another should arise with faculties and disposition for investigation, that true opinion must be the one which they would ultimately come to. " Truth crushed to earth shall rise again," and the opinion which would finally result from investigation does not depend on how anybody may actually think. But the reality of that which is real does depend on the real fact that investigation is destined to lead, at last, if continued long enough, to a belief in it.

But I may be asked what I have to say to all the minute facts of history, forgotten never to be recovered, to the lost books of the ancients, to the buried secrets.

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"Full many a gem of purest ray serene
        The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
 Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
        And waste its sweetness on the desert air."
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Do these things not really exist because they are hopelessly beyond the reach of our knowledge? And then, after the universe is dead** (according to the prediction of some scientists), and all life has ceased forever, will not the shock of atoms continue though there will be no mind to know it? To this I reply that, though in no possible state of knowledge can any number be great enough to express the relation between the amount of what rests unknown to the amount of the known, yet it is unphilosophical to suppose that, with regard to any given question (which has any clear meaning), investigation would not bring forth a solution of it, if it were carried far enough. Who would have said, a few years ago, that we could ever know of what substances stars are made whose light may have been longer in reaching us than the human race has existed? Who can be sure of what we shall not know in a few hundred years? Who can guess w T hat would be the result of continuing the pursuit of science for ten thousand years, with the activity of the last hundred? And if it were to go on for a million, or a billion, or any number of years you please, how is it possible to say that there is any question which might not ultimately be solved?

But it maybe objected, "Why make so much of these remote considerations, especially when it is your principle that only practical distinctions have a meaning?" Well, I must confess that it makes very little difference whether we say that a stone on the bottom of the ocean, in complete darkness, is brilliant or not that is to say, that it probably makes no difference, remembering always that that stone may be fished up to-morrow. But that there are gems at the bottom of the sea, flowers in the untraveled desert, etc., are propositions which, like that about a diamond being hard when it is not pressed, concern much more the arrangement of our language than they do the meaning of our ideas.

It seems to me, however, that we have, by the application of our rule, reached so clear an apprehension of what we mean by reality, and of the fact which the idea rests on, that we should not, perhaps, be making a pretension so presumptuous as it would be singular, if we were to offer a metaphysical theory of existence for universal acceptance among those who employ the scientific method of fixing belief. However, as metaphysics is a subject much more curious than useful, the knowledge of which, like that of

a sunken reef, serves chiefly to enable us to keep clear of it, I will not trouble the reader with any more Ontology at this moment. I have already been led much further into that path than I should have desired; and I have given the reader such a dose of mathematics, psychology, and all that is most abstruse, that I fear he may already have left me, and that what I am now writing is for the compositor and proof-reader exclusively. I trusted to the importance of the subject. There is no royal road to logic, and really valuable ideas can only be had at the price of close attention. But I know that in the matter of ideas the public prefer the cheap and nasty; and in my next paper I am going to return to the easily intelligible, and not wander from it again. The reader who has been at the pains of wading through this month's paper, shall be rewarded in the next one by seeing how beautifully what has been developed in this tedious way can be applied to the ascertainment of the rules of scientific reasoning.

We have, hitherto, not crossed the threshold of scientific logic. It is certainly important to know how to make our ideas clear, but they may be ever so clear without being true. How to make them so, we have next to study. How to give birth to those vital and procreative ideas which multiply into a thousand forms and diffuse themselves everywhere, advancing civilization and making the dignity of man, is an art not yet reduced to rules, but of the secret of which the history of science affords some hints.

The Popular Science Monthly, Volume 12, 1878

[1] Possibly the velocities also have to be taken into account.

[2] Fate means merely that which is sure to come true, and can nohow be avoided. It is a superstition to suppose that a certain sort of events are ever fated, and it is another to suppose that the word fate can never be freed from its superstitious taint. We are all fated to die.

Thought Point	Points of Thought

William James: *The Will To Believe*[1]

To
My Old Friend,
CHARLES SANDERS PEIRCE,
To whose philosophic comradeship in old times
and to whose writings in more recent years
I owe more incitement and help than
I can express or repay.

Preface

...Were I obliged to give a short name to the attitude in question, I should call it that of *radical empiricism,* in spite of the fact that such brief nicknames are nowhere more misleading than in philosophy. I say 'empiricism,' because it is contented to regard its most assured conclusions concerning matters of fact as hypotheses liable to modification in the course of future experience; and I say ' radical,' because it treats the doctrine of monism itself as an hypothesis, and, unlike so much of the half-way empiricism that is current under the name of positivism or agnosticism or scientific naturalism, it does not dogmatically affirm monism as something with which all experience has got to square. The difference between monism and pluralism is perhaps the most pregnant of all the differences in philosophy. *Prima facie* the world is a pluralism; as we find it, its unity seems to be that of any collection; and our higher thinking consists chiefly of an effort to redeem it from that first crude form. Postulating more unity than the first experiences yield, we also discover more. But absolute unity, in spite of brilliant dashes in its direction, still remains undiscovered, still remains a *Grenzbegriff* [limit-concept]. “Ever not quite" must be the rationalistic philosopher's last confession concerning it. After all that reason can do has been done, there still remains the opacity of the finite facts as merely given, with most of their peculiarities mutually unmediated and unexplained. To the very last, there are the various ' points of view' which the philosopher must distinguish in discussing the world; and what is inwardly clear from one point remains a bare externality and datum to the other. The negative, the alogical, is never wholly banished. Something — "call it fate, chance, freedom, spontaneity, the devil, what you will" — is still wrong and other and outside and unincluded, from *your* point of view, even though you be the greatest of philosophers. Something is always mere fact and *givenness;* and there may be in the whole universe no one point of view extant from which this would not be found to be the case. "Reason," as a gifted writer says, “is but one item in the mystery; and behind the proudest consciousness that ever reigned, reason and wonder blushed face to face. The inevitable stales, while doubt and hope are sisters. Not unfortunately the universe is wild,—game-flavored as a hawk's wing. Nature is miracle all; the same returns not save to bring the different. The slow round of the engraver's lathe gains but the breadth of a hair, but the difference is distributed back over the whole curve, never an instant true, — ever not quite."[1]

[1] B. P. Blood: The Flaw in Supremacy: Published by the Author, Amsterdam, N. Y., 1893.

This is pluralism, somewhat rhapsodically expressed. He who takes for his hypothesis the notion that it is the permanent form of the world is what I call a radical empiricist. For him the crudity of experience remains an eternal element thereof. There is no possible point of view from which the world can appear an absolutely single fact. Real possibilities, real indeterminations, real beginnings, real , ends, real evil, real crises, catastrophes, and escapes, a real God, and a real moral life, just as commonsense conceives these things, may remain in empiricism as conceptions which that philosophy gives up the attempt either to ' overcome' or to reinterpret in monistic form.

Many of my professionally trained *confreres* will smile at the irrationalism of this view, and at the artlessness of my essays in point of technical form.

But they should be taken as illustrations of the radically empiricist attitude rather than as argumentations for its validity. That admits meanwhile of being argued in as technical a shape as anyone can desire, and possibly I may be spared to do later a share of that work. Meanwhile these essays seem to light up with a certain dramatic reality the attitude itself, and make it visible alongside of the higher and lower dogmatisms between which in the pages of philosophic history it has generally remained eclipsed from sight.

...largely concerned with defending the legitimacy of religious faith. To some rationalizing readers such advocacy will seem a sad misuse of one's professional position. Mankind, they will say, is only too prone to follow faith unreasoningly, and needs no preaching nor encouragement in that direction. I quite agree that what mankind at large most lacks is criticism and caution, not faith. Its cardinal weakness is to let belief follow recklessly upon lively conception, especially when the conception has instinctive liking at its back. I admit, then, that were I addressing the Salvation Army or a miscellaneous popular crowd it would be a misuse of opportunity to preach the liberty of believing as I have in these pages preached it. What such audiences most need is that their faiths should be broken up and ventilated, that the northwest wind of science should get into them and blow their sickliness and barbarism away. But academic audiences, fed already on science, have a very different need. Paralysis of their native capacity for faith and timorous *abulia* in the religious field are their special forms of mental weakness, brought about by the notion, carefully instilled, that there is something called scientific evidence by waiting upon which they shall escape all danger of shipwreck in regard to truth. But there is really no scientific or other method by which men can steer safely between the opposite dangers of believing too little or of believing too much. To face such dangers is apparently our duty, and to hit the right channel between them is the measure of our wisdom as men. It does not follow, because recklessness may be a vice in soldiers, that courage ought never to be preached to them. What *should* be preached is courage weighted with responsibility, — such courage as the Nelsons and Washingtons never failed to show after they had taken everything into account that might tell against their success, and made every provision to minimize disaster in case they met defeat. I do not think that any one can accuse me of preaching reckless faith. I have preached the right of the individual to indulge his personal faith at his personal risk. I have discussed the kinds of risk; I have contended that none of us escape all of them; and I have only pleaded that it is better to face them open-eyed than to act as if we did not know them to be there.

After all, though, you will say, Why such an ado about a matter concerning which, however we may theoretically differ, we all practically agree? In this age of toleration, no scientist will ever try actively to interfere with our religious faith, provided we enjoy it quietly with our friends and do not make a public nuisance of it in the market-place. But it is just on this matter of the market-place that I think the utility of such essays as mine may turn. If religious hypotheses about the universe be in order at all, then the active faiths of individuals in them, freely expressing themselves in life, are the experimental tests by which they are verified, and the only means by which their truth or falsehood can be wrought out. The truest scientific hypothesis is that ' which, as we say, ' works' best; and it can be no otherwise with religious hypotheses. Religious history proves that one hypothesis after another has worked ill, has crumbled at contact with a widening knowledge of the world, and has lapsed from the minds of men. Some articles of faith, however, have maintained themselves through every vicissitude, and possess even more vitality to-day than ever before: it is for the 'science of religions' to tell us just which hypotheses these are. Meanwhile the freest competition of the various faiths with one another, and their openest application to life by their several champions, are the most favorable conditions under which the survival of the fittest can proceed. They ought therefore not to lie hid each under its bushel, indulged-in quietly with friends. They ought to live in publicity, vying with each other; and it seems to me that (the regime of tolerance once granted, and a fair field shown) the scientist has nothing to fear for his own interests from the liveliest possible state of fermentation in the religious world of his time. Those faiths will best stand the test which adopt also his hypotheses, and make them integral elements of their own. He should welcome therefore every species of religious agitation and discussion, so long as he is willing to allow that some religious hypothesis *may* be true. Of course there are plenty of scientists who would deny that dogmatically, maintaining that science has already ruled all possible religious hypotheses out of court. Such scientists ought, I agree, to aim at imposing privacy on religious faiths, the public manifestation of which could only be a nuisance in their eyes. With all such

scientists, as well as with their allies outside of science, my quarrel openly lies; and I hope that my book may do something to persuade the reader of their crudity, and range him on my side. Religious fermentation is always a symptom of the intellectual vigor of a society; and it is only when they forget that they are hypotheses and put on rationalistic and authoritative pretensions, that our faiths do harm. The most interesting and valuable things about a man are his ideals and over-beliefs. The same is true of nations and historic epochs; and the excesses of which the particular individuals and epochs are guilty are compensated in the total, and become profitable to mankind in the long run....

I

…I have brought with me to-night something like a sermon on justification by faith to read to you, — I mean an essay in justification *of* faith, a defense of our right to adopt a believing attitude in religious matters, in spite of the fact that our merely logical intellect may not have been coerced. 'The Will to Believe,' accordingly, is the title of my paper.

I have long defended to my own students the lawfulness of voluntarily adopted faith; but as soon as they have got well imbued with the logical spirit, they have as a rule refused to admit my contention to be lawful philosophically, even though in point of fact they were personally all the time chock-full of some faith or other themselves. I am all the while, however, so profoundly convinced that my own position js correct, that your invitation has seemed to me . good occasion to make my statements more clear. Perhaps your minds will be more open than those with which I have hitherto had to deal. I will be as little technical as I can, though I must begin by setting up some technical distinctions that will help us in the end.

Let us give the name of *hypothesis* to anything that may be proposed to our belief; and just as the electricians speak of live and dead wires, let us speak of any hypothesis as either *live* or *dead.* A live hypothesis is one which appeals as a real possibility to him to whom it is proposed. If I ask you to believe in the Mahdi, the notion makes no electric connection with your nature, — it refuses to scintillate with any credibility at all. As an hypothesis it is completely dead. To an Arab, however (even if he be not one of the Mahdi's followers), the hypothesis is among the mind's possibilities: it is alive. This shows that deadness and liveness in an hypothesis are not intrinsic properties, but relations to the individual thinker. They are measured by his willingness to act. The maximum of liveness in an hypothesis means willingness to act irrevocably. Practically, that means belief; but there is some, believing tendency wherever there is willingness to I act at all.

Next, let us call the decision between two hypotheses an *option.* Options may be of several kinds. They may be — 1, *living* or *dead;* 2, *forced* or *avoidable;* 3, *momentous* or *trivial;* and for our purposes we may call an option a *genuine* option when it is of the forced, living, and momentous kind.

1. A living option is one in which both hypotheses are live ones. If I say to you: "Be a theosophist or be a Mohammedan," it is probably a dead option, because for you neither hypothesis is likely to be alive. But if I say: "Be an agnostic or be a Christian," it is otherwise: trained as you are, each hypothesis makes some appeal, however small, to your belief.
2. Next, if I say to you: "Choose between going out with your umbrella or without it," I do not offer you a genuine option, for it is not forced. You can easily avoid it by not going out at all. Similarly, if I say, "Either love me or hate me," " Either call my theory true or call it false," your option is avoidable. You may remain indifferent to me, neither loving nor hating, and you may decline to offer any judgment as to my theory. But if I say, "Either accept this truth or go without it," I put on you a forced option, for there is no standing place outside of the alternative. Every dilemma based on a complete logical disjunction, with no possibility of not choosing, is an option of this forced kind.
3. Finally, if I were Dr. Nansen and proposed to you to join my North Pole expedition, your option would be momentous; for this would probably be your only similar opportunity, and your choice now would either exclude you from the North Pole sort of immortality altogether or put at least the chance of it into your hands. He who refuses to embrace a unique opportunity loses the prize as surely as if he tried and failed. *Per contra*, the option is trivial when the opportunity is not unique, when the stake is insignificant, or when the decision is reversible if it later prove unwise. Such trivial options abound in the scientific life. A chemist finds an hypothesis live enough to spend a year in its verification: he believes in it to that extent. But if his experiments prove inconclusive either way, he is quit for his loss of time, no vital harm being done.

It will facilitate our discussion if we keep all these distinctions well in mind.

II

…Does it not seem preposterous on the very face of it to talk of our opinions being modifiable at will? Can our will either help or hinder our intellect in its perceptions of truth? Can we, by just willing it, believe that Abraham Lincoln's existence is a myth, and that the portraits of him in McClure's Magazine are all of someone else? Can we, by any effort of our will, or by any strength of wish that it were true, believe ourselves well and about when we are roaring with rheumatism in bed, or feel certain that the sum of the two one-dollar bills in our pocket must be a hundred dollars? We can *say* any of these things, but we are absolutely impotent to believe them; and of just such things is the whole fabric of the truths that we do believe in made up, — matters of fact, immediate or remote, as Hume said, and relations between ideas, which are either there or not there for us if we see them so, and which if not there cannot be put there by any action of our own.

In Pascal's Thoughts there is a celebrated passage known in literature as Pascal's wager. In it he tries to force us into Christianity by reasoning as if our concern with truth resembled our concern with the stakes in a game of chance. Translated freely his words are these: You must either believe or not believe that God is — which will you do? Your human reason cannot say. A game is going on between you and the nature of things which at the day of judgment will bring out either heads or tails. Weigh what your gains and your losses would be if you should stake all you have on heads, or God's existence: if you win in such case, you gain eternal beatitude; if you lose, you lose nothing at all. If there were an infinity of chances, and only one for God in this wager, still you ought to stake your all on God; for though you surely risk a finite loss by this procedure, any finite loss is reasonable, even a certain one is reasonable, if there is but the possibility of infinite gain. Go, then, and take holy water, and have masses said; belief will come and stupefy your scruples, — *Cela vousfera eroire et vous abitira* [That will make you believe and will stupefy you]. Why should you not? At bottom, what have you to lose? You probably feel that when religious faith expresses itself thus, in the language of the gamingtable, it is put to its last trumps. Surely Pascal's own personal belief in masses and holy water had far other springs; and this celebrated page of his is but an argument for others, a last desperate snatch at a weapon against the hardness of the unbelieving heart. We feel that a faith in masses and holy water adopted willfully after such a mechanical calculation would lack the inner soul of faith's reality; and if we were ourselves in the place of the Deity, we should probably take particular pleasure in cutting off believers of this pattern from their infinite reward. It is evident that unless there be some pre-existing tendency to believe in masses and holy water, the option offered to the will by Pascal is not a living option. Certainly no Turk ever took to masses and holy water on its account; and even to us Protestants these means of salvation seem such foregone impossibilities that Pascal's logic, invoked for them specifically, leaves us unmoved. As well might the Mahdi write to us, saying, “I am the Expected One whom God has created in his effulgence. You shall be infinitely happy if you confess me; otherwise you shall be cut off from the light of the sun. Weigh, then, your infinite gain if I am genuine against your finite sacrifice if I am not!" His logic would be that of Pascal; but he would vainly use it on us, for the hypothesis he offers us is dead. No tendency to act on it exists in us to any degree.

The talk of believing by our volition seems, then, from one point of view, simply silly. From another point of view it is worse than silly, it is vile. When one turns to the magnificent edifice of the physical sciences, and sees how it was reared; what thousands of disinterested moral lives of men lie buried in its mere foundations; what patience and postponement, what choking down of preference, what submission to the icy laws of outer fact are wrought into its very stones and mortar; how absolutely impersonal it stands in its vast augustness, — then how besotted and contemptible seems every little sentimentalist who comes blowing his voluntary smoke-wreaths, and pretending to decide things from out of his private dream! Can we wonder if those bred in the rugged and manly school of science should feel like spewing such subjectivism out of their mouths? The whole system of loyalties which grow up in the schools of science go dead against its toleration; so that it is only natural that those who have caught the scientific fever should pass over to the opposite extreme, and write sometimes as if the incorruptibly truthful intellect ought positively to prefer bitterness and unacceptableness to the heart in its cup.

III

…Free-will and simple wishing do seem, in the matter of our credences, to be only fifth wheels to the coach. Yet if anyone should thereupon assume that intellectual insight is what remains after wish and will and sentimental preference have taken wing, or that pure reason is what then settles our

opinions, he would fly quite as directly in the teeth of the facts.

It is only our already dead hypotheses that our willing nature is unable to bring to life again But what has made them dead for us is for the most part a previous action of our willing nature of an antagonistic kind. When I say ' willing nature,' I do not mean only such deliberate volitions as may have set up habits of belief that we cannot now escape from, — I mean all such factors of belief as fear and hope, prejudice and passion, imitation and partisanship, the circumpressure of our caste and set. As a matter of fact we find ourselves believing, we hardly know how or why. Mr. Balfour gives the name of ' authority ' to all those influences, born of the intellectual climate, that make hypotheses possible or impossible for us, alive or dead. Here in this room, we all of us believe in molecules and the conservation of energy, in democracy and necessary progress, in Protestant Christianity and the duty of fighting for ' the doctrine of the immortal Monroe,' all for no reasons worthy of the name. We see into these matters with no more inner clearness, and probably with much less, than any disbeliever in them might possess. His unconventionality would probably have some grounds to show for its conclusions; but for us, not insight, but the *prestige* of the opinions, is what makes the spark shoot from them and light up our sleeping magazines of faith. Our reason is quite satisfied, in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of every thousand of us, if it can find a few arguments that will do to recite in case our credulity is criticized by someone else. Our faith is faith in someone else's faith, and in the greatest matters this is most the case. Our belief in truth itself, for instance, that there is a truth, and that our minds and it are made for each other,—what is it but a passionate affirmation of desire, in which our social system backs us up ? We want to have a truth; we want to believe that our experiments and studies and discussions must put us in a continually better and better position towards it; and on this line we agree to fight out our thinking lives. But if a pyrrhonistic skeptic asks us *how we know* all this, can our logic find a reply? No! certainly it cannot. It is just one volition against another, — we willing to go in for life upon a trust or assumption which he, for his part, does not care to make.[2]

As a rule we disbelieve all facts and theories for which we have no use. Clifford's cosmic emotions find no use for Christian feelings. Huxley belabors the bishops because there is no use for sacerdotalism in his scheme of life. Newman, on the contrary, goes over to Romanism, and finds all sorts of reasons good for staying there, because a priestly system is for him an organic need and delight. Why do so few ' scientists' even look at the evidence for telepathy, so called? Because they think, as a leading biologist, now dead, once said to me, that even if such a thing were true, scientists ought to band together to keep it suppressed and concealed. It would undo the uniformity of Nature and all sorts of other things without which scientists cannot carry on their pursuits. But if this very man had been shown something which as a scientist he might *do* with telepathy, he might not only have examined the evidence, but even have found it good enough. This very law which the logicians would impose upon us — if I may give the name of logicians to those who would rule out our willing nature here — is based on nothing but their own natural wish to exclude all elements for which they, in their professional quality of logicians, can find no use.

Evidently, then, our non-intellectual nature does influence our convictions. There are passional tendencies and volitions which run before and others which come after belief and it is only the latter that are too late for the fair; and they are not too late when the previous passional work has been already in their own direction. Pascal's argument, instead of being powerless, then seems a regular clincher, and is the last stroke needed to make our faith in masses and holy water complete. The state of things is evidently far from simple; and pure insight and logic, whatever they might do ideally, are not the only things that really do produce our creeds.

IV

Our next duty, having recognized this mixed-up state of affairs, is to ask whether it be simply reprehensible and pathological, or whether, on the contrary, we must treat it as a normal element in making up our minds. The thesis I defend is, briefly stated, this: *Our passional nature not only lawfully may, but must, decide an option between propositions, whenever it is a genuine option that cannot by its nature be decided on intellectual grounds; for to say, under such circumstances, "Do not decide, but leave the question open" is itself a passional decision, — just like deciding yes or no, — and is attended with the same risk of losing the truth.* The thesis thus abstractly expressed will, I trust, soon become quite clear. But I must first indulge in a bit more of preliminary work.

V

It will be observed that for the purposes of this discussion we are on ' dogmatic ' ground, — ground, I mean, which leaves systematic philosophical skepticism altogether out of account. The postulate that there is truth, and

that it is the destiny of our minds to attain it, we are deliberately resolving to make, though the skeptic will not make it. We part company with him, therefore, absolutely, at this point. But the faith that truth exists, and that our minds can find it, may be held in two ways. We may talk of the *empiricist* way and of the *absolutist* way of believing in truth. The absolutists in this matter say that we not only can attain to knowing truth, but we can *know when* we have attained to knowing it; while the empiricists think that although we may attain it, we cannot infallibly know when. To *know* is one thing, and to know for certain *that* we know is another. One may hold to the first being possible without the second; hence the empiricists and the absolutists, although neither of them is a skeptic in the usual philosophic sense of the term, show very different degrees of dogmatism in their lives.

If we look at the history of opinions, we see that the empiricist tendency has largely prevailed in science, while in philosophy the absolutist tendency has had everything its own way. The characteristic sort of happiness, indeed, which philosophies yield has mainly consisted in the conviction felt by each successive school or system that by it bottom-certitude had been attained. " Other philosophies are collections of opinions, mostly false; *my* philosophy gives standing-ground forever," — who does not recognize in this the key-note of every system worthy of the name? A system, to be a system at all, must come as a *closed* system, reversible in this or that detail, perchance, but in its essential features never!

Scholastic orthodoxy, to which one must always go when one wishes to find perfectly clear statement, has beautifully elaborated this absolutist conviction in a doctrine which it calls that of 'objective evidence.' If, for example, I am unable to doubt that I now exist before you, that two is less than three, or that if all men are mortal then I am mortal too, it is because these things illumine my intellect irresistibly. The final ground of this objective evidence possessed by certain propositions is the *adaeqnatio intellect's nostri cum re* [conformity of our minds to the fact]. The certitude it brings involves an [entitas ipsa involvit] *aptitudincm ad extorquendum certum assensum* [reality involves a power to compel sure assent] on the part of the truth envisaged, and on the side of the subject a *quietem in cognition* [a quieting of thought], when once the object is mentally received, that leaves no possibility of doubt behind; and in the whole transaction nothing operates but the *entitas ipsa* of the object and the *entitas ipsa* of the mind. We slouchy modern thinkers dislike to talk in Latin, — indeed, we dislike to talk in set terms at all; but at bottom our own state of mind is very much like this whenever we uncritically abandon ourselves: You believe in objective evidence, and I do. Of some things we feel that we are certain: we know, and we know that we do know. There is something that gives a click inside of us, a bell that strikes twelve, when the hands of our mental clock have swept the dial and meet over the meridian hour. The greatest empiricists among us are only empiricists on reflection: when left to their instincts, they dogmatize like infallible popes. When the Cliffords tell us how sinful it is to be Christians on such 'insufficient evidence,' insufficiency is really the last thing they have in mind. For them the evidence is absolutely sufficient, only it makes the other way. They believe so completely in an anti-Christian order of the universe that there is no living option: Christianity is a dead hypothesis from the start.

VI

But now, since we are all such absolutists by instinct, what in our quality of students of philosophy ought we to do about the fact? Shall we espouse and indorse it? Or shall we treat it as a weakness of our nature from which we must free ourselves, if we can?

I sincerely believe that the latter course is the only one we can follow as reflective men. Objective evidence and certitude are doubtless very fine ideals to play with, but where on this moonlit and dreamvisited planet are they found? I am, therefore, myself a complete empiricist so far as my theory of human knowledge goes. I live, to be sure, by the practical faith that we must go on experiencing and thinking over our experience, for only thus can our opinions grow more true; but to hold any one of them — I absolutely do not care which — as if it never could be reinterpretable or corrigible, I believe to be a tremendously mistaken attitude, and I think that the whole history of philosophy will bear me out. There is but one indefectibly certain truth, and that is the truth that pyrrhonistic skepticism itself leaves standing, — the truth that the present phenomenon of consciousness exists. That, however, is the bare starting-point of knowledge, the mere admission of a stuff to be philosophized about. The various philosophies are but so many attempts at expressing what this stuff really is. And if we repair to our libraries what disagreement do we discover! Where is a certainly true answer found? Apart from abstract propositions of comparison (such as two and two are the same as four), propositions which tell us nothing by themselves about concrete

reality, we find no proposition ever regarded by any one as evidently certain that has not either been called a falsehood, or at least had its truth sincerely questioned by some one else. The transcending of the axioms of geometry, not in play but in earnest, by certain of our contemporaries (as Zollner and Charles H. Hinton), and the rejection of the whole Aristotelian logic by the Hegelians, are striking instances in point.

No concrete test of what is really true has ever been agreed upon. Some make the criterion external to the moment of perception, putting it either in revelation, the *consensus gentium*, the instincts of the heart, or the systematized experience of the race. Others make the perceptive moment its own test, — Descartes, for instance, with his clear and distinct ideas guaranteed by the veracity of God; Reid with his ' common-sense;' and Kant with his forms of synthetic judgment *a priori*. The inconceivability of the opposite; the capacity to be verified by sense; the possession of complete organic unity or self-relation, realized when a thing is its own other, — are standards which, in turn, have been used. The much lauded objective evidence is never triumphantly there; it is a mere aspiration or *Grenzbegriff*, marking the infinitely remote ideal of our thinking life. To claim that certain truths now possess it, is simply to say that when you think them true and they *are* true, then their evidence is objective, otherwise it is not. But practically one's conviction that the evidence one goes by is of the real objective brand, is only one more subjective opinion added to the lot. For what a contradictory array of opinions have objective evidence and absolute certitude been claimed! The world is rational through and through, — its existence is an ultimate brute fact; there is a personal God, — a personal God is inconceivable; there is an extra-mental physical world immediately known, — the mind can only know its own ideas; a moral imperative exists,— obligation is only the resultant of desires; a permanent spiritual principle is in every one,—there are only shifting states of mind; there is an endless chain of causes, — there is an absolute first cause; an eternal necessity, — a freedom; a purpose, — no purpose; a primal One, — a primal Many; a universal continuity, — an essential discontinuity in things; an infinity, — no infinity. There is this, — there is that; there is indeed nothing which someone has not thought absolutely true, while his neighbor deemed it absolutely false; and not an absolutist among them seems ever to have considered that the trouble may all the time be essential, and that the intellect, even with truth directly in its grasp, may have no infallible signal for knowing whether it be truth or no. When, indeed, one remembers that the most striking practical application to life of the doctrine of objective certitude has been the conscientious labors of the Holy Office of the Inquisition, one feels less tempted than ever to lend the doctrine a respectful ear.

But please observe, now, that when as empiricists we give up the doctrine of objective certitude, we do not thereby give up the quest or hope of truth itself. We still pin our faith on its existence, and still believe that we gain an ever better position towards it by systematically continuing to roll up experiences and think. Our great difference from the scholastic lies in the way we face. The strength of his system lies in the principles, the origin, the *terminus a quo* of his thought; for us the strength is in the outcome, the upshot, the *terminus ad quem* [the end to which]. Not where it comes from but what it leads to is to decide. It matters not to an empiricist from what quarter an hypothesis may come to him: he may have acquired it by fair means or by foul; passion may have whispered or accident suggested it; but if the total drift of thinking continues to confirm it, that is what he means by its being true.

VII

One more point, small but important, and our preliminaries are done. There are two ways of looking at our duty in the matter of opinion, — ways entirely different, and yet ways about whose difference the theory of knowledge seems hitherto to have shown very little concern. *We must know the truth;* and *we must avoid error,* — these are our first and great commandments as would-be knowers; but they are not two ways of stating an identical commandment, they are two separable laws. Although it may indeed happen that when we believe th» truth *A,* we escape as an incidental consequence from believing the falsehood *B,* it hardly ever happens that by merely disbelieving *B* we necessarily believe *A.* We may in escaping *B* fall into believing other falsehoods, *C* or *D,* just as bad as *B;* or we may escape *B* by not believing anything at all, not even *A.*

Believe truth! Shun error! — these, we see, are two materially different laws; and by choosing between them we may end by coloring differently our whole intellectual life. We may regard the chase for truth as paramount, and the avoidance of error as secondary; or we may, on the other hand, treat the avoidance of error as more imperative, and let truth take its chance. Clifford, in the instructive passage which I have quoted, exhorts us to the latter course. Believe nothing, he tells us, keep your mind in suspense forever, rather than by closing it on insufficient evidence incur the awful risk of believing lies. You, on the other hand, may think that the risk of being in error is a very

small matter when compared with the blessings of real knowledge, and be ready to be duped many times in your investigation rather than postpone indefinitely the chance of guessing true. I myself find it impossible to go with Clifford. We must remember that these feelings of our duty about either truth or error are in any case only expressions of our passional life. Biologically considered, our minds are as ready to grind out falsehood as veracity, and he who says, "Better go without belief forever than believe a lie! " merely shows his own preponderant private horror of becoming a dupe. He may be critical of many of his desires and fears, but this fear he slavishly obeys. He cannot imagine any one questioning its binding force. For my own part, I have also a horror of being duped; but I can believe that worse things than being duped may happen to a man in this world: so Clifford's exhortation has to my ears a thoroughly fantastic sound. It is like a general informing his soldiers that it is bette1 to keep out of battle forever than to risk a single wound. Not so are victories either over enemies or over nature gained. Our errors are surely not such awfully solemn things. In a world where we are so certain to incur them in spite of all our caution, a certain lightness of heart seems healthier than this excessive nervousness on their behalf. At any rate, it seems the fittest thing for the empiricist philosopher.

VIII

And now, after all this introduction, let us go straight at our question. I have said, and now repeat it, that not only as a matter of fact do we find our passional nature influencing us in our opinions, but that there are some options between opinions in which this influence must be regarded both as an inevitable and as a lawful determinant of our choice.

I fear here that some of you my hearers will begin to scent danger, and lend an inhospitable ear. Two first steps of passion you have indeed had to admit as necessary, — we must think so as to avoid dupery, and we must think so as to gain truth; but the surest path to those ideal consummations, you will probably consider, is from now onwards to take no further passional step.

Well, of course, I agree as far as the facts will allow. Wherever the option between losing truth and gaining it is not momentous, we can throw the chance of *gaining truth* away, and at any rate save ourselves from any chance of *believing falsehood,* by not making up our minds at all till objective evidence has come. In scientific questions, this is almost always the case; and even in human affairs in general, the need of acting is seldom so urgent that a false belief to act on is better than no belief at all. Law courts, indeed, have to decide on the best evidence attainable for the moment, because a judge's duty is to make law as well as to ascertain it, and (as a learned judge once said to me) few cases are worth spending much I time over: the great thing is to have them decided on *any* acceptable principle, and got out of the way. But in our dealings with objective nature we obviously are recorders, not makers, of the truth; and decisions for the mere sake of deciding promptly and getting on to the next business would be wholly out of place. Throughout the breadth of physical nature facts are what they are quite independently of us, and seldom is there any such hurry about them that the risks of being duped by believing a premature theory need be faced. The questions here are always trivial options, the hypotheses are hardly living (at any rate not living for us spectators), the choice between believing truth or falsehood is seldom forced. The attitude of skeptical balance is therefore the absolutely wise one if we would escape mistakes. What difference, indeed, does it make to most of us whether we have or have not a theory of the Rontgen rays, whether we believe or not in mind-stuff, or have a conviction about the causality of conscious states? It makes no difference. Such options are not forced on us. On every account it is better not to make them, but still keep weighing reasons *pro et contra* with an indifferent hand.

I speak, of course, here of the purely judging mind. For purposes of discovery such indifference is to be less highly recommended, and science would be far less advanced than she is if the passionate desires of individuals to get their own faiths confirmed had been kept out of the game. See for example the sagacity which Spencer and Weismann now display. On the other hand, if you want an absolute duffer in an investigation, you must, after all, take the man who has no interest whatever in its results: he is the warranted incapable, the positive fool. The most useful investigator, because the most sensitive observer, is always he whose eager interest in one side of the question is balanced by an equally keen nervousness lest he become deceived.1 Science has organized this nervousness into a regular *technique*, her so-called method of verification; and she has fallen so deeply in love with the method that one may even say she has ceased to care for truth by itself at all. It is only truth as technically verified that interests her. The truth of truths might come in merely affirmative form, and she would decline to touch it. Such truth as that, she might repeat with Clifford, would be stolen in defiance of her duty to mankind. Human passions, however, are stronger than technical

rules. "Le coeur a ses raisons," as Pascal says, "que la raison ne connait pas;" [The heart has its reasons that reason cannot know] and however indifferent to all but the bare rules of the game the umpire, the abstract intellect, may be, the concrete players who furnish him the materials to judge of are usually, each one of them, in love with some pet' live hypothesis ' of his own. Let us agree, however, that wherever there is no forced option, the dispassionately judicial intellect with no pet hypothesis, saving us, as it does, from dupery at any rate, ought to be our ideal.

The question next arises: Are there not somewhere forced options in our speculative questions, and can we (as men who may be interested at least as much in positively gaining truth as in merely escaping dupery) always wait with impunity till the coercive evidence shall have arrived? It seems *a priori* improbable that the truth should be so nicely adjusted to our needs and powers as that. In the great boarding-house of nature, the cakes and the butter and the syrup seldom come out so even and leave the plates so clean. Indeed, we should view them with scientific suspicion if they did.

IX

Moral questions immediately present themselves as questions whose solution cannot wait for sensible proof. A moral question is a question not of what sensibly exists, but of what is good, or would be good if it did exist. Science can tell us what exists; but to compare the *worths,* both of what exists and of what does not exist, we must consult not science, but ' what Pascal calls our heart. Science herself consults her heart when she lays it down that the infinite ascertainment of fact and correction of false belief are the supreme goods for man. Challenge the statement, and science can only repeat it oracularly, or else prove it by showing that such ascertainment and correction bring man all sorts of other goods which man's heart in turn declares. The question of having moral beliefs at all or not having them is decided by our will. Are our moral preferences true or false, or are they only odd biological phenomena, making things good or bad for *us,* but in themselves indifferent? How can your pure intellect decide? If your heart does not *want* a world of moral reality, your head will assuredly never make you believe in one. Mephistophelian skepticism, indeed, will satisfy the head's play-instincts much better than any rigorous idealism can. Some men (even at the student age) are so naturally cool-hearted that the moralistic hypothesis never has for them any pungent life, and in their supercilious presence the hot young moralist always feels strangely ill at ease. The appearance of knowingness is on their side, of *naiveté* and gullibility on his. Yet, in the inarticulate heart of him, he clings to it that he is not a dupe, and that there is a realm in which (as Emerson says) all their wit and intellectual superiority is no better than the cunning of a fox. Moral skepticism can no more be refuted or proved by logic than intellectual skepticism can. When we stick to it that there *is* truth (be it of either kind), we do so with our whole nature, and resolve to J stand or fall by the results. The skeptic with his whole nature adopts the doubting attitude; but which of us is the wiser, Omniscience only knows.

Turn now from these wide questions of good to a certain class of questions of fact, questions concerning personal relations, states of mind between one man and another. *Do you like me or not ?* — for example. Whether you do or not depends, in countless instances, on whether I meet you half-way, am willing to assume that you must like me, and show you trust and expectation. The previous faith on my part in your liking's existence is in such cases what makes your liking come. But if I stand aloof, and refuse to budge an inch until I have objective evidence, until you shall have done something apt, as the absolutists say, *ad extorquendum assensum meum,* [to compel my assent] ten to one your liking never comes. How many women's hearts are vanquished by the mere sanguine insistence of some man that they *must* love him! he will not consent to the hypothesis that they cannot. The desire for a certain kind of truth here brings about that special truth's existence; and so it is in innumerable cases of other sorts. Who gains promotions, boons, appointments, but the man in whose life they are seen to play the part of live hypotheses, who discounts them, sacrifices other things for their sake before they have come, and takes risks for them in advance? His faith acts on the powers above him as a claim, and creates its own verification.

A social organism of any sort whatever, large or small, is what it is because each member proceeds to his own duty with a trust that the other members will simultaneously do theirs. Wherever a desired result is achieved by the co-operation of many independent persons, its existence as a fact is a pure consequence of the precursive faith in one another of those immediately concerned. A government, an army, a commercial system, a ship, a college, an athletic team, all exist on this condition, without which not only is nothing achieved, but nothing is even attempted. A whole train of passengers (individually brave enough) will be looted by a few highwaymen, simply because the latter can count on one another, while each passenger fears that if he makes a movement of resistance, he will be shot before anyone else backs him up. If we believed that the whole car-full would rise at once with us, we should each severally rise, and train-robbing would never even be attempted. There are, then, cases where a fact cannot come at all unless I a preliminary

faith exists in its coming. *And where faith in a fact can help create the fact,* that would be an insane logic which should say that faith running ahead of scientific evidence is the ' lowest kind of immorality' into which a thinking being can fall. Yet such is the logic by which our scientific absolutists pretend to regulate our lives!

X

In truths dependent on our personal action, then, faith based on desire is certainly a lawful and possibly an indispensable thing.

But now, it will be said, these are all childish human cases, and have nothing to do with great cosmical matters, like the question of religious faith. Let us then pass on to that. Religions differ so much in their accidents that in discussing the religious question we must make it very generic and broad. What then do we now mean by the religious hypothesis? Science says things are; morality says some things are better than other things; and religion says essentially two things.

First, she says that the best things are the more 1 eternal things, the overlapping things, the things in the universe that throw the last stone, so to speak, and say the final word. " Perfection is eternal," — this phrase of Charles Secretan seems a good way of putting this first affirmation of religion, an affirmation which obviously cannot yet be verified scientifically at all,

The second affirmation of religion is that we are better off even now if we believe her first affirmation to be true.

Now, let us consider what the logical elements of this situation *are in case of religious hypothesis in both its branches be really true* (Of course, we must admit that possibility at the outset. If we are to discuss the question at all, it must involve a living option. If for any of you religion be a hypothesis that cannot, by any living possibility be true, then you need go no farther. I speak to the 'saving remnant' alone.) So proceeding, we see, first, that religion offers itself as an option. We are supposed to gain, even now, by our belief, and to lose by our nonbelief, a certain vital good. Secondly, religion is a *forced* option, so far as that good goes. We cannot escape the issue by remaining skeptical and waiting for more light, because, although we do avoid error in that way *if religion be untrue,* we lose the good, *if it be true,* just as certainly as if we positively chose to disbelieve. It is as if a man should hesitate indefinitely to ask a certain woman to marry him because he was not perfectly sure that she would prove an angel after he brought her home. Would he not cut himself off from that particular angel-possibility as decisively as if he went and married someone else? Skepticism, then, is not avoidance of option; it is option of a certain particular kind of risk. *Better risk loss of truth than chance of error,* — that is your faith-vetoer's exact position. He is actively playing his stake as much as the believer is; he is backing the field against the religious hypothesis, just as the believer is backing the religious hypothesis against the field. To preach skepticism to us as a duty until 'sufficient evidence' for religion be found, is tantamount therefore to telling us, when in presence of the religious hypothesis, that to yield to our fear of its being error is wiser and better than to yield to our hope that it may be true. It is not intellect against all passions, then; it is only intellect with one passion laying down its law. And by what, forsooth, is the supreme wisdom of this passion warranted? Dupery for dupery, what proof is there that dupery through hope is so much worse than dupery through fear? I, for one, can see no proof; and I simply refuse obedience to the scientist's command to imitate his kind of option, in a case where my own stake is important enough to give me the right to choose 1 my own form of risk. If religion be true and the evidence for it be still insufficient, I do not wish, by putting your extinguisher upon my nature (which feels to me as if it had after all some business in this matter), to forfeit my sole chance in life of getting upon the winning side, — that chance depending, of course, on my willingness to run the risk of acting I as if my passional need of taking the world religiously l might be prophetic and right.

All this is on the supposition that it really may be prophetic and right, and that, even to us who are discussing the matter, religion is a live hypothesis which may be true. Now, to most of us religion comes in a still further way that makes a veto on our active faith even more illogical. The more perfect and more eternal aspect of the universe is represented in our religions as having personal form. The universe is no longer a mere *It* to us, but a *Thou,* if we are religious; and any relation that may be possible from person to person might be possible here. For instance, although in one sense we are passive portions of the universe, in another we show a curious autonomy, as if we were small active centers on our own account. We feel, too, as if the appeal of religion to us were made to our own active good-will, as if evidence might be forever withheld from us unless we met the hypothesis half-way. To take a trivial illustration: just as a man who in a company of gentlemen made no advances, asked a warrant for every concession, and believed no one's word without proof, would cut himself off by such churlishness from all the social rewards that a more trusting spirit would earn, — so here, one who should shut himself up in snarling logicality and try to make the gods extort his recognition willy-nilly, or not get it at all, might cut himself off forever from

his only opportunity of making the gods' acquaintance. This feeling, forced on us we know not whence, that by obstinately believing that there are gods (although not to do so would be so easy both for our logic and our life) we are doing the universe the deepest service we can, seems part of the living essence of the religious hypothesis. If the hypothesis *were* true in all its parts, including this one, then pure intellectualism, with its veto on our making willing advances, would be an absurdity; and some participation of our sympathetic nature would be logically required. I, therefore, for one, cannot see my way to accepting the agnostic rules for truth-seeking, or willfully agree to keep my willing nature out of the game. I cannot do so for this plain reason, that *a rule of thinking which would absolutely prevent me from acknowledging certain kinds of truth if those kinds of truth were really there, would be an irrational rule.* That for me is the long and short of the formal logic of the situation, no matter what the kinds of truth might materially be.

I confess I do not see how this logic can be escaped. But sad experience makes me fear that some of you may still shrink from radically saying with me, *in abstracto,* that we have the right to believe at our own risk any hypothesis that is live enough to tempt our will. I suspect, however, that if this is so, it is because you have got away from the abstract logical point of view altogether, and are thinking (perhaps without realizing it) of some particular religious hypothesis which for you is dead. The freedom to ' believe what we will' you apply to the case of some patent superstition; and the faith you think of is the faith defined by the schoolboy when he said, “Faith is when you believe something that you know ain't true." I can only repeat that this is misapprehension. *In conereto,* the freedom to believe can only cover living options which the intellect of the individual cannot by itself resolve; and living options never seem absurdities to him who has: them to consider. When I look at the religious question as it really puts itself to concrete men, and when I think of all the possibilities which both practically and theoretically it involves, then this command that we shall put a stopper on our heart, instincts, and courage, and *wait*—acting of course meanwhile more or less as if religion were *not* true[3] — till doomsday, or till such time as our intellect and senses working together may have raked in evidence enough, — this command, I say, seems to me the queerest idol ever manufactured in the philosophic cave. Were we scholastic absolutists, there might be more excuse. If we had an infallible intellect with its objective certitudes, we might feel ourselves disloyal to such a perfect organ of knowledge in not trusting to it exclusively, in not waiting for its releasing word. But if we are empiricists, if we believe that no bell in us tolls to let us know for certain when truth is in our grasp, then it seems a piece of idle fantasticality to preach so solemnly our duty of waiting for the bell. Indeed we *may* wait if we will, — I hope you do not think that I am denying that, — but if we do so, we do so at our peril as much as if we believed. In either case we *act,* taking our life in l our hands. No one of us ought to issue vetoes to the other, nor should we bandy words of abuse. We ought, on the contrary, delicately and profoundly to respect one another's mental freedom: then only shall we bring about the intellectual republic; then only shall we have that spirit of inner tolerance without which all our outer tolerance is soulless, and which is empiricism's glory; then only shall we live and let live, in speculative as well as in practical things.

I began by a reference to Fitz James Stephen; let me end by a quotation from him. “What do you think of yourself? What do you think of the world? . . . These are questions with which all must deal as it seems good to them. They are riddles of the Sphinx, and in some way or other we must deal with them. ... In all important transactions of life we have to take a leap in the dark. ... If we decide to leave the riddles unanswered, that is a choice; if we waver in our answer, that, too, is a choice: but whatever choice we make, we make it at our peril. If a man chooses to turn his back altogether on God and the future, no one can prevent him; no one can show beyond reasonable doubt that he is mistaken. If a man thinks otherwise and acts as he thinks, I do .not see that anyone can prove that *he* is mistaken. Each must act as he thinks best; and if he is wrong, so much the worse for him. We stand on a mountain pass in the midst of whirling snow and blinding mist, through which we get glimpses now and then of paths which may be deceptive. If we stand still we shall be frozen to death. If we take the wrong road we shall be dashed to pieces. We do not certainly know whether there is any right one. What must we do? ‘Be strong and of a good courage.' Act for the best, hope for the best, and take what comes. ... If death ends all, we cannot meet death better."[4]

[1] An Address to the Philosophical Clubs of Yale and Brown Universities. Published in the New World, June, 1896.

[2] Compare the admirable page 310 in S. H. Hodgson's " Time and Space," London, 1865.

[3] Since belief is measured by action, he who forbids us to believe, religion to be true, necessarily also forbids us to act as we should if we did believe it to be true. The whole

defense of religious faith I hinges upon action. If the action required or inspired by the religious hypothesis is in no way different from that dictated by the naturalistic hypothesis, then religious faith is a pure superfluity, better pruned away, and controversy about its legitimacy is a piece of idle trifling, unworthy of serious minds. I myself believe, of course, that the religious hypothesis gives to the world an expression which specifically determines our reactions, and makes them in a large part unlike what they might be on a purely naturalistic scheme of belief.

[4] Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, p. 353, 2d edition. London, 1874

Thought Point	Points of Thought
How does James' thought differ from Peirce's?	
What are the ramifications of James' extension of Peirce's thought?	
How does James' vision of belief differ from Kierkegaard's?	

Socialism and Communism

We do not often think of these as philosophies, and in fact Engels was probably more of a social scientist. We often lump these in the ideology department, but like Locke before them, we will look for more than just slogans and some great art.

The Players

Dates	Philosophers	Main Points
1818 - 1883	Karl Marx	*German; Communism and Socialism; influenced by German; Hegel, esp. the historical dialectic; Economics over politics;*
1820 - 1895	Friedrich Engels	*With Marx, author of modern Communism; solidarity of the working class*
1870 - 1924	Vladimir Lenin	*Father of Russian Communism; politics over economics*
1879 - 1940	Leon (Lev) Trotsky	*Lenin's second; Opposed Stalin and was assassinated*
1893 – 1976	Mao Tse-tung	*Father of Chinese Communism; rural proletariat; practical, grass-roots knowledge, obtained through experience*

Table 5: Social Players

Communism, We Hardly Knew Ye…

While Russian Communism comes to mind (even more so than Chinese for some reason), that is not what we are really examining here. Lenin's dictatorial style of the-state-is-all is different than Marx and Engels' vision of the world.

Political systems aside, philosophically speaking Marx and Engels are the two names we usually relate to this system of when this subject comes up. In fact, in some senses, they are so closely related that they are reliant on each other. Together they produced *The Communist Manifesto* and Engels continued to edit the writings of Marx (*Das Kapital* to be precise), which in a sense also means that in the end, he controlled the message. For different reasons both men left Germany and ended up in London. So, this produces the first philosophy tag-team we have ever encountered. We saw a very close relationship between Peirce and James, well at least James to Peirce, but this goes well beyond that. There develops an intertwining of thought which eventually makes it hard to separate one from the other.

Enough of that though. Like Existentialism, Communism and Socialism have their share of pop-philosophical explanations. Heap on top of that the 'failure' of 'Communist' Russia due to problems far beyond those ever thought up by both men (though probably by Nietzsche), and well, you get the sense of it. We, on the other hand, plow into their thought, unbiased and ready to listen and learn. Unwilling to bow to the pressures of corrupt capitalist history writers we put our hands to that plow of free thought and stand to see that new days when we will intellectually crush through violent logic….oops, got carried away there.

Marx

Karl Marx is an interesting character. For all of the bravado we associate with him, he wrote poetry and songs dedicated to the love of his life Jenny; was a kind, devoted son to his father, he considered law as a career – *okay, two outa' three ain't bad*.[37]

He started out as a really huge fan of Kant and Fichte and their idealism, suddenly converting to Hegel and his idealism. "*A curtain had fallen, my holy of holies was rent asunder, and new gods had to be installed. From the idealism which, by the way, I had compared and nourished with the idealism of Kant and Fichte, I arrived at the point of seeking the idea in reality itself. If previously the gods had dwelt above the earth, now they became its center. I had read fragments of Hegel's philosophy, the grotesque craggy melody of which did not appeal to me. Once more I wanted to dive into the sea, but with the definite intention of establishing that the nature of the mind is just as necessary, concrete and firmly based as the nature of the body. My aim was no longer to practice tricks of swordsmanship, but to bring genuine pearls into the light of day.*" (*Letter to his father, Nov 1837*) He fathomed that the dialectic was the way to go yet, while he still saw it in terms of history, he felt it was better applied to classes instead of nations. So basically he repackages Hegel's 'idealistic' dialectics into 'materialistic' dialectics, what we call *philosophical materialism* (a historical/dialectic materialism) which differentiates it, I suppose from just plain capitalistic materialism.

Realistically he seems to have a love-hate relationship with Hegel and his dialectic, at once embracing it as the means of explaining everything and yet not wanting to commit himself to the larger application of it, feeling that it ended up as an "*abstract, logical, speculative* expression" (*Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic and Philosophy as a Whole*) and not reflective of the "*real* history of man". (*ibid*)[38] So he starts out telling his father "*While I was ill I got to know Hegel from beginning to end, together with most of his disciples….I came across a Doctors' Club, which includes some university lecturers…. In controversy here, many conflicting views were expressed, and I became ever more firmly bound to the modern world philosophy from which I had thought to escape, but all rich chords were silenced and I was seized with a veritable fury of irony, as could easily happen after so much had been negated.*" And ends up telling us "*My dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life-process of the human brain, i.e. the process of thinking, which, under the name of 'the Idea,' he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurges of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of 'the Idea.' With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought.*" (*Capital*). "*Nothing prevents us from combining our criticism with the criticism of politics, from participating in politics, and consequently in real struggles*," "*We will not, then, oppose the world like doctrinarians with a new principle: here is truth, kneel down here! We expose new principles to the world out of the principles of the world itself. We don't tell it: Give up your struggles, they are rubbish, we will show you the true war cry! We explain to it only the real object for which it struggles, and consciousness is a thing it must acquire even if it objects to it*" (from an article in the *Deutch-Franzosische Jahrbucher*).

We can still hear a bit of Kant in there and we can also see some of the thinking which Nietzsche also professed. That which enslaves, which lessens, whatever, must be eradicated, ripped out of the way if necessary but only to get to *the* truth. We move beyond good and evil, not because they do not exist, but because the existing understanding of them is flawed. This way of thinking might be compared to some medieval thinkers (skepticism) because it is more of a motion toward *negation*, and by negating, discovering and preserving the inner truth of the thing. For Marx, it is not about

[37] He did abandon this pursuit, I will leave it up to you to decide if it was to his credit or not.

[38] This of course you will recall, is a reference to the fact that Hegel thought all of human history came down to the dialectic – his example being the French Revolution.

rejecting something because it is untrue, or without foundation, and replacing it with something new but uncovering what gave rise to that existing bad thing — and then revolutionizing those aspects of it to come up with a better end. If we find something which has created the screwed up world in which we live, then we must revolutionize the world by getting rid of the thing which is screwing it up, thereby making it not-screwed-up. This will produce a 'real' world rather than the illusionary one in which we live.[39] Still, for Nietzsche it is a much less physical and violent possibility, more aimed toward the individual and not society (or a class) as a whole.

The Beautiful Lounge Suite

Let us saunter back to Adam Smith and his musings on value. The value of a product is the time, expertise, and cost of producing it, that is, its value lies outside of the product; the surplus value of the thing was profit. Marx too thinks about value and focuses on the profit made. Smith saw everyone benefiting from the arrangement. Surplus value was a reward. Marx saw the capitalist class as exploiting the working class by keeping not only their own but the surplus value produced by the working class as well, who, even by Smith's standards deserved a fair share. In other words, rather than everyone at the table being rewarded by the value of their contribution, Marx saw it as the few making lots of money off the labor of the many who did not share, and in fact lived in squalor while providing a lifestyle to the few out of proportion to their contribution.

The argument supporting this behavior being that they understood what was best for the company and by Smith's reasoning deserved the share equal *for what they did* (the value being greater than what the worker brings). And what was best for the company was therefore best for the workers. If the company prospered, so did its workers, ergo, since they owned the company the workers could not work without them. Marx on the other hand interpreted it more along the lines that by 'reinvesting' the surplus value rather than redistributing or paying the workers more up front, the capitalist class instead increases its *control* of society as a whole (not just the means of production). The interest of capitalists is to maximize profits, not social justice, and they create a society which bolsters and supports their thinking.

This means that social institution, like say, the police are at the beck and call not of those they should protect, but at those who feel they need protection. Free speech, social justice, rights for all, these things are easily subject to suppression to ensure the 'rights' of those who profit from the status quo.

Pursuant to this, the working class becomes *more and more alienated* from the process (socially, politically, and economically) because producer and product have been separated by the controlling *non-productive* capitalist class. This perceived 'right' of the owners springs from the idea that something could be *owned* by someone other than the producer, and for Marx, this is a flawed idea. Private property, which because of laws and tradition kept power within the realm of the few, shows the result of the process of alienation, and vice versa (something which can be seen all the way back to feudal times, and the effect of that time were still being felt via the attitudes and actions of the wealthy). And per this (as if that alone were not bad enough) the working class is *further alienated* because the capitalists own not just the product but the production system as well (whether it is a factory or arable land). Workers, not capitalists, needed to own the means of production, and not in a private way, as did the capitalists, but in a public way, where all could share equally, regardless of what they brought to the table. In a sense, no one group can be excluded because all are necessary for production. Every group therefore brings a thing of equal value to the table and therefore deserves and equal share of the surplus value.

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[39] **Old Woman**: I thought we were an autonomous collective…**Dennis**: You're fooling yourself – we're living in a dictatorship.... **Old Woman**: There you go, bringing class into it again! (*Monty Python and the Holy Grail*)

As a modern social commentary, Marx also points out that in a capitalistic economic system workers become trapped in a vicious circle: the harder they work, the more natural resources are needed for production. This leaves fewer resources for the workers to live on, because instead of growing your own corn, your corn is going to the ethanol plant you work at and not your belly.[40] The ability for the worker to be self-sufficient is denigrated, reducing them to paying for their own living out of their wages alone, forcing them to work even harder to earn enough to live on which in turn increases production, etc. This means that their very jobs keep them unable to subsist without giving their lives over to their 'masters'. The means of subsistence becomes a commodity just like labor and has value/cost outside of labor.

A Lack Of Social Graces

The result of the current system is that Society is divided into two *antagonistic* classes: the *proletariat* (the workers) and the *bourgeoisie* (the current, soon-to-be-possibly-displaced-or-dispatched owners of production). It is this division of labor which alienates workers from the product of their labors. Per the above, workers do not own the product of their work and as a result workers give much more than they receive.

So what is the outcome or at least the possible remedies? First is Socialism: all citizens own the means of production. Socialism provides a just distribution of wealth and services based on human needs, not profits. Still, it was prone to 'dogmatism' and though all should be shared, there can be some private ownership and some class division, kind of the haves sharing with the have-nots, which creates a one-sided system.

So next comes Communism with its full equality and truly class-less society, where there are no haves and have-nots. The workers truly control the means of production, and everyone has full ownership, meaning that none can control or lord ownership over another. There is no management-labor division, because the management is seen as labor and labor has management responsibility.

Let us take a moment and look at this as a moral system. Economy not wisdom determines the nature of human interaction. The economic system of a civilization (the way the civilization produces goods) determines the organization of its society. Society is organized in social classes that struggle for power and the history of humanity is the history of class struggles (think about Nietzsche's *will to power*). Classless societies, where the economics do not separate or denigrate give true power, and end human struggles and oppression. Feel free to start drawing some conclusions.

Using Hegel's understanding of history-as-dialectic as his basis, Marx takes it farther and shows how all nations go through five economic stages: *slavery*, *feudalism*, *capitalism*, *socialism* (merely collective ownership of property), and finally, *communism* (rule of the people). The ultimate goal of history is a class-less society of peers (because the ultimate Hegelian synthesis is not the Absolute but communism). Society *with* government (as a separate institution) will evolve into communism because government becomes economics. The working-class shall *overthrow* the capitalist class by violence if necessary and while he allows that this is not always necessary, it usually is, because face it, who really wants to give up the Bentley and the house on the Rivera?

Engels

Friedrich Engels met Karl Marx when he submitted an article to the paper Marx was on again, off again editing. They soon took up a correspondence and became fast friends. Engels was a son of

[40] The merits of corn as a food product are not debated here. Suffice it to say, whatever the crop the land that would be used to feed people is now given over to the production of the products resulting from that crop.

wealth and business who eventually moved to England to take over a factory owed by his father's firm. He had written articles for and corresponded with Marx but they did not meet until later, yet a deep friendship and collaboration developed. They bounced about Europe spreading the message and starting papers and periodicals, lecturing and establishing or legitimizing societies and unions. But unlike Nietzsche, it was not because they had no home.

A brilliant intellect himself, Engels often to defers to Marx and their relationship seems very loving, if one can use the word correctly. Yet Engels' relationship to Marx obviously had repercussions in his life. "*The* Critical Critique *is not yet here. The new title,* The Holy Family*, will involve me still farther in family difficulties with my already exasperated parents. Naturally you could not know this. In the advertisement you have put my name first — why? I have done next to nothing towards it, and everybody will recognize your style.*" Both men seemed to want to promote the other in all things.[41] Ironically enough, when both eventually moved to London, it was Engel's family business which kept both men from starving. Engels' work and eventual partnership in a capitalist concern, while out of sync with his teachings and beliefs nevertheless allowed those ideas to be sustained and spread.

At the risk of redundancy, Engels' position was already so close to Marx's that they melded almost immediately. He too saw the 'failure' of Socialism to truly satisfy the needs of the working man. "*Socialism in its present form can never accomplish anything for the labouring class; it would never lower itself to stand for an instant on the basis of Chartism* [a party of political reformers, chiefly workingmen, in England from 1838 to 1848 named for their manifesto: *People's Charter*]. *The union of this Owenism* [Robert Owen, a socialistic philosopher]*, the reproduction in an English form of the French Communism, must be the next step, and has already begun.*"

So the seeds of Communism are ripe and growing. The thinking which is spurring its growth is being championed by several people not mentioned in this chapter but influential on both Marx and Engels. For these thinkers, and for Engels especially, Communism is not just talk. For Engels it was action as well. In his letters to Marx he is not shy about the steps that must be taken as well as the risks. "*Yesterday morning the Mayor prohibited Frau Obermayer from holding any meeting on her premises; and warned me that if in spite of this a meeting should be held, an arrest and prosecution would follow. We have, of course, carried out our programme and must wait and see whether we are arrested, which I hardly think likely, for we were sharp enough to give them no handle, so that the whole affair could only end in a complete fiasco for the Government. Moreover, the public prosecutors and the whole county court were present, and the Chief Procurator himself took part in the discussion.*" (*letter of 26 February, 1845*)

Solidarity

One major idea of Engels' which plays into Marx's thought is *solidarity*. We can perhaps remember the workers movement in Poland ironically called Solidarity, and in a sense though it fought against the Communist regime it is a true echo of Engel's thought. Solidarity as Engels portrayed it pertained to the workers political unity. Most workers groups were not aligned and did not hold similar goals and ideals. Engels saw the importance of shared vision and action in order to reach the goal that all workers needed. He pushed the unity, the organization, and the shared commitment of the proletariat because without unity there could be no success. Ironically, this also meant fighting for orthodoxy of ideas and purpose.

The economic struggle of class is political. Only when united by common cause and thought could an effect front be raised against the existing political and economic system.

[41] A model for communism perhaps?

There is also a sense of solidarity with all thinking. Engels sees this thought as far-reaching and encompassing. There is a strong Hegelian aspect to it and it owes much to Hegel's insistence on the dialectic as the measure of all things. But he too does not tend toward Hegel's Absolute, except in perhaps the sense that it is everything. "*We are not concerned here with writing a handbook of dialectics, but only with showing that the dialectical laws are really laws of development of nature, and therefore are valid also for theoretical natural science.*" (*Dialectics of Nature*, Chapter 2)

Oh The Places You'll Go!

Following from that last quote, and this is probably an aside which only I will enjoy but, in a nostalgic look back to where we have been and the speculation which humans have done about the nature of the world, it is fascinating to see science and philosophy develop together over time.

In the midst of his discussion of the dialectic Engels writes "*If we imagine any non-living body cut up into smaller and smaller portions, at first no qualitative change occurs. But this has a limit: if we succeed, as by evaporation, in obtaining the separate molecules in the free state, then it is true that we can usually divide these still further, yet only with a complete change of quality. The molecule is decomposed into its separate atoms, which have quite different properties from those of the molecule. In the case of molecules composed of various chemical elements, atoms or molecules of these elements themselves make their appearance in the place of the compound molecule; in the case of molecules of elements, the free atoms appear, which exert quite distinct qualitative effects: the free atoms of nascent oxygen are easily able to effect what the atoms of atmospheric oxygen, bound together in the molecule, can never achieve.*" (*Dialectics of Nature*, Chapter 2) And that is just the first part of the discussion.

And in yet another aside, his *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State: in the light of the researches of Lewis H. Morgan* in his sections on the 'paring family' and the 'monogamous family' offers an insight into the place of women in society and observes the role of patriarchal oppression in preserving not only the capitalist order but the oppression of women through domestic labor. He urges the elimination of private domestic labor for women, producing a patriarchal precursor to feminism.

BFFs

"In *1845*, we [*Marx and Engels*] decided to devote ourselves to the research necessary to work out the materialistic explanation of history discovered by Marx." (preface by Engels to a work by Ludwig Feuerbach)

While each was a prolific and intelligent writer in his own right, let us take a moment and recount their shared works. In 1845 they produced their first joint offering: *he Holy Family; or a Review of the Critical Critique against Bruno Bauer and his Followers*. While Engels admittedly contributed "about a sheet and a half out of the whole", it showed their ability to work together as equal, or at least complimentary partners, something Marx had a problem doing sometimes with others. If we think back to the likes of Kant and Fichte, or more recently Peirce and James, we do not see a long history of collaboration amongst our philosophical denizens, making this years-long alliance that much more amazing.

Officially, the works they produced together were:

The *Communist Manifesto*, (1848), which was based in Engels' view previously articulated in the *Principles of Communism* (1847) but was a work primarily written by Marx.

"*Imaginary Splits in the International,*" (the *First International* was a federation of workers' groups, founded in 1864 by British and French trade-union leaders) is an example of their collaborative work to renounce other incorrect or disruptive thought being generated by other

thinkers in the worker's movements. They wrote many articles, letters, and lectures along these lines (aside from their personal correspondences).

Das Capital (*Capital*) (1867-95), a more scholarly lying out of the principles of Communism, thought primarily written by him was not finished before Marx's death. Engels continued to edit it until his own death.

Opiate Of The Masses

This phrase rings in the ears of most Westerners. I do not want to spend too much time on it, but, like Nietzsche's 'god is dead' thing, it probably needs to be addressed. First off, the quote is more properly translated as 'the opiate of the people' not 'the masses'.

The full quote is "*Religion is, indeed, the self-consciousness and self-esteem of man who has either not yet won through to himself, or has already lost himself again. But man is no abstract being squatting outside the world. Man is the world of man—state, society. This state and this society produce religion, which is an inverted consciousness of the world, because they are an inverted world. Religion is the general theory of this world, its encyclopedic compendium, its logic in popular form, its spiritual point d'honneur, its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn complement, and its universal basis of consolation and justification. It is the fantastic realization of the human essence since the human essence has not acquired any true reality. The struggle against religion is, therefore, indirectly the struggle against that world whose spiritual aroma is religion. Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness. To call on them to give up their illusions about their condition is to call on them to give up a condition that requires illusions. The criticism of religion is, therefore, in embryo, the criticism of that vale of tears of which religion is the halo.*"(*Contribution to Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*)

What are the social systems which the bourgeoisie keeps in place to support the suppression of the proletariat? What seems to satisfy but in fact only produces illusion? Marx's fight with religion is not necessarily a fight with God, as was Nietzsche's, though the thinking is similar as we can see from the quote. The worker needed to 'win himself' free from the illusionary nature of religion so that he can truly claim his place and his right. It could be argued, I suppose, in Marx's thought at least that religion could perhaps reclaim a spot in the proletariat world but only if what it brought to the table was equal and productive and it did not siphon off resources from the worker.

Putting It Together

So how does social thought end up affecting the course of philosophy? There is a Jeep commercial that in a slogan which would make Marx proud states "the things we make, make us".[42] How odd that this would be thought of in capitalist terms, not only that but as representative of American values? Anyway, we can hear the existentialist mantra, and even Nietzsche's call for

[42] The slogan ends the commercial but the text is: "The things that make us Americans are the things we make. This has always been a nation of builders. Of craftsman. Men and women for whom straight stitches and clean welds were matters of personal pride. They made the skyscrapers and the cotton gins. The colt revolvers and the jeep 4X4's. These things make us who we are.

As a people we do well when we make good things and not so well when we don't. The good news is this can be put right. We just have to do it. And so we did. This, our newest son, was imagined, drawn, carved, stamped, hewn and forged here in America. It is well made and it is designed to work. This was once a country where people made things. Beautiful things. And so it is again."

power, yet we also hear the echo of his disdain for such systems where the weak control the strong "...disagreeable for the Christian conscience and important for philosophic progress..." (From a letter published in the *Sozialdemokrat,* 1865)

Marx was at heart a romantic and an idealist. Certainly there is a radical element to this thought, which cannot be separated from it. While even today some elements that rely on it may be considered radical even in terms of its initial radical nature, it is the very activity of the thought to be loud, harsh, blunt, and radical. The feeling that change does not come easy and without complete upheaval is not, as we have seen, a new form of thinking.

Both Marx and Engels started out as Socialists, but soon grew discontented with it, coming to the dialectic conclusion that the ultimate synthesis was communism, where all things are synthesized, melded. There are no classes to separate, no ownership to exclude, no differentiation of jobs to alienate, only work and work for the good of all.

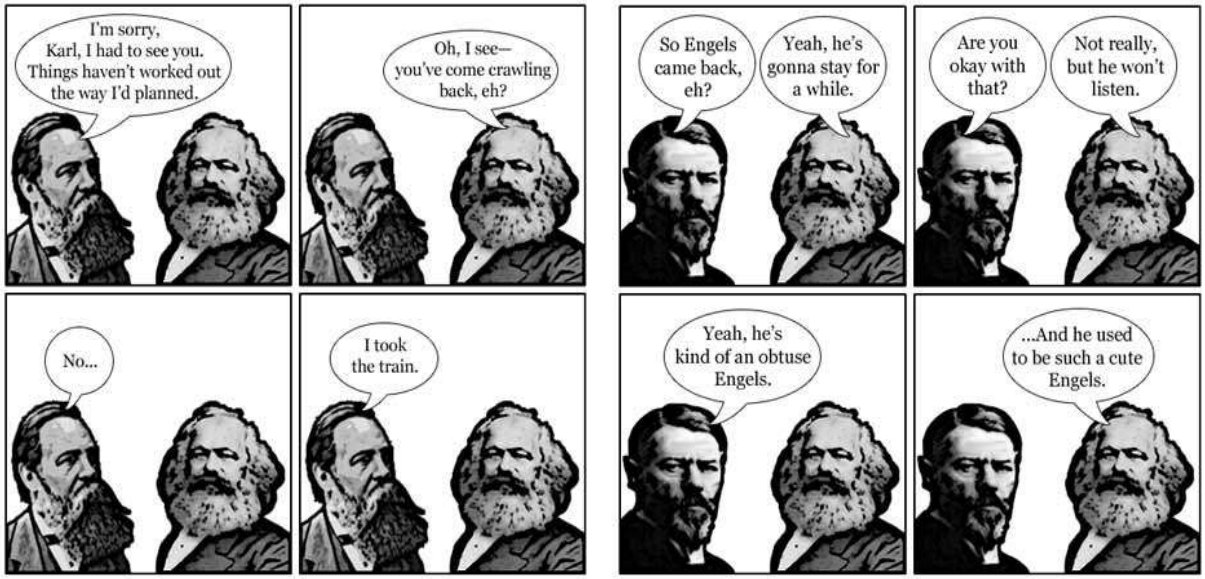
We can also see a bit more of the struggle of secular versus religious thought from an introduction to a criticism of Hegel's *Philosophy of Law* where the argument that theological criticism (*criticism* in the sense of evaluation not its negative connotation) was rapidly being replaced, of necessity, by political criticism.

So it is not so much a political as an economic struggle within a political context, that is, the politics of economics. Rights and freedoms were based less in John Locke's ideas as Adam Smith's. The idea of universal rights was not the context for economic justice but the other way around, thus they are not 'universals' in and of themselves, only in context.

In the end, while most of the credit and vilification goes to Marx as the brilliant theoretician of the pair, it was Engels, as the brilliant and apt businessman (salesman) who popularized their shared thought. Marx relied on Engels' ability to make the theory palatable as well as his ability as a businessman to continue championing the cause. Some might (and do) argue that in the end, as the final editor of the message, Engels 'changed' it, warping the original thinking of Marx and thus planting the seeds of its destruction. This humble writer feels that Marx trusted Engels implicitly, and that Engels, while a brilliant writer and thinker in his own right, knew the mind and hear of Marx in a way that most critics do not. He makes no statements as to the effect of Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, and Mao.

History, through Hegel, has taken on a new kind of dynamic. We could perhaps divide historical interpretation into two basic categories. The medieval mind perhaps sums up earlier thinking that history is 'organic' that is it 'grows', that the roots of the past are essential for understanding how to move forward. Hegel perhaps sums up the more modern thinking that all is 'progress' that revolution is the basis for any forward motion.

"Please, dear Father, excuse my illegible handwriting and bad style; it is almost 4 o'clock, the candle has burnt itself out, and my eyes are dim; a real unrest has taken possession of me, I shall not be able to calm the turbulent specters until I am with you who are dear to me.
Please give greetings from me to my sweet, wonderful Jenny. I have read her letter twelve times already, and always discover new delights in it. It is in every respect, including that of style, the most beautiful letter I can imagine being written by a woman." **Karl Marx** *Letter to his father*, *Nov 1837*



http://ex-bostonian.blogspot.com/2005_03_01_archive.html

Karl Marx: *People's Paper*

Speech at anniversary of the *People's Paper*

The so-called revolutions of 1848 were but poor incidents — small fractures and fissures in the dry crust of European society. However, they denounced the abyss. Beneath the apparently solid surface, they betrayed oceans of liquid matter, only needing expansion to rend into fragments continents of hard rock. Noisily and confusedly they proclaimed the emancipation of the Proletarian, i.e. the secret of the 19th century, and of the revolution of that century.

That social revolution, it is true, was no novelty invented in 1848. Steam, electricity, and the self-acting mule were revolutionists of a rather more dangerous character than even citizens Barbés, Raspail and Blanqui. But, although the atmosphere in which we live, weighs upon every one with a 20,000 lb. force, do you feel it? No more than European society before 1848 felt the revolutionary atmosphere enveloping and pressing it from all sides. There is one great fact, characteristic of this our 19th century, a fact which no party dares deny.

On the one hand, there have started into life industrial and scientific forces, which no epoch of the former human history had ever suspected. On the other hand, there exist symptoms of decay, far surpassing the horrors recorded of the latter times of the Roman Empire. In our days, everything seems pregnant with its contrary: Machinery, gifted with the wonderful power of shortening and fructifying human labor, we behold starving and overworking it; The newfangled sources of wealth, by some strange weird spell, are turned into sources of want; The victories of art seem bought by the loss of character.

At the same pace that mankind masters nature, man seems to become enslaved to other men or to his own infamy. Even the pure light of science seems unable to shine but on the dark background of ignorance. All our invention and progress seem to result in endowing material forces with intellectual life, and in stultifying human life into a material force.

This antagonism between modern industry and science on the one hand, modern misery and dissolution on the other hand; this antagonism between the productive powers and the social relations of our epoch is a fact, palpable, overwhelming, and not to be controverted. Some parties may wail over it; others may wish to get rid of modern arts, in order to get rid of modern conflicts. Or they may imagine that so signal a progress in industry wants to be completed by as signal a regress in politics. On our part, we do not mistake the shape of the shrewd spirit that continues to mark all these contradictions. We know that to work well the newfangled forces of society, they only want to be mastered by newfangled men — and such are the working men. They are as much the invention of modern time as machinery itself.

In the signs that bewilder the middle class, the aristocracy and the poor prophets of regression, we do recognize our brave friend, Robin Goodfellow[1], the old mole that can work in the earth so fast, that worthy pioneer — the Revolution. The English working men are the firstborn sons of modern industry. They will then, certainly, not be the last in aiding the social revolution produced by that industry, a revolution, which means the emancipation of their own class all over the world, which is as universal as capital-rule and wages-slavery. I know the heroic struggles the English working class have gone through since the middle of the last century — struggles less glorious, because they are shrouded in obscurity, and burked by the middleclass historian. To revenge the misdeeds of the ruling class, there existed in the middle ages, in Germany, a secret tribunal, called the "Vehmgericht." [2] If a red cross was seen marked on a house, people knew that its owner was doomed by the "Vehm." All the houses of Europe are now marked with the mysterious red cross.

History is the judge — its executioner, the proletarian.

Endnotes

Delivered: April 14, 1856; London;
Source: Marx/Engels Selected Works, Volume One, p. 500;
Publisher: Progress Publishers, Moscow, USSR, 1969;
First Published: The *People's Paper*, April 19, 1856;

On April 14 1856, Marx was invited as an official representative of the revolutionary refugees in London to a banquet commemorating the fourth anniversary of the Chartist People's Paper. He used the occasion to demonstrate the internationalist solidarity that united the proletarian revolutionaries, among whom he had established himself as the outstanding leader, with the revolutionary wing of the Chartist movement, and show that in contrast to the French and German petty-bourgeois democrats, who were merely flirting with the Chartist leaders, the German communists were true allies of the Chartists, sharing with them the aim of achieving the rule of the working class in all countries (for more on this, see Marx's letter to Engels of April 16, 1856). In his address (he was the first speaker) Marx concentrated on the historic role of the proletariat. The banquet was also addressed by another representative of the German communists, Wilhelm Pieper. The other speakers were mostly Chartists (James Finlen, Ernest Jones and others).

Marx did not intend to publish his speech. It was, however, included in the newspaper report under the heading: "Fourth Anniversary Banquet of *The People's Paper*." The following text preceded the speech:

"On Monday last at the Bell Hotel, Strand, Ernest Jones entertained the compositors of *The People's Paper* and the other gentlemen connected with its office, at a supper, which was joined by a large number of the leading Democrats of England, France and Germany now in London. The entertainment was of the choicest description, and reflected the greatest credit on the enterprising proprietor of the Hotel, Mr. Hunter; the choicest viands and condiments of the season being supplied in profusion. The tables were well filled with a numerous company of both sexes, Ernest Jones occupying the chair, and Mr. Fowley, manager of *The People's Paper* office, the vice-chair. The banquet commenced at seven, and at nine o'clock the cloth was cleared, when a series of sentiments was given from the chair.

"The Chairman then proposed the toast: 'The proletarians of Europe', which was responded to by Dr. Marx as follows:"

1. A character in Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream.
2. The *Vehmgericht*, derived from *Vehme* (judgment, punishment) and *Gericht* (court), was a secret tribunal which exercised great power in Westphalia from the end of the twelfth to the middle of the sixteenth century.

Thought Point	Points of Thought
What is the subject of this piece?	
How does previous thought help or hinder human development?	
How does scientific thinking hinder human development?	
What is the relationship between humanity and nature?	
How does industry affect humanity?	
What idea does he illuminate in this discussion?	
What is the role of revolution?	
How does this reflect his vision of history?	
What might Nietzsche say?	

Frederick Engels: *Dialectics of Nature*

INTRODUCTION

MODERN natural science, which alone has achieved an all-round systematic and scientific development, as contrasted with the brilliant natural-philosophical intuitions of antiquity and the extremely important but sporadic discoveries of the Arabs, which for the most part vanished without results - this modern natural science dates, like all more recent history, from that mighty epoch which we Germans term the Reformation, from the national misfortune that overtook us at that time, and which the French term the Renaissance and the Italians the Cinquecento [500], although it is not fully expressed by any of these names. It is the epoch which had its rise in the last half of the fifteenth century. Royalty, with the support of the burghers of the towns, broke the power of the feudal nobility and established the great monarchies, based essentially on nationality, within which the modern European nations and modern bourgeois society came to development. And while the burghers and nobles were still fighting one another, the peasant war in Germany pointed prophetically to future class struggles, not only by bringing on to the stage the peasants in revolt - that was no longer anything new - but behind them the beginnings of the modern proletariat, with the red flag in their hands and the demand for common ownership of goods on their lips. In the manuscripts saved from the fall of Byzantium, in the antique statues dug out of the ruins of Rome, a new world was revealed to the astonished West, that of ancient Greece: the ghosts of the Middle Ages vanished before its shining forms; Italy rose to an undreamt-of flowering of art, which seemed like a reflection of classical antiquity and was never attained again. In Italy, France, and Germany a new literature arose, the first, modern literature; shortly afterwards came the classical epochs of English and Spanish literature. The bounds of the old *orbis terrarum* were pierced. Only now for the first time was the world really discovered and the basis laid for subsequent world trade and the transition from handicraft to manufacture, which in its turn formed the starting-point for modern large scale industry. The dictatorship of the Church over men's minds was shattered; it was directly cast off by the majority of the Germanic peoples, who adopted Protestantism, while among the Latins a cheerful spirit of free thought, taken over from the Arabs and nourished by the newly-discovered Greek philosophy, took root more and more and prepared the way for the materialism of the eighteenth century.

It was the greatest progressive revolution that mankind has so far experienced, a time which called for giants and produced giants - giants in power of thought, passion, and character, in universality and learning. The men who founded the modern rule of the bourgeoisie had anything but bourgeois limitations. On the contrary, the adventurous character of the time inspired them to a greater or less degree. There was hardly any man of importance then living who had not travelled extensively, who did not command four or five languages, who did not shine in a number of fields. Leonardo da Vinci was not only a great painter but also a great mathematician, mechanician, and engineer, to whom the most diverse branches of physics are indebted for important discoveries. Albrecht Durer was painter, engraver, sculptor, and architect, and in addition invented a system of fortification embodying many of the ideas that much later were again taken up by Montalembert and the modern German science of fortification. Machiavelli was statesman, historian, poet, and at the same time the first notable military author of modern times. Luther not only cleaned the Augean stable of the Church but also that of the German language; he created modern German prose and composed the text and melody of that triumphal hymn which became the Marseillaise of the sixteenth century. The heroes of that time had not yet come under the servitude of the division of labor, the restricting effects of which, with its production of one-sidedness, we so often notice in their successors. But what is especially characteristic of them is that they almost all pursue their

lives and activities in the midst of the contemporary movements, in the practical struggle; they take sides and join in the fight, one by speaking and writing, another with the sword, many with both. Hence the fullness and force of character that makes them complete men. Men of the study are the exception - either persons of second or third rank or cautious philistines who do not want to burn their fingers.

At that time natural science also developed in the midst of the general revolution and was itself thoroughly revolutionary; it had to win in struggle its right of existence. Side by side with the great Italians from whom modern philosophy dates, it provided its martyrs for the stake and the prisons of the Inquisition. And it is characteristic that Protestants outdid Catholics in persecuting the free investigation of nature. Calvin had Servetus burnt at the stake when the latter was on the point of discovering the circulation of the blood, and indeed he kept him roasting alive during two hours; for the Inquisition at least it sufficed to have Giordano Bruno simply burnt alive.

The revolutionary act by which natural science declared its independence and, as it were, repeated Luther's burning of the Papal Bull was the publication of the immortal work by which Copernicus, though timidly and, so to speak, only from his deathbed, threw down the gauntlet to ecclesiastical authority in the affairs of nature. The emancipation of natural science from theology dates from this act, although the fighting out of the particular antagonistic claims has dragged out up to our day and in many minds is still far from completion. Thenceforward, however, the development of the sciences proceeded with giant strides, and, it might be said, gained in force in proportion to the square of the distance (in time) from its point of departure. It was as if the world were to be shown that henceforth the reciprocal law of motion would be as valid for the highest product of organic matter, the human mind, as for inorganic substance.

The main work in the first period of natural science that now opened lay in mastering the material immediately at hand. In most fields a start had to be made from the very beginning. Antiquity had bequeathed Euclid and the Ptolemaic solar system; the Arabs had left behind the decimal notation, the beginnings of algebra, the modern numerals, and alchemy; the Christian Middle Ages nothing at all. Of necessity, in this situation the most fundamental natural science, the mechanics of terrestrial and heavenly bodies, occupied first place, and alongside of it, as handmaiden to it, the discovery and perfecting of mathematical methods. Great work was achieved here. At the end of the period characterized by Newton and Linnaus we find these branches of science brought to a certain perfection. The basic features of the most essential mathematical methods were established; analytical geometry by Descartes especially, logarithms by Napier, and the differential and integral calculus by Leibniz and perhaps Newton. The same holds good of the mechanics of rigid bodies, the main laws of which were made clear once for all. Finally in the astronomy of the solar system Kepler discovered the laws of planetary movement and Newton formulated them from the point of view of the general laws of motion of matter. The other branches of natural science were far removed even from this preliminary perfection. Only towards the end of the period did the mechanics of fluid and gaseous bodies receive further treatment. Physics proper had still not gone beyond its first beginnings, with the exception of optics, the exceptional progress of which was due to the practical needs of astronomy. By the phlogistic theory, chemistry for the first time emancipated itself from alchemy. Geology had not yet gone beyond the embryonic stage of mineralogy; hence paleontology could not yet exist at all. Finally, in the field of biology the essential preoccupation was still with the collection and first sifting of the immense material, not only botanical and zoological but also anatomical and even physiological. There could as yet be hardly any talk of the comparison of the various forms of life, of the investigation of their geographical distribution and their climatic, etc., living conditions. Here only botany and zoology arrived at an approximate completion owing to Linnæus.

But what especially characterizes this period is the elaboration of a peculiar general outlook, in which the central point is the view of the *absolute immutability of nature*. In whatever way nature itself might have come into being, once present it remained as it was as long as it continued to exist. The planets and their satellites, once set in motion by the mysterious "first impulse", circled on and on in their predestined ellipses for all eternity, or at any rate until the end of all things. The stars remained for ever fixed and immovable in their places, keeping one another therein by "universal gravitation". The earth had persisted without alteration from all eternity, or, alternatively, from the first day of its creation. The "five continents" of the present day had always existed, and they had always had the same mountains, valleys, and rivers, the same climate, and the same flora and fauna, except in so far as change or cultivation had taken place at the hand of man. The species of plants and animals had been established once for all when they came into existence; like continually produced like, and it was already a good deal for Linnaeus to have conceded that possibly here and there new species could have arisen by crossing. In contrast to the history of mankind, which develops

in time, there was ascribed to the history of nature only an unfolding in space. All change, all development in nature, was denied. Natural science, so revolutionary at the outset, suddenly found itself confronted by an out-and-out conservative nature in which even to-day everything was as it had been at the beginning and in which - to the end of the world or for all eternity - everything would remain as it had been since the beginning.

High as the natural science of the first half of the eighteenth century stood above Greek antiquity in knowledge and even in the sifting of its material, it stood just as deeply below Greek antiquity in the theoretical mastery of this material, in the general outlook on nature. For the Greek philosophers the world was essentially something that had emerged from chaos, something that had developed, that had come into being. For the natural scientists of the period that we are dealing with it was something ossified, something immutable, and for most of them something that had been created at one stroke. Science was still deeply enmeshed in theology. Everywhere it sought and found its ultimate resort in an impulse from outside that was not to be explained from nature itself. Even if attraction, by Newton pompously baptized as "universal gravitation", was conceived as an essential property of matter, whence comes the unexplained tangential force which first gives rise to the orbits of the planets? How did the innumerable varieties of animals and plants arise? And how, above all, did man arise, since after all it was certain that he was not present from all eternity? To such questions natural science only too frequently answered by making the creator of all things responsible. Copernicus, at the beginning of the period, writes a letter renouncing theology; Newton closes the period with the postulate of a divine first impulse. The highest general idea to which this natural science attained was that of the purposiveness of the arrangements of nature, the shallow teleology of Wolff, according to which cats were created to eat mice, mice to be eaten by cats, and the whole of nature to testify to the wisdom of the creator. It is to the highest credit of the philosophy of the time that it did not let itself be led astray by the restricted state of contemporary natural knowledge, and that - from Spinoza right to the great French materialists - it insisted on explaining the world from the world itself and left the justification in detail to the natural science of the future.

I include the materialists of the eighteenth century in this period because no natural scientific material was available to them other than that above described. Kant's epoch- making work remained a secret to them, and Laplace came long after them. We should not forget that this obsolete outlook on nature, although riddled through and through by the progress of science, dominated the entire first half of the nineteenth century, and in substance is even now still taught in all schools. [1]

The first breach in this petrified outlook on nature was made not by a natural scientist but by a philosopher. In 1755 appeared *Kant's Allgemeine Naturgesehichte und Theorie des Himmels [General Natural History and Theory of the Heavens]*. The question of the first impulse was abolished; the earth and the whole solar system appeared as something that had come into being in the course of time. If the great majority of the natural scientists had had a little less of the repugnance to thinking that Newton expressed in the warning: "Physics, beware of metaphysics!", they would have been compelled from this single brilliant discovery of Kant's to draw conclusions that would have spared them endless deviations and immeasurable amounts of time and labor wasted in false directions. For Kant's discovery contained the point of departure for all further progress. If the earth were something that had come into being, then its present geological, geographical, and climatic state, and its plants and animals likewise, must be something that had come into being; it must have had a history not only of co-existence in space but also of succession in time. If at once further investigations had been resolutely pursued in this direction, natural science would now be considerably further advanced than it is. Rut what good could come of philosophy? Kant's work remained without immediate results, until many years later Laplace and Herschel expounded its contents and gave them a deeper foundation, thereby gradually bringing the "nebular hypothesis" into favour. Further discoveries finally brought it victory; the most important of these were: the proper motion of the fixed stars, the demonstration of a resistant medium in universal space, the proof furnished by spectral analysis of the chemical identity of the matter of the universe and the existence of such glowing nebular masses as Kant had postulated.

It is, however, permissible to doubt whether the majority of natural scientists would so soon have become conscious of the contradiction of a changing earth that bore immutable organisms, had not the dawning conception that nature does not just *exist*, but *comes into being and passes away*, derived support from another quarter. Geology arose and pointed out, not only the terrestrial strata formed one after another and deposited one upon another, but also the shells and skeletons of extinct animals and the trunks, leaves, and fruits of no longer existing plants contained in these strata. It had finally to be acknowledged that not only the earth as a whole but also its present surface and the plants and animals living on it possessed a history in time. At first the acknowledgement occurred reluctantly enough. Cuvier's

theory of the revolutions of the earth was revolutionary in phrase and reactionary in substance. In place of a single divine creation, he put a whole series of repeated acts of creation, making the miracle an essential natural agent. Lyell first brought sense into geology by substituting for the sudden revolutions due to the moods of the creator the gradual effects of a slow transformation of the earth. [2]

Lyell's theory was even more incompatible than any of its predecessors with the assumption of constant organic species. Gradual transformation of the earth's surface and of all conditions of life led directly to gradual transformation of the organisms and their adaptation to the changing environment, to the mutability of species. But tradition is a power not only in the Catholic Church but also in natural science. For years, Lyell himself did not see the contradiction, and his pupils still less. This is only to be explained by the division of labor that had meanwhile become dominant in natural science, which more or less restricted each person to his special sphere, there being only a few whom it did not rob of a comprehensive view. Meanwhile physics had made mighty advances, the results of which were summed up almost simultaneously by three different persons in the year 1842, an epoch-making year for this branch of natural investigation. Mayer in Heilbronn and Joule in Manchester demonstrated the transformation of heat into mechanical energy and of mechanical energy into heat. The determination of the mechanical equivalent of heat put this result beyond question. Simultaneously, by simply working up the separate physical results already arrived at, Grove - not a natural scientist by profession, but an English lawyer - proved that all so-called physical energy, mechanical energy, heat, light, electricity magnetism, indeed even so-called chemical energy, become transformed into one another under definite conditions without any loss of energy occurring, and so proved *post factum* along physical lines Descartes' principle that the quantity of motion present in the world is constant. With that the special physical energies, the as it were immutable "species" of physics, were resolved into variously differentiated forms of the motion of matter, convertible into one another according to definite laws. The fortuitousness of the existence of a number of physical energies was abolished from science by the proof of their interconnections and transitions. Physics, like astronomy before it, had arrived at a result that necessarily pointed to the eternal cycle of matter in motion as the ultimate reality.

The wonderfully rapid development of chemistry, since Lavoisier, and especially since Dalton, attacked the old ideas of nature from another aspect. The preparation by inorganic means of compounds that hitherto had been produced only in the living organism proved that the laws of chemistry have the same validity for organic as for inorganic bodies, and to a large extent bridged the gulf between inorganic and organic nature, a gulf that even Kant regarded as for ever impassable.

Finally, in the sphere of biological research also the scientific journeys and expeditions that had been systematically organized since the middle of the previous century, the more thorough exploration of the European colonies in all parts of the world by specialists living there, and further the progress of paleontology, anatomy, and physiology in general, particularly since the systematic use of the microscope and the discovery of the cell, had accumulated so much material that the application of the comparative method became possible and at the same time indispensable. On the one hand the conditions of life of the various floras and faunas were determined by means of comparative physical geography; on the other hand the various organisms were compared with one another according to their homologous organs, and this not only in the adult condition but at all stages of development. The more deeply and exactly this research was carried on, the more did the rigid system of an immutable, fixed organic nature crumble away at its touch. Not only did the separate species of plants and animals become more and more inextricably intermingled, but animals turned up, such as *Amphioxus* and *Lepidosiren*, that made a mockery of all previous classification, and finally organisms were encountered of which it was not possible to say whether they belonged to the plant or animal kingdom. More and more the gaps in the paleontological record were filled up, compelling even the most reluctant to acknowledge the striking parallelism between the evolutionary history of the organic world as a whole and that of the individual organism, the Ariadne's thread that was to lead the way out of the labyrinth in which botany and zoology appeared to have become more and more deeply lost. It was characteristic that, almost simultaneously with Kant's attack on the eternity of the solar system, C. F. Wolff in 1759 launched the first attack on the fixity of species and proclaimed the theory of descent. But what in his case was still only a brilliant anticipation took firm shape in the hands of Oken, Lamarck, Baer, and was victoriously carried through by Darwin in 1859, exactly a hundred years later. Almost simultaneously it was established that protoplasm and the cell, which had already been shown to be the ultimate morphological constituents of all organisms, occurred independently as the lowest forms of organic life. This not only reduced the gulf between inorganic and organic nature to a minimum but removed one of the most essential difficulties that had previously stood in the way of the theory of descent of organisms. The new conception of nature

was complete in its main features; all rigidity was dissolved, all fixity dissipated, all particularity that had been regarded as eternal became transient, the whole of nature shown as moving in eternal flux and cyclical course.

Thus we have once again returned to the point of view of the great founders of Greek philosophy, the view that the whole of nature, from the smallest element to the greatest, from grains of sand to suns, from protista to men, has its existence in eternal coming into being and passing away, in ceaseless flux, in un-resting motion and change, only with the essential difference that what for the Greeks was a brilliant intuition, is in our case the result of strictly scientific research in accordance with experience, and hence also it emerges in a much more definite and clear form. It is true that the empirical proof of this motion is not wholly free from gaps, but these are insignificant in comparison with what has already been firmly established, and with each year they become more and more filled up. And how could the proof in detail be otherwise than defective when one bears in mind that the most essential branches of science —trans-planetary astronomy, chemistry, geology— have a scientific existence of barely a hundred years, and the comparative method in physiology one of barely fifty years, and that the basic form of almost all organic development, the cell, is a discovery not yet forty years old?

The innumerable suns and solar systems of our island universe, bounded by the outermost stellar rings of the Milky Way, developed from swirling, glowing masses of vapor, the laws of motion of which will perhaps be disclosed after the observations of some centuries have given us an insight into the proper motion of the stars. Obviously, this development did not proceed everywhere at the same rate. Recognition of the existence of dark bodies, not merely planetary in nature, hence extinct suns in our stellar system, more and more forces itself on astronomy (Mädler); on the other hand (according to Secchi) a part of the vaporous nebular patches belong to our stellar system as suns not yet fully formed, whereby it is not excluded that other nebulae, as Mädler maintains, are distant independent island universes, the relative stage of development of which must be determined by the spectroscope.

How a solar system develops from an individual nebular mass has been shown in detail by Laplace in a manner still unsurpassed; subsequent science has more and more confirmed him.

On the separate bodies so formed - suns as well as planets and satellites - the form of motion of matter at first prevailing is that which we call heat. There can be no question of chemical compounds of the elements even at a temperature like that still possessed by the sun; the extent to which heat is transformed into electricity or magnetism under such conditions, continued solar observations will show; it is already as good as proved that the mechanical motion taking place in the sun arises solely from the conflict of heat with gravity.

The smaller the individual bodies, the quicker they cool down, the satellites, asteroids, and meteors first of all, just as our moon has long been extinct. The planets cool more slowly, the central body slowest of all.

With progressive cooling the interplay of the physical forms of motion which become transformed into one another comes more and more to the forefront until finally a point is reached from when on chemical affinity begins to make itself felt, the previously chemically indifferent elements become differentiated chemically one after another, obtain chemical properties, and enter into combination with one another. These compounds change continually with the decreasing temperature, which affects differently not only each element but also each separate compound of the elements, changing also with the consequent passage of part of the gaseous matter first to the liquid and then the solid state, and with the new conditions thus created.

The period when the planet has a firm shell and accumulations of water on its surface coincides with that when its intrinsic heat diminishes more and more in comparison to the heat emitted to it from the central body. Its atmosphere becomes the arena of meteorological phenomena in the sense in which we now understand the word; its surface becomes the arena of geological changes in which the deposits resulting from atmospheric precipitation become of ever greater importance in comparison to the slowly decreasing external effects of the hot fluid interior.

If, finally, the temperature becomes so far equalized that over a considerable portion of the surface at least it does not exceed the limits within which protein is capable of life, then, if other chemical conditions are favorable, living protoplasm is formed. What these conditions are, we do not yet know, which is not to be wondered at since so far not even the chemical formula of protein has been established - we do not even know how many chemically different protein bodies there are - and since it is only about ten years ago that the fact became known that completely structureless protein exercises all the essential functions of life, digestion, excretion, movement, contraction, reaction to stimuli, and reproduction.

Thousands of years may have passed before the conditions arose in which the next advance could take place and this formless protein produce the first cell by formation of nucleus and cell membrane. Rut this first cell also

provided the foundation for the morphological development of the whole organic world; the first to develop, as it is permissible to assume from the whole analogy of the palæontological record, were innumerable species of non-cellular and cellular protista, of which *Eozoon canadense* alone has come down to us, and of which some were gradually differentiated into the first plants and others into the first animals. And from the first animals were developed, essentially by further differentiation, the numerous classes, orders, families, genera, and species of animals; and finally mammals, the form in which the nervous system attains its fullest development; and among these again finally that mammal in which nature attains consciousness of itself - man.

Man too arises by differentiation. Not only individually, by differentiation from a single egg cell to the most complicated organism that nature produces - no, also historically. When after thousands of years of struggle the differentiation of hand from foot, and erect gait, were finally established, man became distinct from the monkey and the basis was laid for the development of articulate speech and the mighty development of the brain that has since made the gulf between man and monkey an unbridgeable one. The specialisation of the hand - this implies the tool, and the tool implies specific human activity, the transforming reaction of man on nature, production. Animals in the narrower sense also have tools, but only as limbs of their bodies: the ant, the bee, the beaver; animals also produce, but their productive effect on surrounding nature in relation to the latter amounts to nothing at all. Man alone has succeeded in impressing his stamp on nature, not only by shifting the plant and animal world from one place to another, but also by so altering the aspect and climate of his dwelling place, and even the plants and animals themselves, that the consequences of his activity can disappear only with the general extinction of the terrestrial globe. And he has accomplished this primarily and essentially by means of the hand. Even the steam engine, so far his most powerful tool for the transformation of nature, depends, because it is a tool, in the last resort on *the hand*. But step by step with the development of the hand went that of the brain; first of all consciousness of the conditions for separate practically useful actions, and later, among the more favoured peoples and arising from the preceding, insight into the natural laws governing them. And with the rapidly growing knowledge of the laws of nature the means for reacting on nature also grew; the hand alone would never have achieved the steam engine if the brain of man had not attained a correlative development with it, and parallel to it, and partly owing to it.

With men we enter *history*. Animals also have a history, that of their derivation and gradual evolution to their present position. This history, however, is made for them, and in so far as they themselves take part in it, this occurs without their knowledge or desire. On the other hand, the more that human beings become removed from animals in the narrower sense of the word, the more they make their own history consciously, the less becomes the influence of unforeseen effects and uncontrolled forces of this history, and the more accurately does the historical result correspond to the aim laid down in advance. If, however, we apply this measure to human history, to that of even the most developed peoples of the present day, we find that there still exists here a colossal disproportion between the proposed aims and the results arrived at, that unforeseen effects predominate, and that the uncontrolled forces are far more powerful than those set into motion according to plan. And this cannot be otherwise as long as the most essential historical activity of men, the one which has raised them from bestiality to humanity and which forms the material foundation of all their other activities, namely the production of their requirements of life, that is to-day social production, is above all subject to the interplay of unintended effects from uncontrolled forces and achieves its desired end only by way of exception and, much more frequently, the exact opposite. In the most advanced industrial countries we have subdued the forces of nature and pressed them into the service of mankind; we have thereby infinitely multiplied production, so that a child now produces more than a hundred adults previously did. And what is the result? Increasing overwork and increasing misery of the masses, and every ten years a great collapse. Darwin did not know what a bitter satire he wrote on mankind, and especially on his countrymen, when he showed that free competition, the struggle for existence, which the economists celebrate as the highest historical achievement, is the normal state of the *animal kingdom*. Only conscious organization of social production, in which production and distribution are carried on in a planned way, can lift mankind above the rest of the animal world as regards the social aspect, in the same way that production in general has done this for men in their aspect as species. Historical evolution makes such an organization daily more indispensable, but also with every day more possible. From it will date a new epoch of history, in which mankind itself, and with mankind all branches of its activity, and especially natural science, will experience an advance that will put everything preceding it in the deepest shade.

Nevertheless, "all that comes into being deserves to perish". Millions of years may elapse, hundreds of thousands of generations be born and die, but inexorably the time will come when the declining warmth of the sun will no

longer suffice to melt the ice thrusting itself forward from the poles; when the human race, crowding more and more about the equator, will finally no longer find even there enough heat for life; when gradually even the last trace of organic life will vanish; and the earth, an extinct frozen globe like the moon, will circle in deepest darkness and in an ever narrower orbit about the equally extinct sun, and at last fall into it. Other planets will have preceded it, others will follow it; instead of the bright, warm solar system with its harmonious arrangement of members, only a cold, dead sphere will still pursue its lonely path through universal space. And what will happen to our solar system will happen sooner or later to all the other systems of our island universe; it will happen to all the other innumerable island universes, even to those the light of which will never reach the earth while there is a living human eye to receive it.

And when such a solar system has completed its life history and succumbs to the fate of all that is finite, death, what then? Will the sun's corpse roll on for all eternity through infinite space, and all the once infinitely diverse, differentiated natural forces pass for ever into one single form of motion, attraction? "Or" - as Secchi asks - "do forces exist in nature which can re-convert the dead system into its original state of an incandescent nebula and re-awake it to new life? We do not know".

At all events we do not know in the sense that we know that $2 \times 2 = 4$, or that the attraction of matter increases and decreases according to the square of the distance. In theoretical natural science, however, which as far as possible builds up its view of nature into a harmonious whole, and without which nowadays even the most thoughtless empiricist cannot get anywhere, we have very often to reckon with incompletely known magnitudes; and logical consistency of thought must at all times help to get over defective knowledge. Modern natural science has had to take over from philosophy the principle of the indestructibility of motion; it cannot any longer exist without this principle. But the motion of matter is not merely crude mechanical motion, mere change of place, it is heat and light, electric and magnetic stress, chemical combination and dissociation, life and, finally, consciousness. To say that matter during the whole unlimited time of its existence has only once, and for what is an infinitesimally short period in comparison to its eternity, found itself able to differentiate its motion and thereby to unfold the whole wealth of this motion, and that before and a.fter this remains restricted for eternity to mere change of place - this is equivalent to maintaining that matter is mortal and motion transitory. The indestructibility of motion cannot be merely quantitative, it must also be conceived qualitatively; matter whose purely mechanical change of place includes indeed the possibility under favourable conditions of being transformed into heat, electricity, chemical action, or life, but which is not capable of producing these conditions from out of itself, such matter has *forfeited motion;* motion which has lost the capacity of being transformed into the various forms appropriate to it may indeed still have *dynamis* but no longer *energeia,* and so has become partially destroyed. Both, however, are unthinkable.

This much is certain: there was a time when the matter of our island universe had *transformed* a quantity of motion - of what kind we do not yet know - into heat, such that there could be developed from it the solar systems appertaining to (according to Mädler) at least twenty million stars, the gradual extinction of which is likewise certain. How did this transformation take place? We know just as little as Father Secchi knows whether the future *caput mortuum* of our solar system will once again be converted into the raw material of a new solar system. But here either we must have recourse to a creator, or we are forced to the conclusion that the incandescent raw material for the solar system of our universe was produced in a natural way by transformations of motion which are *by nature inherent* in moving matter, and the conditions of which therefore also must be reproduced by matter, even if only after millions and millions of years and more or less by chance but with the necessity that is also inherent in chance.

The possibility of such a transformation is more and more being conceded. The view is being arrived at that the heavenly bodies are ultimately destined to fall into one another, and one even calculates the amount of heat which must be developed on such collisions. The sudden flaring up of new stars, and the equally sudden increase in brightness of familiar ones, of which we are informed by astronomy, is most easily explained by such collisions. Not only does our group of planets move about the sun, and our sun within our island universe, but our whole island universe also moves in space in temporary, relative equilibrium with the other island universes, for even the relative equilibrium of freely moving bodies can only exist where the motion is reciprocally determined; and it is assumed by many that the temperature in space is not everywhere the same. Finally, we know that, with the exception of an infinitesimal portion, the heat of the innumerable suns of our island universe vanishes into space and fails to raise the temperature of space even by a millionth of a degree centigrade. What becomes of all this enormous quantity of heat? Is it forever dissipated in the attempt to heat universal space, has it ceased to exist practically, and does it only continue to exist theoretically, in the fact that universal space has become warmer by a decimal

fraction of a degree beginning with ten or more noughts? The indestructibility of motion forbids such an assumption, but it allows the possibility that by the successive falling into one another of the bodies of the universe all existing mechanical motion will be converted into heat and the latter radiated into space, so that in spite of all "indestructibility of force" all motion in general would have ceased. (Incidentally it is seen here how inaccurate is the term "indestructibility of force" instead of "indestructibility of motion".) Hence we arrive at the conclusion that in some way, which it will later be the task of scientific research to demonstrate, the heat radiated into space must be able to become transformed into another form of motion, in which it can once more be stored up and rendered active. Thereby the chief difficulty in the way of the reconversion of extinct suns into incandescent vapor disappears.

For the rest, the eternally repeated succession of worlds in infinite time is only the logical complement to the co-existence of innumerable worlds in infinite space - a principle the necessity of which has forced itself even on the anti-theoretical Yankee brain of Draper. [3]

It is an eternal cycle in which matter moves, a cycle that certainly only completes its orbit in periods of time for which our terrestrial year is no adequate measure, a cycle in which the time of highest development, the time of organic life and still more that of the life of beings conscious of nature and of themselves, is just as narrowly restricted as the space in which life and self-consciousness come into operation; a cycle in which every finite mode of existence of matter, whether it be sun or nebular vapor, single animal or genus of animals, chemical combination or dissociation, is equally transient, and wherein nothing is eternal but eternally changing, eternally moving matter and the laws according to which it moves and changes. But however often, and however relentlessly, this cycle is completed in time and space, however many millions of suns and earths may arise and pass away, however long it may last before the conditions for organic life develop, however innumerable the organic beings that have to arise and to pass away before animals with a brain capable of thought are developed from their midst, and for a short span of time find conditions suitable for life, only to be exterminated later without mercy, we have the certainty that matter remains eternally the same in all its transformations, that none of its attributes can ever be lost, and therefore, also, that with the same iron necessity that it will exterminate on the earth its highest creation, the thinking mind, it must somewhere else and at another time again produce it.

[1] How tenaciously even in 1861 this view could be held by a man whose scientific achievements had provided highly important material for abolishing it is shown by the following classic words: "All the arraignments of our solar system, so far as we are capable of comprehending them, aim st preservation of what exists and at unchanging continuance. Just as since the most ancient times no animal and no plant on the earth has become more perfect or in any way different, just as we find in all organisms only stages alongside of one another and not following one another, just as our own race has always remained the same in corporeal respects - so even the greatest diversity in the co-existing heavenly bodies does not justify us in assuming that these forms are merely different stages of development; it is rather that everything created is equally perfect in itself." (Madler, *Popular Astronomy* Berlin, 1881, 5th edition, p. 316)

[2] The defect of Lyell's view - at least in its first form - lay in conceiving the forces at work on the earth as constant, both in quality and quantity. The cooling of the earth does not exist for him; the earth does not develop in a definite direction but merely changes in an inconsequent fortuitous manner.

[3] "The multiplicity of worlds in infinite space leads to the conception of a succession of worlds in infinite time." (J. W. Draper, *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, 1864. Vol. 2, p. 325)

Thought Point	Points of Thought
What is Engels talking about?	
Does anything here seem to differ from Marx's thought?	
How does he view history?	
How does he view earlier philosophy?	
How does he view science?	
Which is better, science's view or the Greek's view?	
What can we know?	
What is differentiation?	
How does Engels' view of religion compare to James'?	

Realism Versus Idealism

So since we have bandied these words about for so long, we have to ask (and you have), what do they *really* mean? Aside from the fact that only three letters mark a difference in how they are spelled, what is the true difference? We want to get to the heart of the matter. Modern thinking speaks in terms of optimist and pessimist, or practical and dreamer, but that is not their philosophical meaning, though they are all based in it.

Really Reaching Back For An Idea Of Thought

We can argue forms of Idealism and Realism all the way back to the Greeks. In that case, as with Rationalists and Empiricists, who's who?

Thinker	Camp
Plato	
Aristotle	
Epicurus	
Stoics	
Augustine	
Aquinas	
Descartes	
Locke	
Hume	
Kant	
Hegel	
Berkeley	
Schopenhauer	
Nietzsche	
James	
Heidegger	

Exercise 1: Who Thought What? Part II

So just what is what? Besides the fact that this time there are a lot more thinkers, does it get harder or easier as you go along? Less thinkers means that you do not have to spend as much time on the exercise but more thinkers means that you have a broader base (and hopefully understanding as well) from which to draw. Perhaps we can come up with some basic agreement as to what the terms mean.

Idealism

Strictly speaking Idealism is the thinking that thing-in-itself (the noumena) and the mental representation of it (the phenomena) are not identical else they would be the same thing i.e. I know that a table and my thought of a table are not the same thing. The object and my idea of the object are two

different things. At its simplest level we could say that Idealism tend to incorporate epistemology and ontology and separate the thought from the thing.

Realism

Strictly speaking Realism is the thinking that the thing itself (substance) is real in and of itself and has nothing to do with 'ideas' because if I can see a table in front of me and I think 'table' I cannot separate my thought from the object. The object is the real and my idea of it is nothing more than a perception of the thing itself. At its simplest level we could say that Realism tend to separate epistemology from ontology and combine the thought to the thing.

Making Sense of It

So which thinkers are Realists? Which are Idealists? What about the ideas of 'sensation' and 'universals'? How do they play in? What about other labels we have used before like 'Empiricist' and 'Rationalist'? Are all Empiricists Realists and all Rationalists Idealists? We could certainly make arguments about this. The question comes down to this: what aspect of the thought are we talking about? As with the Rationalists and the Empiricists, there are many different flavors of Realism and Idealism. Kant, for instance speaks not just of Idealism but *Transcendental Idealism*. What is he talking about? What makes a particular Idealism 'transcendental', and how is that different than just plain Idealism?

So what did I mean by my summary statements above? How can you 'incorporate epistemology and ontology' and at the same time 'separate the thought from the thing'? Okay take a stab at it. What do I mean?

Statement	Meaning
incorporate epistemology and ontology	
separate the thought from the thing	
separate epistemology from ontology	
combine the thought to the thing	

Exercise 2: Thinking and Meaning

Keeping in mind that these are general statements made amongst general statements, they still may not help us answer the question of how to classify a thinker. Also keep in mind that it may just be okay that way. Every thinker may not classify themselves that way, and in fact might be put out if you try. And finally, as with our chapter on *Empiricism versus Rationalism*, we may not come to a satisfactory answer, only have a good discussion. It is only by delving deeper that we might better answer some of the question.

That is why terms like 'Transcendental Idealism' exist. It sometimes comes down to how an individual chooses to express the idea which helps 'define' the person one way or the other. Keep in mind that sometimes they start in one place and end in another (you will see that, someone starts as an Idealist and ends their philosophical career as a Realist). This means that as you read, and if you merely read randomly, you can become confused as to what they are preaching.

To frame this discussion then, let us put it into the realm of 'meaning'. Where does meaning come from? Is it internal to the thing known or does it come from outside of the thing? And I am not talking about '*what does a chair mean*' but how do *I know* it is a chair? So call it *meaning, truth, knowledge,* or *understanding* it is up to you, just call it for the dinner.

Your People...My People...Call Me

We can say that Realists put the 'substance' of the thing *in* the thing, such that any meaning we extract from it comes to us *from* the thing, not from anything outside of it. At its simplest we can think of Aristotle – substance *is* the thing (*substance = essence*). Take anything away from it and it ceases to be that thing and is in fact something else. I merely take in what the thing is and mentally classify it. Push that to Hume. I can know nothing, because my knowledge of it is flawed or incomplete. I do not even really classify it; merely associate it with other things that I perceive.

We can say that Idealists put the meaning of the thing inside us, because we strictly have no direct knowledge of the thing itself, only perceptions and ideas which guide us in giving meaning to the thing. Regardless of the *substance* of the thing, its *essence/existence* is what we know. Not that it has to have 'real' substance to exist. The *idea* of something is sufficient. Think of a unicorn. There is no proof that it 'exists' but the mere fact that I can think it up means that it has some sort of existence. We can say that the *idea* is the *substance*. We can think of Plato – the Form is the real thing and any 'real' thing is a mere shadow of the actual Ideal thing. Push that to Schopenhauer. I determine reality; the only thing I can be certain of is what is in my head.

Even so, both of these statements are limited. Aristotle and Plato are dealing with reality as a whole, whereas Schopenhauer and Hume are more in tune with how our minds relate to the world around us. What we almost have to do is keep all of philosophic history in front of us as we approach this question.

What Can I Say?

So what can we say? We can frame the discussion in physical/metaphysical terms. Metaphysical things can be 'real' but does 'knowing' them make you a realist – especially when we think about it in terms of the thing giving us the meaning? If God is 'real', as he is for Augustine and Aquinas, is he real in the same way to both? If Augustine is an Idealist and Aquinas is a Realist, is their mutual understanding of God different? Certainly both would argue that God made all things, both physical and spiritual, that he exists aside from anything created. We have the physical world and the rational soul. God reveals truth to us, and we rationally come to understand it. God falls out of this conversation perhaps, because he is outside of reality, and yet he is reality.

Okay, the point being that we need to keep each thinker in context. What is the reality they are trying to explain? Does Augustine's Idealism match up with Heidegger's? Does Aquinas' Realism match up with Locke's? Perhaps this sounds as if we are discussing in a circle, and that there is no 'right or wrong answer', and we are just throwing in points to hide that fact.

[Nominalism and realism are theories related to epistemology (the study of knowledge). Both positions are anchored in their approaches to the concept of universals.

Realism is the view that there are universals that are related to but exist apart from thoughts and individual objects in our world. Consider two white horses for example. Realism asserts that there is a universal concept of "whiteness" which the two white horses share. Plato's 'theory of forms' is the classic representation of realism. Plato argued that for every object in the physical

world, there is a more perfect 'form' or 'idea' that exists in another realm. Plato never did identify where these forms or ideas existed. The fifth century theologian, Augustine, however, modified Plato's realism by stating that universals exist in the mind of God.

Nominalism, on the other hand, asserts that reality only exists in particular objects. Universals, therefore, have no reality apart from objects. Thus, there are no concepts like "whiteness" that exist in another dimension. Two objects like horses or rocks may share "whiteness" but this whiteness is located in particular objects and not in some independent concept of "whiteness" that exists somewhere else. Forms of nominalism can be found in the views of William of Ockham, George Berkeley, and David Hume.

The concepts of nominalism and realism were an important part of medieval philosophy and theology. In general, the time period of 1200–1350 was a period in which realism was held. The time period of 1350–1500 was dominated by nominalism.]

Putting It Together

This is perhaps less of a fight of the century than a squabble among siblings, but at the same time each system has deep implications for how we view/understand/make sense of the world. They also can make it difficult to have a dialog, much less a civil conversation about how to view the world, because they are so diametrically opposed.

Do not feel too bad about this. Part of our problem here is the nature of our survey. We have barely scratched the surface with many of these thinkers and thus the subtleties and varieties of their thought is somewhat hidden from us. So in some way these were all trick questions. You may, when speaking of a specific aspect of thought that it is 'realist' and yet another might be 'idealist'. Certainly we can point to a few and say somewhat definitively that they are one or the other. Any general research you do is liable to show conflicting answers to the question because of the focus of the specific statements.

"If a picture paints a thousand words then why can't I paint you?" – *If*, **Bread**
"Thanks a lot big brain." *Galapagos*, **Kurt Vonnegut**

Phenomenology

Remember what phenomena are? Similar to Peirce's attempt to create a system which gave clarity to scientific thought, Phenomenology attempted to bring a clarity to psychology, among other things. Let me once again say up front that like so many of these chapters, it may be long but still does very little justice to the depth and the complexity of the thinking and thinkers noted herein.

The Players

Dates	Philosophers	Main Points
1838 - 1917	Franz Brentano	*Italo-German; intention; the central concern of philosophy is to understand consciousness, showing the distinction between the mental and the non-mental*
1859 -1938	Edmund Husserl	*Austrian; student of Brentano; father of modern phenomenology; combine mathematics, psychology and philosophy to provide a sound foundation for mathematics; essence is experience (phenomena); experienced reality is truth*
1889 -1976	Martin Heidegger	*German; student and 'friend' of Husserl; applied the methods of phenomenology to ontology*
1905 -1980	Jean-Paul Sartre	*French; intentionality is consciousness; genuine self*
1908 -1961	Maurice Merleau-Ponty	*French; contemporary of Sartre and de Beauvoir; critique of rationalism and empiricism; lived experience denies the detachment of subject from object*

Table 34: Phenomenology Players

Phenomenology Thru The Ages

Phenomenology is not a new idea, or at least, term. Phenomenology is also sometimes categorized as a branch of philosophy in itself, like ontology, epistemology or theology. We can argue that just as empiricism and rationalism are forms of Epistemology, Phenomenology, as a branch, is all of the different ways of viewing *consciousness*, making it different somewhat from epistemology which is more focused on *thinking*.

Anyway, we can look at the name itself and recall all of the discussions on *phenomena* (you can, of course…right?) through time. The one that probably comes to mind immediately is from Kant's thinking, describing *noumena* and *phenomena* as that thing-in-itself and our perception of that thing-in-itself, respectively.

But what about Aquinas? Does his view put him in line? Aristotle? Oh heck I'll stop asking and make you answer!

Thinker	Phenomenologist?	Why?
Plato		
Aristotle		
Aquinas		
Descartes		
Kant		
Nietzsche		

Table 35: Name that Phenomenologist

But What Does All This Have To Do With Existentialism?

One of the things we begin to run into the closer we get to today in time, as we saw with philosophy and science, is that philosophical systems seem to become more muddled. Hence Jean-Paul Sartre is here as well as in the latter discussion of post-modern existentialism.

How can that be? Where does phenomenology fit into the modern, existential picture? As we have said, it is a confusing mixed bag of approaches which defines existentialism, but at its core is the understanding that existence is what it is all about. Phenomenology too is a large bag of approaches. Suffice it to say for us at this moment, Phenomenology remains in that vein but it is the *nature* of existence and experience which differentiates this system enough to warrant its own name. Simplistically, Phenomenologists, concerned with consciousness, ask the metaphysical question 'what exists?' or 'what is existence?'

Brentano

Franz Brentano sought to bring to philosophy the same rigorous empirical methods as he was applying to psychology. In fact he is the reason we think of psychology as a science. Heavily influenced by Aristotle and the Scholastic thinkers, he brought them back to the intellectual table. In an attempt to strengthen his arguments for this new science, he turns to previous epistemological and ontological thinking.

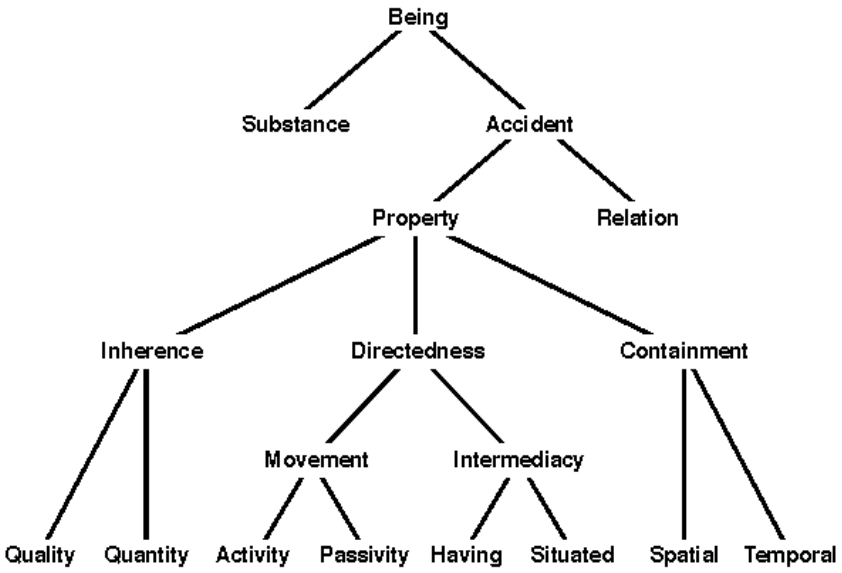


Figure 1: Aristotle's Categories as explained and enhanced by Franz Brentano

Brentano's thinking produced something you may have heard of in that Psych 101 class you were forced to take: *Gestalt* theory. Like most German words from this point on, *Gestalt* is best not translated but the word represents the thought of the *essence* or shape of an entity in its fullness, as *itself*. The mind, where phenomenological stuff takes place is self-organizing whole, with the ability to formulate objects as a whole (our minds can make a series of lines a drawing *of something*), hence its ability to have *phenomena*.

That Was Not My Intention...

From this background, and for our purposes, he introduces (or perhaps, re-introduces) the idea of *intention*. This is not intention like we so often direct at our children, as in 'what were you thinking?', but in the sense that it is a *conscious 'directing' of perception at something*. Each of our thoughts is 'directed' at something. The Scholastics utilized this term to talk about existence, using it to distinguish between objects of understanding and objects of reality, that is, concepts in our minds and physical objects. Brentano is using it in the newer broader sense, more in terms of Kant's *phenomena*, our perception of a thing. He is applying it to the way we think about objects.

Brentano is a bridge of several eras of philosophy, which we can see as he tries to pull all sorts of ideas about existence into his thought. All our knowledge should be based on direct experience, not a modern scientific understanding, somewhat Aristotelian, but more of an internal, individual Kantian sense. Just as Kant brought back the idea of categories, though differently than Aristotle, Brentano shows that internal sense of something comes from our experience of it, sort of an experience = existence equation, similar yet different from our existentialist friends. Phenomena then, just as Kant saw them, are the mental idea of the thing (not the thing itself). But it is more, in that meaning and knowledge of the thing also reside there; *our experience is the thing*. 'Intention' is the distinguisher.

"*Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction towards an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing), or immanent objectivity. Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way. In presentation something is presented, in judgment something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on. This intentional in-existence is characteristic exclusively of mental phenomena. No physical phenomenon exhibits anything like it. We could, therefore, define mental phenomena by saying that they are those phenomena which contain an object intentionally within themselves.*" (*Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*)

There is probably a variety of the reasons we do not hear as much about him some being his concentration on psychology (as opposed to psychiatry) and perhaps his reliance on the Medieval thought that influenced him. Still, in turn he influenced among others, Freud, and another of his students, our next guest. For many he is considered to be one of the most unknown influential thinkers of the late 19th century. For reasons not gone into here, he never really published much, preferring lectures to published works, and it is his students and adherents who did most of the leg work to get his works into publication.

Husserl

Edmund Husserl takes Brentano's idea about phenomena and produces what he thinks of as a basic philosophy. That is to say, this is about cognition, not a new philosophical development or even an extension of earlier philosophies. It is a totally new *science*, something like the way Brentano saw psychology. To Husserl, phenomenology is one of the foundational philosophies, the basis from with others, like ontology or epistemology spring.

Husserl is big, probably too big to take on in this format, but he has also drifted, like Brentano into the background. We might attribute this to the times, because with his Jewish heritage, he ran afoul of the Nazis and that pretty much ended his academic career.[43] So let us concentrate our peek. Like many philosophers before him, Husserl went through stages in the development of his thought, originally espousing a realist standpoint which he later abandoned, taking up transcendental idealism but, in his

[43] We might recall some of the great 'black-listed' thinkers, writers, and artists of the McCarthy era, whose works are ascribed to other 'front-men' as it were...or not.

words moving past even that, defining a 'transcendental-phenomenological idealism'. (*Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Second Book*)

Philosophical Time-Out

Okay, so let us step through each of those landings. What is realism? What is transcendental idealism? What is phenomenology? So then, just what is transcendental-phenomenological idealism? Take a moment. As usual, I will wait.

"*I may not here neglect, however, to declare expressly that I retract nothing whatsoever as regards transcendental-phenomenological idealism and that I still consider, as I did before, every form of the usual philosophical realism nonsensical in principle, no less so than that idealism which it sets itself up against in its arguments and which it 'refutes.' [Phenomenological reduction – knowing/the act of knowing which is based in astonishment] is a piece of pure self-reflection, exhibiting the most original evident facts; moreover, if it brings into view in them the outlines of idealism...it is still anything but a party to the usual debates between idealism and realism. . . .*" (*Epilogue* [personal comments on the work by Husserl] for *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Second Book*)

Husserl differs from his teacher Brentano (who focused mainly on mental phenomena) by maintaining that the essence of a thing is not its physical constituents or physical laws, as might Aristotle or Aquinas, but the *way we experience them*. This sounds simple enough. The thing has essence from us, not just because we experience aspects of it but in the way we experience it. To put it another way, something has essence because of how we experience it and that we experience it. Phenomena and being, then, are one and the same.

How can this be you ask? Well, think of it this way. I am sure that I am sitting at a desk because I see, feel, experience the desk, therefore it must exist. Like the Pragmatists, Husserl calls us to practical way of looking at the world: by the way we experience it. "*In sense-perception, the 'external' thing appears 'in one blow', as soon as our glance falls upon it. The manner in which it makes the thing appear present is straightforward: it requires no apparatus of founding or founded acts. To what complex mental processes it may trace back its origin, and in what manner, is of course irrelevant here. We are not ignoring the obvious complexity that can be shown to exist in the phenomenological content of the straightforward perceptual act and particularly in its unitary intention.*" (*Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Second Book*)

This then is a thinking which requires no pre-determined universals. Cast your mind back to Kant. He puts categories back into the mix to explain how we know something. Think back on James' and Engels' writings on science. They seem pretty sure of things because of science. For Husserl, Phenomenology is the *true science* of phenomena. This is because Science, as it had come to be understood has caused a crisis by denying humans the truth of the reality that they experience since it is based on proving that phenomena and being *are not* identical. Husserl contends that there is a knowing which is part of our everyday lives, where we approach the world with pre-set theories and 'knowledge', with our minds already made up before we ever step outside of ourselves to seek out the world (something is 'just a given' you might say). Phenomenology represents the 'aha' moments, where our minds are open and unprepared and the world just comes at us in a surprising way. It is a purely mental activity and a form of knowledge at the same time. Husserl saw that the foundation upon which scientific inquiry rested was compromised by the very methods of science itself and the assumptions of the scientist; the 'phenomenological reduction' is the technique whereby the phenomenologist puts him or herself in a position to provide adequately rigorous grounds for scientific or any other kind of inquiry, in other words, places themselves in a position to be astonished. "*What is essentially new, broken open in transcendentally oriented phenomenology...is the insight that a concrete description of the sphere of*

consciousness as a self-enclosed sphere of intentionality...has a total different sense than descriptions of nature, thus the exemplary descriptions in the descriptive natural sciences." (*ibid*)

We can see some of the empiricism science relies on here but we also begin to see the disillusionment with science as the panacea. We can pick up echoes of Nietzsche, and like Marx and Engels' notion of alienation, he sees us separated from ourselves and our world by our scientific thinking patterns.

Not That I'm Conscious of

Building on Brentano, Husserl tells us that consciousness is *intentional*: *consciousness* is 'consciousness *of*'. This 'intentionality' of consciousness correlates to what we talked about above, the *act* of 'knowing' (*phenomena*) of the subject and the object that is known (*noema*) are one. So this kind of an immediate 'knowing', which may seem to smack a bit of his earlier realism, reflects the idealism he comes to espouse. The 'phenomenon' is *intuitively* known to the subject. To be more specific, the essence of the phenomenon is the sum of all possible 'intuitive' ways of knowing the phenomenon. This is achieved after 'bracketing out' (*einklammerung*) the physical description of the phenomenon that is, the description given by the natural sciences.

Reflecting Kant's idea of 'pure', Husserl tells us that what is left behind after this automatic bracketing is a purely transcendental knowledge of the phenomenon. Subject and object are not separated, as they are in Kant (*noumena* and *phenomena*). So what does this mean for 'thinking' in general? If this is a foundational philosophy, what about all of the off-shoots, like Logic? "*Logic is not the theory of Thought as Thought, but of valid Thought; not of thinking, but of correct thinking. It is not a Science distinct from, and coordinate with, Psychology. So far as it is a science at all, it is a part, or branch, of Psychology; differing from it, on the one hand as a part differs from the whole, and on the other, as an Art differs from a Science. Its theoretic grounds are wholly borrowed from Psychology, and include as much of that science as is required to justify the rules...*" (*ibid*)

We can see that there is perhaps a practical side to this, but not like James might think of it. All thinking is not equal, though all thinking is valid. In the end, Husserl tends to hang with Brentano and the psychological mind, which is capable of thought and can distinguish, intuitively, things around it and inside it as 'real'.

Heidegger

Martin Heidegger picks up Husserl's thought and, depending who you talk with, Husserl or Heidegger, either extended or screwed it up. So right off the bat we can see that this is somewhat different than the Peirce/James relationship. Heidegger started out as a pupil, assistant, and close confidant of Husserl, but somehow, in an opposite swap of fortunes, became more closely associated with the Nazis and less so with Husserl. As his association with Husserl's later thinking waned so did his affiliation with the Party. There is no doubt that his association with the Nazis aided his career, but it tainted it as well, as it did Husserl before him. Towards the end of the War, he was declared the most 'expendable' member of the faculty and went from Rector to digging trenches along the Rhine. After the War, Heidegger was accused of being or at least sympathetic to the Nazis and was banned from teaching as well as being dismissed from his chair of philosophy. The ban was eventually lifted a few years later. [44]

Heidegger's main (published but initially unfinished, re-published later) work, which for reasons to come I will give in the German, *Sein und Zeit* (*Being and Time*) basically laid out his philosophy and his

[44] This author makes no claims to understand the motivations or thinking of these people aside from the ones in their philosophic mode, nor to refuse to acknowledge a thinker because of perceptions about the individual. So, all that will be said is that Heidegger thought highly of Husserl but after a certain point, it does not appear the affection was mutual.

philosophical journey. In a sense, though he is extending Husserl's metaphysical thought, he is looking back to the metaphysics of Brentano. Heidegger's metaphysics focuses more on ontology than consciousness (psychology). He attempts to understand being (*Sein*) by means of a phenomenological analysis of human existence which he called *Dasein* (literally 'in-being') in and through the aspect or characteristic of time (*Zeit*), hence the being and time title. This becomes his quest.

Starting from his own starting point, the first aspect of being he argues is that humanity is unique in that it is the one being who can question the nature/essence *of* being[45]. For Heidegger then, *the fundamental question is the question of being*. Husserl helps us to see that humanity is different than the phenomena around us, we being the one who is conscious. Heidegger takes that farther defining us as not a '*what*' among other '*whats*' but a '*who'*and not just a who, but a '*who*' among other '*whos*'. There is almost a dichotomy. Consciousness is consciousness of[46], meaning that there is the consciousness and there is something to be conscious of. This means that humans are part of the world but are also the observer of the world. Humans are not, therefore, just *Dasein* (existence), but *Insein* (being-in-the-world – existing in the world) who is *Dersein* (being-for-others). The world is not a world of particles or formulas: it is a world of meaning that the mind not only can understand but is made to understand.

It is important to understand that we exist as part of the world and that the world and the mind cannot be separated. We cannot detach ourselves from reality because we are part of it. Subject and object do not exist independently and cannot be separated meaning that there is a unity of the *dasein* (being in the world). As Husserl saw the unity of phenomena and existence, being is being-in. Part of the problem though as Husserl said, is that science separates us from reality.

We can hear a bit of an echo of Marx in Heidegger's thinking that technology alienates humans because it recasts the natural environment as a commodity, a 'standing reserve' (*Bestand*) to be utilized for the purpose of humans. "*The Earth reveals itself as a mining district - the Rhine itself appears to be something at our command - e.g, a supply of power... no longer the river running through the native country*". (*Basic Writings*) People lose their identity because the natural environment that provided them with an identity is now simply a store of resources to be exploited. "*Agriculture is now a mechanized food industry, in essence the same as the manufacture of corpses in the gas chambers and death camps, the same thing as the blockades and reduction of countries to famine, the same thing as the manufacture of hydrogen bombs.*" (*Lecture in Bremen, 1949*)

To reach back even farther we can look at the Greek idea of *techne* (*Chapter 12*) which meant skill or craft, as in the *art* of medicine. *Techne* has become, or more exactly has deteriorated into technology, and is the means to destroy us. Basically we have lost our way in the world because we have forgotten that we have being in the world, we have separated our being from the world.

Being There

So we have this being, this *Dasein*. "As ways in which man behaves, sciences have the manner of Being which this entity – man himself – possesses. This entity we denote by the term *'Dasein'*." (*Sein und Zeit*, Intro) That is to say everything we do (like science) reflects *us*, has its being in *us*. Science is not objectively outside of us, and while it may be objective or at least objective about us, it and its methods are not external to us.

If we wanted to draw a picture of reality using Heidegger's thought, we might think of a plane which we can rotate in 360 degrees. On one side of the plane is physical reality; on the other, metaphysical or mental reality. In the middle, with the plane passing through it, is 'Man'. Humanity is the conduit from

[45] Remember that, from Husserl, consciousness is consciousness *of*.
[46] Have I said that enough?

one side of the plane to the other. Humanity is the processor, the link, the connector between the two divided sections. The subject and the object meet within us; subject and object exist within us.

Each of us lives in a world of beings...us. This world, let us call it our 'workshop', holds all of our tools, everything we need to transition between thought and reality and to interact with one another. We exist in this workshop, and the things in our workshop exist. "*In the phenomenon of space the primary ontological character of the Being of entities within-the-world is not to be found, either as unique or as one among others. Still less does space constitute the phenomenon of the world. Unless we go back to the world, space cannot be conceived. Space becomes accessible only if the environment is deprived of its worldhood; and spatiality is not discoverable at all except on the basis of the world. Indeed space is still one of the things that is constitutive for the world, just as Dasein's own spatiality is essential to its basic state of Being-in-the-world*" (*Sein und Zeit*, III)

So where does time (*zeit*) come into it? Hegel saw the dialectic, and history was its proof. Marx changed the focus and while retaining the activity of the dialectic with economic history being its proof. Heidegger focused on the history of being, creating what we might call an existential phenomenology.

Wha'chu Say?

As a quick note, in line with the resurgence of metaphysics, and along with the introduction of the term *Dasein*, Heidegger also brings back our old friend *logos*. In this case the meaning of *logos* comes from Aristotle and is basically means 'letting something be seen'(*S&Z*), that is "mak[ing] manifest what one is 'talking about in one's discourse" (*ibid*), and introduces the concepts of 'trueness' and 'falseness', which will later be used by Sartre.

Putting It Together

Phenomenology seems to take the best of all worlds: Aristotle, Scholasticism, Existentialism, Pragmatism, Marxism. But we know that it is not alone in this behavior. Each of the three men, influenced by religious thought, especially Aristotle and Medieval Scholasticism, manage to return the discussion to individual knowledge and consciousness.

Keeping in mind exactly what phenomena are the whole time these guys are talking may be difficult, but it is essential (no pun intended...well maybe a little...). When Brentano uses the term *in-existence* for mental phenomena, he is distinguishing them from physical based phenomena, not implying that they have no existence, but an existence in contrast to 'existing' things. In the end, mental phenomena have the same legitimacy and weight as physical phenomena.

Husserl wants us to understand that knowing, consciousness itself is phenomenal (pun intended). The subject (the place of phenomena), not the objects, is starting point of philosophy. Using 'phenomenological reduction' we must move from the detached scientific 'natural attitude' to the 'phenomenological attitude' so that we can free ourselves from prejudices and observe the world through 'pure' detachment, so that we can encounter 'things-as-they-are-in-themselves'. Only then can we understand consciousness and the objects of consciousness.

Husserl then, asks the question how do phenomena appear in our consciousness? How do we construct them? Heidegger moves outside of the question to how *are* we in the world such that the world presents itself to our consciousness in order to be established ('constituted') there? The "*universal problem of being, refers to that which constitutes and to that which is constituted.*" (*Letter to Husserl*, 1927) He explores how we 'are', that is, the 'forms' of 'being' (*sein*).

This distinguishes Phenomenology from straight Existentialism. Perception and existence go hand in hand, and it is not so much a pure idealism, like say Nietzsche, nor is it a purely pragmatic view like James'. Their connection to Aristotle and Scholasticism means that they are producing a similar world view, where humans are central to the process of existence, and yet are part of a larger whole, where

there is even space for God. This is in contrast to many of their contemporaries, yet seems to be very similar.

On a side note, each of these men ran afoul of political problems, from the nature of the laws governing how they could act and think. They construct a vision of existence which involves not just the mind but the world around us. At the same time, perhaps colored by their trials, they see a world in which the individual is the means of ordering that world.

"Ever since Brentano imposed his God on me with ridiculous facility, through his arguments, I fear being seduced one of these days by proofs in favor of spiritualism, homeopathy, Louise Lateau, etc. . . . It's a fact that his God is nothing but a logical principle and that I have accepted it as such. Yet, we proceed down a slippery slope once we acknowledge the concept of God. It remains to be seen at which point we stumble. Moreover, his God is very strange. . . . It is impossible to refute Brentano before hearing him out, studying him, exploring his thought. Confronted with such a rigorous dialectician, we must strengthen our intellect by addressing his arguments before confronting him directly." -- *Letter of Sigmund Freud to Eduard Silberstein*

20th Century Philosophy

As with the centuries before it, the last century saw an explosion of thinkers, perhaps inspired by Einsteinian physics. Whatever the case, we are beginning to enter what is known as, for reasons obvious perhaps only to us, the Post-Modern period of philosophical enquiry.

The Players

Dates	Philosophers	Main Points
1838 -1917	Franz Brentano	*Phenomenologist*
1859 -1938	Edmund Husserl	*Phenomenologist*
1861 -1947	Alfred North Whitehead	*English; Process; unity of the world; progress is not necessarily a forward motion*
1864 -1920	Max Weber	*German; theology and economics*
1864 -1936	Miquel de Unamuno	*Spanish; positivist; faith in itself*
1866 -1952	Benedtto Croce	*Italian; Hegel & Fichte; Philosophy of Spirit*
1868 -1963	W.E.B. Du Bois	*American; materialist; social philosopher; race problems*
1872 -1970	Bertrand Russell	*English; Mental and physical are two different ways of knowing a thing; atheist*
1873 -1958	G. E. Moore	*English; Friend of Russell; the falseness of English Idealism; common-sense*
1878 -1965	Martin Buber	*German; Jewish; I-Thou*
1889 -1951	Ludwig Wittgenstein	*German; The world, like language can be broken down and understood*
1889 -1976	Martin Heidegger	*Phenomenologist*
1897 -2000	Charles Hartshorne	*American; ProcessTheology*
1905 -1980	Jean-Paul Sartre	*French; phenomenologist, existentialist, genuine self*
1908 -1986	Simon de Beauvoir	*French; existentialist,*
1908 -1961	Maurice Merleau-Ponty	*French; existentialist, empirical phenomenology*
1913 -1960	Albert Camus	*French; existentialist,*
1926 -1984	Michel Foucault	*French; Kant & Nietzsche; genealogy of knowledge*
1905 -1982	Ayn Rand	*Russian-American; objectivism; man is the only absolute*

Table 6: 20th Century Players

Trends In Philosophy

When you look at this pantheon of names one question comes to mind: *Are all of these guys on the same page?* It would seem, as we look at our culture today that existential nihilism rules the day and that was pretty well laid out by this time right?

Not exactly. We know that there was a resurgence in metaphysics, a branch of philosophy throttled by Hume, declared dead by Nietzsche and denigrated or downgraded by others. At the same time the questions of *being* are channeled there by Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Husserl, and maybe even James. But is it alive and kicking? There certainly is a tendency in many later thinkers to kick it every time it rears its head. What we begin to see is a division of camps for sure, with Kierkegaard on one side and Nietzsche on the other.

In terms of the players there has been some overlap, especially with the Phenomenologists. All lived during the First World War. Some advocate faith in a time of despair; others see hope in economic and

political systems; those that lived through the Second World War, saw things a bit differently perhaps. These attitudes seem to produce either a longing for metaphysics or a desire to crush it completely from human thought.

Great leaps in engineering and technology, that began in the Industrial Revolution 100 plus years earlier, are moving from the grand industrial scale to the personal scale, and ironically, many involve better ways of killing each other. Cars, trains, airplanes, washing machines, indoor plumbing, radios, records, tanks, machine guns, rockets; the mid-19th century into the mid-20th century saw the explosion of technology, which is seen as both helping and alienating humanity. We develop the means to open Pandora's Box to destroy ourselves and unlock the secrets of the universe using the same key. Trends that Marx saw in the 19th century are coming to fruition in the 20th century.

The introduction of the Nuclear Age really seems to mark a difference. We can see a before, when we could just kill a lot of people, to after when we could kill *every* person, kind of a BC/AD type of thinking shift. Like the transition to 'modern' thought, this period has definite differences to the time before. There is a rise in 'loss of faith' in these thinkers. Many started out as believers but make a conscious decision to step away from that Faith. This means that there is a growing association of philosophy with atheism. This creates a bit of a struggle, with many in the science fields making the same move. With the loss confidence in organizations and ultimately of a sense of Faith, people find fewer and fewer places to seek the solace of reason[47].

So, philosophy in this time begins to represent both the hope and the disillusionment with this world. Coming to grips with insanity is never easy. Chaos and destruction, social ills and oppression are realities never easy to come to terms with. Medievals focused on things which offend many sensibilities 1000 years later. Similarly, the same question arises as to how to best get a handle on thinking in order to solve these problems. The focus on math, physics, and psychology which grew in the previous century is getting lost in ideologies and different languages as it spreads. We are becoming a 'world community' not just a series of nations imposing ourselves on others. Language, what it means, how it communicates, what that communication means begins to take precedence over being, or, actually being becomes the handmaiden of linguistics, as the mode of understanding who we are.

Positivism

Positivism is a sense of truth. Positivism is a system of philosophical and religious doctrines. [As a philosophical system or method, Positivism denies the validity of metaphysical speculations, and maintains that the data of sense experience are the only object and the supreme criterion of human knowledge; as a religious system, it denies the existence of a personal God and takes humanity, 'the great being', as the object of its veneration and cult. Positivism asserts that the only authentic knowledge is that which is based on sense experience and positive verification.] As such, it is not a new type of thinking, having arisen in the 18th century, but for our purposes, while during that time it was an undercurrent, it is becoming the prevalent thought of this time.

Logical Positivism, which will develop during this period, seeks to take the basic tenets of Positivism and center them within logic. [Logical positivists reject metaphysical speculation and attempt to reduce statements and propositions to pure logic.]

Russell

In this setting, Bertrand Russell sidles up to the bar and slaps down his nickel as our first major player. In fact, if I were to make the call as to the philosopher who truly represents the 20th century, Russell would be the one. A long-lived and fascinating individual, he came from a considerable line of

[47] A veiled reference all the way back to Socrates/Plato.

liberal English aristocracy (he was Third Earl Russell) and politicians (Whigs; his grandfather was twice Prime Minister). He championed social justice causes, and was even awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. [In terms of philosophy, like many we have seen recently collaborated and taught, straddling philosophies and] So at best he deserves more mention than he will get here.[48]

We will spend some quality time with him in the next chapter. Suffice it to say that he and the modern existentialist Sartre get my vote for poster-children of 20th century philosophy.

G. E. Moore

George Edward Moore was a younger contemporary of Bertrand Russell and when they met at Cambridge, the two struck an immediate friendship. Moore, in a reaction against English Idealism contended that Idealism *in any form* was wrong. He developed what came to be called the 'naturalistic fallacy', and if you recall what a fallacy is (*Chapter 3*), then you know that he is speaking of a deficit in an argument and he felt that this particular one is committed whenever a philosopher attempts to prove a claim about ethics by appealing to a definition of the term 'good' by its 'natural' properties (often classified as a *formal* fallacy). I guess it could be seen as a reaction against the sentimentalism of the time, but he is really talking about someone confusing the attributes of goodness with goodness itself. That is to say, beauty is not necessarily truth nor is truth necessarily beauty.

This subtle claim has metaphysical consequences. He argues that any 'universal' claim to an ethical good is arbitrary. He points to Kant's reliance on *a priori* as really just a form of subjectivism, and therefore having no universal bearing. Idealism and Empiricism create a separation between the object and our sensing of it. "*That 'to be true'* means *to be thought in a certain way is, therefore, certainly false. Yet this assertion plays the most central part in Kant's 'Copernical*[sic] *Revolution' of philosophy, and renders worthless the whole mass of modern literature, to which that revolution has given rise, and which is called Epistemology*." (*Principia Ethica*)

Proving reality through 'rational methods' was apparently a satiric past-time (it is said he would wave his hands in the air and then comment that he had proved reality). Ultimately, *Common-sense* is mainly correct about the world, that is to say the truth and general knowledge of generally understood truisms is a matter of common sense, and therefore a pretty sufficient way to understand the world, so there is no need for ideals.

Wittgenstein

Ludwig Wittgenstein, build heavily on the foundation laid by More, Whitehead, and Russell.

More on him later.

Max Weber

Karl Emil Maximilian Weber was a prominent lawyer, economist, and politician from a prominent family, until he had a nervous breakdown and shifted his attention toward philosophy. He is probably best known as a social philosopher and his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* gives us the idea of the 'Protestant work ethic', based upon the notion of the Calvinist emphasis on the necessity for hard work as a component of a person's calling and worldly success and as a sign of personal salvation being the basis for modern Capitalism.

Weber saw the world through the eyes of Kant and Nietzsche and German Idealism in general.

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[48] I appear to be apologizing more and more because these thinkers deserve more space than they are given yet at the same time, where they fit into understanding modern trends in philosophy means that we do not need to spend as much time with them to get the gist…still, I feel bad about shorting them. As always you are welcomed and encouraged to leap beyond the bounds of this work in order to explore them.

W. E. B. Du Bois

William Edward Burghardt or W.E.B. Du Bois does not so much slide in here as appear as another example of this time. He bears mention, not because he is the first black philosopher (he graduated *cum laude* from Harvard in Philosophy), but Du Bois, like More and Astell before him, represent an application of philosophy to social and political situations. In terms of thinking he kind of fits in between the transcendentalists, pragmatists, and existentialists.

Du Bois is actually considered by some to be a Pragmatist (in fact he studied with James at Harvard), but his long life and varied writings tend to make any strict call difficult. He advocated *Materialism* which holds that the only thing that exists is matter and that all things are composed of *material*, and all phenomena (including consciousness as we shall see with Russell) are the result of material interactions. In other words, matter is the only substance. So his is very much a *monist ontology* in contrast to *idealism* or *neutral monism*. This materialism is often confused with his stances on economic materialism. He advocated, like many intellectuals, Marxism, but one can definitely see the pragmatic and materialist philosophy in his thought.

"*If you tonight suddenly should become full-fledged Americans; if your color faded, or the color line here in Chicago was miraculously forgotten; suppose, too, you became at the same time rich and powerful; — what is it that you would want? What would you immediately seek? Would you buy the most powerful of motor cars and outrace Cook County? Would you buy the most elaborate estate on the North Shore? Would you be a Rotarian or a Lion or a What-not of the very last degree? Would you wear the most striking clothes, give the richest dinners, and buy the longest press notices?*

Even as you visualize such ideals you know in your heart that these are not the things you really want. You realize this sooner than the average white American because, pushed aside as we have been in America, there has come to us not only a certain distaste for the tawdry and flamboyant but a vision of what the world could be if it were really a beautiful world; if we had the true spirit; if we had the Seeing Eye, the Cunning Hand, the Feeling Heart; if we had, to be sure, not perfect happiness, but plenty of good hard work, the inevitable suffering that comes with life; sacrifice and waiting, all that — but, nevertheless, lived in a world where men know, where men create, where they realize themselves and where they enjoy life. It is that sort of world we want to create for ourselves and for all America." (from the speech *Criteria of Negro Art*)

Rand

Ayn Rand was born and educated in Russia but defected and became a US citizen. As opposed to Du Bois, she was passionately pro-Capitalist and anti-Communist. She developed a system which she called *Objectivism*, and when we think of literary philosophers, she is one of the first to come to mind. This is because, while she wrote extensively, her novels are the way most found her ideas expounded and disseminated, with the most familiar (in popular culture) being *Atlas Shrugged* and *The Fountainhead*.[49]

Simply put, *Objectivism* states that human knowledge and values are *objective* and are not created by the thoughts one has (*subjectivism*), but are determined by the nature of reality and that can be rationally discovered by man's mind. (*What Is Capitalism?*) Rand chose the name because term she wanted to use, *Existentialism*, had already been taken. This tells us though, that she squarely placed

[49] Like our discussion of Dostoyevsky earlier, there is a quandary about this statement; she considered herself more of a writer than a philosopher. She did, as opposed to Dostoyevsky, write her thoughts in philosophic journals which then became the novels for which she is famous.

Objectivism into the realm of existence and hence, with her use of the novel, is often placed with the 20th century Existentialists. She is here because she is different from her contemporary existentialists.

Her thought, firmly rooted in Aristotle and metaphysics is also in stark opposition to Russell and Wittgenstein. Whereas they disdained ethics, she embraced it, emphasizing *metaphysical naturalism* (to their horror, I am sure), empirical reason in epistemology and ethics. Metaphysics supplies an objective reality, Epistemology explains the basis of reason and living rationally, and Ethics allows for self-realization. Objectivism is based in abstract absolutes and has at its roots a rational self-interest (*The Virtue of Selfishness*) and self-responsibility – the idea that no human is any other human's slave, that is, one is one's own end and one's own life and happiness are one's highest values. Self-interest, properly understood, is the standard of morality (we will take care of one another out of self-interest) and selflessness is the *deepest immorality*. Nietzsche, as you can tell, was also a big influence.

Existential and pragmatic action is the key. One is known by one's actions; in that familiar sounding all-American *geist*, we can trace some of this thought back to Chapter 36; we can hear echoes of James (*Chapter 50*) and Locke (*Chapter 35*). As might be expected from someone who defected, only American-style free market capitalism gives the true freedom, which makes it the only moral system, because it alone allows the individual the freedom to pursue their self-interests and allows them to choose what to do with their time, money and property (i.e. it is the exact opposite of Lenin's Marxism). "*That which you call your soul or spirit is your consciousness, and that which you call 'free will' is your mind's freedom to think or not, the only will you have, your only freedom. This is the choice that controls all the choices you make and determines your life and character.*" (*Atlas Shrugged)*

de Beauvoir

Simone de Beauvoir certainly deserves more than I give her here. She was Sartre's lover and companion, but she was much more. Though she was the youngest person to ever pass the French teaching exam in philosophy, she thought of herself more as an author than philosopher. Influenced by both Husserl and Heidegger, she focused on the significance of lived experience and on the ways in which the meanings of the world are revealed in language. This is probably the reason she is seen more as a writer than a meta-physicist (that and her insistence on that fact).

Putting It Together

Is this world of knowledge, of air flight and space flight, of Babbage machines and super computers so different than the centuries before it? The chaos and storm of movement from one type of thinking to another, from one divisive notion to one perceived to eliminate the contentions and problems caused by previous thinking still seem to remain the same; each era claiming to have solved all of previous philosophical history in a neat little package.

Clarity of thought, simplicity of understanding, removal of extraneous ideas, concentration on existence, these are the hallmarks of 20th century thinking. At the same time it does begin to highlight the sharp distinction between thinkers. The paucity of modern thought drives some back to Scholasticism. The convoluted nature of modern thought drives others to reject it and substitute a more streamlined, less complicated version. Whatever the case, historical notions of empiricism and rationalism are left behind in favor of sleeker, more unified notions of consciousness, all bound and driven by an existential framework. Even metaphysical questions are drawn to be important only in light of human interaction.

There is a distinctive movement away, a clear split from 'modern' thinking. Again, is it anything different than we have seen before?

Classifying Russell and Wittgenstein: Defining the 20th Century

The shadow which hangs over the previous discussion of the 20th Century is Bertrand Russell and his student, Ludwig Wittgenstein. While some of our later thinkers may be more closely identified with the last century, Russell, along with his mentor Alfred North Whitehead, changed the direction of the thinking. Iconoclasts might be the word I apply here. Math has become the new language, especially as it is expressed within Physics.

The Players

Dates	Philosophers	Main Points
1838 -1917	Franz Brentano	*Phenomenologist*
1859 -1938	Edmund Husserl	*Phenomenologist*
1861 -1947	Alfred North Whitehead	*English; Process; unity of the world; progress is not necessarily a forward motion*
1872 -1970	Bertrand Russell	*English; Mental and physical are two different ways of knowing a thing; atheist*
1873 -1958	G. E. Moore	*English; Friend of Russell; the falseness of English Idealism; common-sense*
1889 -1951	Ludwig Wittgenstein	*German; The world, like language can be broken down and understood*
1889 -1976	Martin Heidegger	*Phenomenologist*
1905 -1982	Ayn Rand	*Russian-American; objectivism; man is the only absolute*

Table 7: 20th Century Players: Russell and Wittgenstein

Russell

Bertrand Russell was a multi-faceted character, and he used his influence and keen mind to influence things. He championed social justice causes, and was even awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

He really seeks to simplify all of the different disciplines by gathering the different ways of looking at reality and defining them once and for all.

He begins by trashing traditional notions of reality. There is no substance or '*neutral monism*' (one mental/physical universal reality[50]) as he called it. As an alternative, he presents, what I guess you could call an *active monism*. Everything in the universe is made of space-time *events*, and events are neither mental nor physical because both the ideas of 'matter' and of 'mind' are meaningless over-simplifications of actual reality. He justifies this view by pointing out the over-reliance on one method of thinking over another. What he means is that matter is less material than Newton thought, and the spirit is less spiritual than Berkley (*Chapter 38*) thought. This has some pretty profound ramifications. Working away from these 'extremes' of thinking he proposed that the truth is really that there are different ways of organizing space-time and it is those limiting views which causes all of the problems. In the end all we can really say is that what truly exists is 'events'. So all of the outside thinking, the

[50] Even if we acknowledge that there is a physical and a mental aspect to understanding reality it is stating that those mental and the physical ways of organizing or describing the very same objects are themselves 'neutral', that is, neither physical nor mental is wrong, more specifically.

separation and categorization are meaningless. The difference between matter and mind is simply the 'causal' relationships that are brought to bear on them.

Cause? I thought that died out with the Medievals?

I Was Not Aware Of That

We can get back to that in a minute. So just what can we know then? How can we know? In a twisting toward and away from at the same moment, focusing on what he calls the 'event' rather than the 'phenomena', Russell sees sensations as both material *and* mental. The thing itself then is both 'exists' in both the material and the mental plane. Things 'happen' in a space-time venue (event), differing from Kant's idea that space and time are merely mental constructs by which we order things. Husserl and Heidegger too would place this within us, but with the phenomena being the thing that is within us, not the event of sensation. For Russell, our 'sensation' of a thing is the part of the actual object that can be 'physically' constructed out of it. At the same time the 'sensation' is also part of the mind within which the perception occurred. We can only sense what is physically there, and the sense takes place within us. Therefore an object is defined by all the appearances that emanate from the space-time venue where it is towards the mind where it is perceived; alternatively, a 'mind' is defined by all the appearances that start from objects and reach it. I know, I know, this is starting to sound a bit like Hume…that was what you were thinking, right?

This is why these multiple ways of viewing reality make sense to us or why people might think them. Who we are, our 'Consciousness', allows us to perceive some of the processes that occur in our brain as well as physical objects outside of it. In a sense it is like looking in a mirror. As an example, Russell contends that what a neurophysiologist really sees while examining someone else's brain is a part of his or her *own* brain. What this means is that there is actually *no separation* between the physical and the mental. The observed is part of the observer. Like Heidegger then, the phenomena is the thing. Unlike Heidegger it is not just a mental thing. Each part (the mental and the physical) is part of our understanding. This goes against the Kant's problem of not knowing the thing-in-itself. This problem, the irreducibility of the mental to the physical, is an illusion: the mental and the physical are different ways of knowing *the same thing*. 'What we know' and 'what is' are the same thing. We know the mental by what we call 'Consciousness' and the physical by what we call 'the senses'. Consciousness gives us *immediate, direct knowledge* of what is in the brain, whereas the senses can *observe* (and therefore 'know') what is in the brain (a physical object). The idea of the 'mental' is an immediate grasp of the intrinsic character of the brain. Ergo, 'Consciousness' is just another sense.

There we have it. The thing which has been so fought over, call it the brain, the mind, whatever, is merely just another 'sense', like seeing or touch. Just like I can see a table with the sense of sight, I can 'see' (be aware of, sense, know, whatever) mental things as well. So as a question, can we call this the final death-knell of the rational/empirical fight?

What Caused You To Think That?

So back to that 'cause' statement from earlier. Sensation 'causes' us to be 'conscious' of the thing. Technically though, these 'lines' of cause which we can 'trace' are not 'cause', i.e. not a thing-in-itself. This is because "*a 'thing' or a piece of matter is not to be regarded as a single persistent substantial entity, but as a string of events having a certain kind of causal connection with each other. This kind is what I call "quasi-permanence". The causal law that I suggest may be enunciated as follows: 'Given an event at a certain time, then at any slightly earlier or slightly later time there is, at some neighbouring* [sic] *place, a closely similar event'. I do not assert that this happens always, but only that it happens very often- sufficiently often to give a high probability to an induction confirming it in a particular case. When "substance" is*

abandoned, the identity, for commonsense, of a thing or a person at different times must be explained as consisting in what may be called a 'causal line'." (*On the Notion of Cause*)

I do not usually pre-introduce someone but as with Hegel and Kant I'll make an exception. Russell was a student/colleague of Alfred North Whitehead (*Chapter 55*), the proponent of Process Philosophy, with whom he co-authored the work cited below *Principles of Mathematics*. Suffice it to say, through that relationship, we start with this notion of *events* and *process*, but more on that later. Russell put forth the notion of *process causation* or *causal lines*, postulating that the philosophical idea of causation should be seen as a primitive version of the scientific idea of causal laws which means that because of the primitive understanding that something 'causes' something else, scientific inference is possible. "*The concept 'cause', as it occurs in the works of most philosophers, is one which is apparently not used in any advanced science. But the concepts that are used have been developed from the primitive concept (which is that prevalent among philosophers), and the primitive concept,...still has importance as the source of approximate generalizations [sic] and pre-scientific inductions, and as a concept which is valid when suitably limited.*" (*ibid*) The problem is people stop there (or do not stop there), as if cause was some-thing. In the end, he states his rather healthy skepticism of cause: "*The law of causality, I believe, like much that passes muster among philosophers, is a relic of a bygone age, surviving, like the monarchy, only because it is erroneously supposed to do no harm.*" (*ibid*) Ouch.

Language And Logic

Cause? What is next, Logic? Yep. Philosophy was a good place to start but really folks, they get a bit speculative and fuzzy. Science should be aware of its debt to these folks, but what philosophers need to understand is that all of their groping in the dark has been brought to its true fruition through science. Logic, as philosophically developed has been corrected, or at least can reach its potential if everyone just listens to reason – or empiricism, or well, Russell.

We think back on Aristotle, and the structure of an argument (or *syllogism*), we recall the parts of an argument. The Proposition (truth, thesis, or whatever you want to call it) is the basic foundation, as in, proposition, proposition, conclusion, but it really has to do with the specific terms used within the proposition. The Stoics shift that away toward the words used in the proposition (propositional logic, if you recall, *Chapter 23* if you do not). When it comes to metaphysics, Russell wants to chuck out the bathwater, but he also wants to preserve the ring (we will get to the baby later). Russell makes a distinction between the proposition, which is a logical 'artifact', and the sentence that makes it up, that is, its description in 'natural language'. Aristotle is speaking of the *terms* of the argument, and more modern thinkers speak of the symbolic/mathematic or the *predicates* of the arguments. Russell, working from the latter view of logic, produces a sequence starting with the name of a thing, stating that the name 'signifies' a concept, and a concept 'denotes' an object. Put it in the light of the earlier mental/sensual two-way street, and hopefully it will make sense.

For Aristotle the definition was the thing, and the term held its own meaning within the proposition. Russell is saying that that, the thing itself is merely pointed to by logic. We can see the more mathematical thinking here. '1' in the '1+1=2' argument is not the concept but merely signifies it, and that signified concept merely stands in for the true object. One apple plus one apple equals two apples. I do not need two apples to physically show this.

What it comes down to is that if we simplify thinking then we think better. Aristotle biologically broke things down and grouped them into classes of objects. As Brentano approached it psychologically, Russell comes at it mathematically. So what branch of mathematics is all about simplifying things? Working from that idea, Russell develops a

'Calculus of classes'[51]. We can see this with the apples example: a 'class' is the set of objects by which a function is satisfied. This is easy enough to do with objects, not as easy with ideas. "*In this calculus there are very much fewer new primitive propositions—in fact, two seem sufficient—but there are much greater difficulties in the way of non-symbolic exposition of the ideas embedded in our symbolism. These difficulties, as far as possible, will be postponed to later chapters. For the present, I shall try to make an exposition which is to be as straightforward and simple as possible.*

The calculus of classes may be developed by regarding as fundamental the notion of class, and also the relation of a member of a class to its class. This method…is perhaps more philosophically correct than a different method which, for formal purposes, I have found more convenient. In this method we still take as fundamental the relation (which…I shall denote by ∈) of an individual to a class to which it belongs, i.e. the relation of Socrates to the human race which is expressed by saying that Socrates is a man. In addition to this, we take as indefinables the notion of a propositional function and the notion of such that. It is these three notions that characterize the class-calculus." (*Principles of Mathematics*, § 20 ¶1-2)

So, if any of that made sense, we can see that this is different than just the latter mathematical predicative logic; he sees it as a *logical reconstruction* of Mathematics. Russell is using more of a 'theory of types', meaning that things make more sense when we look at them as types and classes. Logical contradictions of any kind can be resolved at a higher level. You might recall the 2+2=4 thing way back in Chapter N. where two apples plus two oranges does not equal four apples or four oranges. We can 'resolve' this difference at a 'higher' level by saying that we have four fruits.

Okay, so what? Keeping in mind, as we said above, the mental/sensual/consciousness proposition, we can tie this into the whole consciousness thing of the Phenomenologists.[52] Proof does not have to come from any metaphysical truth. The very things we think about give us all of the proof we need, and in the cases of what confuses us, we are looking in the wrong place. That is to say, the thing is the thing, and we do not need anything beyond the physical thing (since it is both physical and mental) to explain anything we know.

As I See It

Speaking of his writings, Russell produced a 'history' of Western philosophy, appropriately called *A History of Western Philosophy*.[53] Divided into three 'books', each book has chapters devoted to a single philosopher, school of philosophy, or philosophic timeframe.

- **Ancient Philosophy**
    - *The Pre-Socratics* (folks like Thales, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Empedocles, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Anaxagoras, Leucippus, Democritus and Protagoras)
    - *Socrates, Plato and Aristotle*
    - *Ancient Philosophy after Aristotle* (folks like the Cynics, Skeptics, Epicureans, Stoics and Plotinus)
- **Catholic Philosophy**

[51] Calculus, being the mathematical study of limits, is used in this sense as any method or system of calculation guided by the symbolic manipulation of expressions. In that way, what he wants us to understand is the thing is the thing.

[52] We can; no one else might, but we can.

[53] At least briefly known as, the full title being: *A History of Western Philosophy and Its Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*.

    - *The Fathers* (folks like Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Benedict and Pope Gregory the Great, including developments in Jewish philosophy and Islamic philosophy)
    - *The Schoolmen* (i.e. the Scholastics – folks like John Scotus and Thomas Aquinas)
- **Modern Philosophy**
    - From the Renaissance to Hume (folks like Machiavelli, Erasmus, More, Bacon, Hobbes, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley and, of course, Hume)
    - From Rousseau to the Present Day (folks like Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Byron, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, the Utilitarians, Marx, Bergson, William James and John Dewey – realizing that it was published in 1945)
- ***The Philosophy of Logical Analysis***, the final chapter, is based in Russell's personal philosophical views.

I know what you are thinking…this all looks vaguely familiar…I know it looks like it but I did not steal anything from Russell. The history of Western philosophy is the history of Western philosophy, right? Alright, that accusing look out of the way, the gist of the whole book, while being a rollicking good read and a nice brief overview of Western philosophy, is mainly focused toward that last chapter, and is designed to show the short-comings of all of Western philosophy until Russell's brilliant interpretation of everything.

He also wrote *Why I Am Not A Christian*, a thoughtful manifesto which is similarly focused on the short-comings of all of Western religion and religious thinking until Russell's brilliant interpretation of everything.

Wittgenstein

Ludwig Wittgenstein, a German, came to England to seek out Russell. "*An unknown German appeared, speaking very little English but refusing to speak German. He had acquired, by himself, a passion for the philosophy of mathematics and has now come to Cambridge on purpose to hear me.*" Quickly Russell took to the young man. "*I love him and feel he will solve the problems I am too old to solve. He is the young man one hopes for. I find him strangely exciting.*" While starting from the mathematical aspect, he picks up Russell's concentration on language. To him philosophical 'problems' are not true problems and so any time spent thinking about them is nonsensical. All of the 'great philosophical problems' on which so many have spent so much time[54] all come down misunderstandings, that is, they are due to linguistic misunderstandings. Not that the language we use confuses or confiscates the problems of philosophy. In fact, Wittgenstein proposes that the structure of language reflects the structure of the world and in that way really is the basis for understanding everything.

How can this be? Which is it? *Listen my children and you will hear....* Let us approach it from the physical side first. The world, he contends, is made of complex facts that can be broken down into simpler facts, something we can all agree on, right? In a similar way, language is made of complex propositions that can be broken down into simpler propositions. This of course may also sound vaguely familiar, and I am not talking about 5th grade English and diagramming sentences. So, all things being equal, at least in logic-land, language is like a map to the world. This means that we can see that the connections between the elements of language reflect the connections between the elements of the world. Basically it is the *way we think*, about everything as well as being *what we think with*. Wittgenstein called this 'grammar'.

[54] Including us, I suppose.

I'm Positive

Russell, Wittgenstein and Moore, all hung out at Cambridge and had great influence on one another. They also had great influence on language and logic.

Logical positivism, on which they exerted some of their greatest influence, is a thinking that combines rationalism based in mathematical and logical-linguistic constructs with epistemological constructs and deductions. Simply put, Logical positivism is a strict way of looking at statements and labeling them as true, false or meaningless using two sources: *empirical statements* (which come from science) and *analytic truths*[55] (statements which are true or false by definition). Basically it rejects anything which is 'unverifiable', i.e. things which are not scientifically or analytically verifiable. [Logical Positivists believed that the purpose of philosophy was not to produce new propositions describing the universe or reality, but rather, the purpose was to analyze the existing propositions to find out whether the statement is mathematical, scientific or nonsensical.]

For Wittgenstein, since the structure of language reflects the structure of the world, the totality of true propositions (which corresponds to the totality of science) provides a representation of the world that is *adequate and complete*. Think of Moore's 'common-sense' assertions. Understanding a proposition means knowing not so much the exact definition but more of 'what is the case if it is true', that is, understanding to which reality it corresponds. This kind of thing is obvious. Still, because we are too close to the topic, so to speak, the meaning of the world cannot be understood from inside the world because the concepts we use to define it come from it (sort of using the word to define itself); we can at best come to a consensus.

Okay. There does not need to be a complex logical system to understand the world. We can pretty much figure out what goes with what and what is true or not from simple scientific or analytic examination. Within this, and perhaps despite this, Language still has a function. Words are tools, just like mathematical constructs. Assertions, commands, questions, etc. are correspond to similar mathematical functions and just as Mathematics is a 'game' played by mathematicians, Language is a 'game' between people. And because definition is fluid, the meaning of a linguistic proposition can only be understood in its context. 'Truth' is a multi-faceted concept because different statements can be all true without being true in the same way. They have what is called an *alethic* (from the Greek for *truth*) *pluralism*. Ergo, the 'meaning' of a word is only accomplished by the consensus of a society.

To understand a word is to understand a language. To understand a language is to master the linguistic skills. This is because paring down a language to meet the rigorous standards of logical positivism means there is not too much to misunderstand. You can put this in light of the 'calculus of classes' idea. The world consists of facts, and we become aware of these facts by virtue of our thoughts. And these thoughts are a logical picture of the facts. And just like a picture depicts reality, our thoughts are also a depiction of the world. Language is the depiction of those thoughts.

A Penny For Your Thoughts

If language is representation of thought then the question arises: What is thought? Wittgenstein provides a simple answer: *A thought is a proposition with a sense*. Okay, slow down. Is there a circular reasoning here? Well, let us walk through it. The way we become aware of our thoughts is through propositions, that is, the sentences which are the basic structures of the language we speak. We can compare and contrast this with Abelard's *nominalism* (which feeds off of Aristotle where a thing is part of *each* object). Wittgenstein is talking about a *phenomena=object* kind of thing in that a name *means* its object, that is, language *represents* the thing (what is known as a *representational view of language*). For

[55] Think back to Kant to understand the word *analytic*.

example, the name 'table' means the object 'table' which is in front of me at the moment. (Eventually Wittgenstein will abandon this view of language).

So, the world consists of *facts*, which are imaged in our *thoughts*, and our thoughts become 'real' through *propositions*. The totality of propositions is language. This is why the structure of language reflects the structure of the world. Reality, thoughts and language share a common structure which can be totally expressed in logical terms. The best language provides us with the best picture of reality. Just as we can judge a picture by virtue of its relation to reality, a proposition is true or false by virtue of how it corrosponds to reality. If a proposition corresponds to reality, it is true. If it does not, it is false. Ergo the totality of true propositions is the whole of natural science.

Truth then is in the words of the speaker. Logical Positivistism picks up on this analytic/synthetic distinction. As we already know from Kant (*Chapter 43*), an *analytic* proposition is one which is necessarily true, because its meaning contains its truth i.e. it would be self-contradictory to deny it. "All bachelors are unmarried men" is an analytic statement. A *synthetic* proposition is one which requires some amount of empirical investigation in order to determine its validity. To extend our example, "All bachelors go to bars to meet women" is a synthetic statement which might be true, but its validity is not obvious merely from analysis of the statement itself. Another way to look at it is that analytic statements do not tell us anything about the world. The statement "The sun is a star" despite being true doesn't tell us whether the sun exists in the world or not. But the statement "The earth revolves around the sun", if true, does tell us something about the world.

So what? Well, logical positivism marks analytic statements as meaningless. The implication shakes the very foundation of the purpose of traditional philosophy. Philosophy is reduced to a kind of litmus test. Because any *a priori* statements, i.e. the propositions of ethics, metaphysics and theology are not verifiable by experiments, they are either trivial or they are nonsensical. The true purpose of philosophy is to not make statements about the nature of reality because task belongs to science. Nor should it explain *synthetic a priori* things, that task belongs to mathematics. The purpose of philosophy is to analyze a problem, and to show that it either belongs to logic and mathematics, or it belongs to science, or, as with many things, it is meaningless. There is no reason for it to 'solve' these problems, because they are outside of its venue.

Language as Lesson

Alright, that may seem like a wandering off course, but it helps us to understand the thinking here because it is a reflection of it. So just what can philosophy tell us? Based on the whole Russellian vision of the universe, the mind and consciousness are merely *causal lines* strung together, and there is no separation between the physical object and our mental sensation of it. So, just as trying to understand the mind outside of the things upon which the mind focuses is impossible. Similarly, trying to understand 'metaphysical' things is also impossible. For example, Ethics, which purports to be universal maxims, is impossible because we are inside the world that ethics struggles to understand; how can we postulate an external universal when there are no external universals? This is part and parcel of Russell's argument against God[56]. Wittgenstein narrows it down in terms of language. Metaphysics is a fictitious notion due to a wrong use of language: it is neither true nor false, it cannot be justified (just like religion and magic which in terms of this are equal concepts). Any study of it is nonsensical. It just does not fall under the realm or the propositions of philosophy.

[56] If the world we sense is all there is, and our sense of it is connected to it and only has meaning in terms of it, then how can there be a 'God' outside of that? How can anything be outside of anything? To postulate a God outside of the World is to postulate something beyond what we can know, because we can only know what is right in front of us.

So what does that leave us with? This quandary may sound familiar to us (at least it should, if not by now, then very soon). What is true? Is it just the physical? Is it just the mental? Is it a combination of both? Is there a way to view things that makes sense of why we might think something exists even if it does not? Why do we even think about things which are not verifiable[57]?

We simply have to understand it as a problem of misunderstanding. Physically, the world is true or false, and that is empirically/scientifically provable. Mentally, physical things come to us as sensation, and as the physical object presents itself to my 'mind' and my 'mind' points out to the object. Okay, understanding that the mental merely points to the physical may explain most 'metaphysical' things away, but what about those mental only things, like Mathematics, where there is no object to sensate and yet we have 'provable' truths? Wittgenstein contends that mathematical entities are pure constructions of the mind. These things are 'inventions' and the mathematician is an 'inventor'. There are objects, and we can apply mathematics to objects but ultimately, Mathematics cannot be grounded in the world, as there is no attribute within an object which implies mathematics. It is simply a 'game' played by mathematicians. There is not 'one thing' and 'one thing' making 'two things'; there is only the one thing and the other one thing. We cannot 'create' or define a 'new thing'. We can only play a 'game' where we 'invent' the new thing: 'two apples'.

So, accordingly, even though it is the basis for how we think, the Aristotelian world of substances and definitions really does not fit the modern understanding of the world (nor does the 'modern' thought of rationalism and empiricism, hence the idea of *post-modern*). This is because though useful to a point, definitions are at best ambiguous and at worst implausible. Kant's salvaging of categories is lacking as well. The object dictates itself to the consciousness. The idea of the class is much better. For that reason, 'categories' are based on 'family resemblance', not on physical or mental features. In the end, there is just the thing-itself, as it presents itself to us and how we categorize things, i.e. the 'category of classes' idea. There is no ghost in the machine, no mind that understands, just 'understanding'.

Philosophy has a limited function. In a sense, like Russell, he too thought he had solved all of the problems of philosophy, and in fact quit for a while.

Putting It Together

And as a note, notice the phrase '*the philosophy of mathematics'* in the Wittgenstein quote from Russell above. These guys are working 'the philosophy of' something. They are not using mathematics per se as part of their philosophy, as say Aristotle or Descartes, but are working for an understanding *of mathematics*. Hence

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Jonathan Miller: We have in the studio Bertrand Russell, who talked to us in the series "*Sense Perception and Nonsense: Number 7, 'Is this a dagger I see before me?'*" Bertrand Russell.

***Bertrand Russell*:** One of the advantages of living in Great Court, Trinity, I seem to recall, was the fact that one could pop across at any time of the day or night and trap the then young G.E. Moore into a logical falsehood by means of a cunning semantic subterfuge. I recall one occasion with particular vividness. I had popped across and had knocked upon his door. "Come in", he said. I decided to wait awhile in order to test the validity of his proposition. "Come in", he said once again. "Very well", I replied, "if that is in fact truly what you wish".

I opened the door accordingly and went in, and there was Moore seated by the fire with a basket upon his knees. "Moore", I said, "do you have any apples in that basket?" "No", he replied, and smiled seraphically, as was his wont. I decided to try a different logical tack. "Moore", I said, "do you then have some apples in that basket?" "No", he replied, leaving me in a logical cleft stick from which I had but one way out. "Moore", I said, "do you then have apples in that basket?" "Yes", he replied. And from that day forth, we remained the very closest of friends.

From* Jonathan Miller, 'Portrait from Memory', *Beyond the Fringe

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[57] Remember, verifiable does not mean true, just whether we can verify if it is true or false.

Process Philosophy

Why spend a moment on this and why not earlier?

The Players

Dates	Philosophers	Main Points
1861 -1947	Alfred North Whitehead	*English-American; Process explains reality; a metaphysics for science*
1872 -1970	Bertrand Russell	*English; Mental and physical are two different ways of knowing a thing*
1897 -2000	Charles Hartshorne	*American; Process*

Table 8: Process Players

Pre-Processors

So what about this process thing. Is it something new? Technically no. There is a certain amount of 'process' thinking in many systems in history, and we can touch on a few.

Hearken way back to Heraclitus, who stepped into the river and determined that he could never step into that river again. A main tenet of his thought is that change is central to understanding the universe.

Pan over to Buddha. All our actual experience is always changing and all phenomena appear and then pass away. In this view experience and therefore existence is flowing rather than static

Move forward to Aristotle. Change happens but it is 'accidental' that is, it is not tied to the substance. Just as red hair 'belongs' to a person, it is not the person, and if all of their red hair fell out they would still be that person. So change can happen but it does not affect the thing in itself. There is no sense of 'becoming'; a thing is what it is. Even as I 'become' older I am still me. Change takes place within a static boundary. Complexity of an organism does not indicate process, that is, humans were humans, not 'better' apes.

Then we have Hegel and the dialectic. For him, the substance of Aristotle is an imposed metaphysical limitation we do not have to worry about. The dialectic is king. History is a *process* of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. It is a dynamic movement. Even the Absolute, on which all is based and toward which all is focused is not a fixed idea.

As a segue we can slip in Darwin. Change is everything. In partial opposition to Aristotle things automatically change and adapt. Mind you they are just different species of the same animal.

Now we jump forward to let Peirce put it in 19th language: "*A single tone may be prolonged…so that, as long as it is sounding, it might be present to a sense from which everything in the past was as completely absent as the future itself. But it is different with the* [melody]*, the performance of which occupies a certain time, during the portions of which only portions of it are played. It consists in an orderliness in the succession of sounds which strike the ear at different times; and to perceive it there must be some continuity of consciousness which makes the events of a lapse of time present to us. We certainly only perceive the air by hearing the separate notes; yet we cannot be said to directly hear it, for we hear only what is present at the instant, and an orderliness of succession cannot exist in an instant.*" (Peirce, *How To Make Our Ideas Clear*) Space and time are segments, and we understand something in terms of them. Some things persist over time and through space but our understanding of them takes place within a framework of time and space, whereas the instant only gives us a minute sense of the

thing. There is never a moment when the thing *is*, that is, where we can say that it has a *sustained existence*. We can only recognize all of its moments strung together, ergo it is always *becoming*.

And finally on to the 20th century and Bertrand Russell's Whitehead influenced idea of causal lines. Things are strung together 'in order' and we think of them as related and therefore serial. There is a certain sense of earlier metaphysics here with the 'causal' thinking, except that they are related within a context. From here on we can see Einstein's theory of relativity and all of its present offshoots producing radical changes in the expression of 'relation', similar to Darwin's influence a century before.

This space-time sense is key to understanding Process because Process thought is a child of the 20th century. It comes post-Pragmatism and post-Einstein. With that in mind, looking at Peirce's 19th century argument above, just as the single musical note takes place in a moment, by itself, in that single moment the note holds little meaning for us does it? We might argue that perhaps that one note is the note from which the orchestra tunes, so that it 'lingers' outside of the moment. But that is the problem. We cannot just take it as a note, it must be in a larger context of *before and after* for it to have meaning. So the single moment may be detached from the past and the future but when it is, it has no meaning. With Einstein we see time having meaning only within a context of space which can warp time relative to gravity, meaning that the time experience context can be *different* depending upon where you are standing.

Process And Recurrence

Whew! Okay then what is Process and how is it different than anything else we have seen so far? Certainly, as shown, we have touched on this subject in our previous discussions of among others Russell, who, as said was heavily influenced by Whitehead. Let us look at it from another recently discussed standpoint. From the time of Aristotle, Western metaphysics has been focused on *things* or *substances*. Suffice it to say briefly, that Process places reality and therefore metaphysics in a 'new' light, one that is in *process* rather than one that is *static*, focusing on *becoming* rather than *being*. Pretty much, in the standard line of thinking, a substance is itself, a thing's *essence*. Recall as we stated above that substance is the thing which does not change about a thing, that is, what it *is* when all else is stripped away, or to put it another way, the stuff that is part of a thing such that changing it would change what the thing *is* (if Socrates had red hair and lost it, he would still be Socrates but if you gave him a frog head he would be something different[58]). Granted, as we have seen, the idea of substance has narrowed since Aristotle, but it is still used to designate the 'thing itself'. This narrowing is most obvious when we talk about existence being the prime thing. And that is where we are. We have arrived at the existence *before* essence and the existence *is* essence way of thinking. Substance then as a *static* thing is not so much part of the conversation.

Let us mix this up a bit. Nietzsche talked about 'eternal recurrence' (a notion he picked up from Hume), upon which we briefly touched (*Chapter 49*). What he was trying to work through was the nature of existence as a whole. Eventually, he thought, everything (and I mean everything) would be repeated, and not just once but since there is no end in sight (because there is no notion of Christian eschatology), repeatedly forever. Think of the monkeys and the typewriter thing. Since existence is pretty much limited to what is (conservation of mass and energy), eventually all of the cards will fall back into the same place and *voila*, the exact thing would exist again, an infinite number of times. Add to that Schopenhauer's idea that a person would pretty much live the same life no matter how many times he or she lived it[59]. He concluded from this thinking, if you recall, that life is absurd, or at best meaningless; it is further proof that there is no 'God' working things from on high. All that is left to us, if

[58] 'Croacates' perhaps?

[59] Schopenhauer's thinking being that someone who unconditionally affirms life would do so even if everything that has happened were to happen again repeatedly, to be specific.

we want to be truly free, is to embrace this fate (*amor fati*). Think of the movie *Groundhog Day*, where the main character lives the same day over and over again. The same events happen every 'day', with clockwork predictability. He is the same man every 'day'. Eventually after trying everything, including every way imaginable to kill himself, he embraces his fate, and begins to act accordingly. [That story is more in the second chance department whereas] Nietzsche says that this is really our only chance and if that is our fate, to eternally repeat the same thing over and over again[60] then we should make a decision as to whether it will crush us or set us free. We should structure our lives to be a repetition we will at least be proud of and want to relive again and again: "*one wants nothing other than* [the way] *it is, not in the future, not in the past, not in all eternity*" (*Ecce Homo*, §10 in *Why I Am So Clever*)

So is the thing static or dynamic? Is that even the correct assignment? If eternal recurrence occurs, and we are 'fated' to live the same life again and again, is there a difference? That is, is the universe and being 'static' in that the same thing will happen again and again and does it matter that it happens an infinite number of times because it will always be the same? What kind of Process or progress can come of that? The key to the question is teleology (the ends of something, remember?). We have to fight the fight perhaps that there is a difference in whether things end or not or have and end of any type. If there is no teleology then does that fundamentally change the nature of the argument? There is a struggle to decide if things work toward an end (Hegel) or if they never end (Hume). And we need to think about if that the end they work for is transitory. Can this transitory universe really be considered static? Does a static universe allow for recurrence?

Speaking of Recurrence, The Return Of Metaphysics

Alright, let us take a deep breath, regroup, and come back to that later.[61] We can perhaps better manage some of our earlier questions by looking at the environment of this thinking. Many of our eternal recurrence camp followers have rejected Metaphysics. 'So what,' you may ask. Well, what about the system ramifications of that? If there are no metaphysical things, that is, if the world is the world and our perceptions of the world are limited to the world, then fate and the mechanics of the universe are built-in, they are *observable and repeatable* aspects of the world. This means that there is no *need* for metaphysics. Let me put it another way. Certainly, the world exists apart from us and we are part of it, but it is not fully us, else consciousness, that sense of us as 'apart from the world', would not exist. Conversely, we could not be conscious of the world if it did not in some part exist apart from us even as we are a part of it. There is no meta-physics, because everything exists within the physical world and everything we need to "know' in order to operate within that world is pretty much right in front of us. This means a *static world* in which *we operate dynamically*. All of this is a gross oversimplification of the conundrum but hang with it.

Enter folks like Brentano and Rand, and the resurgence in metaphysical discussion, albeit a somewhat limited form of metaphysics focused from a purely existential concentration. So what are the ramifications of a metaphysical universe, and especially this 'new' type of metaphysics? The existence of absolutes and universals means that we are not as required to understand the world as required to understand the universals and absolutes which tell us about the world. In fact, we are probably *only* able to understand our *perceptions*. The way we operate in the world is static, via the metaphysical universals, whereas the world is a dynamic expression of the universals.

There is perchance, a third alternative view where both we and the world are dynamic (and a fourth if you take the antithesis). In this system, nothing is set. We have seen something like this put forth by Hume among others but most end up rejecting this view, as we can see with Nietzsche's *amor fati*, or Schopenhauer's Absolute, or even James. There is a resistance to end in nihilism because it seems so

[60] After having repeated it I do not know how many times by now, I suppose.
[61] After all there are plenty of other thoughts to make our heads spin.

untenable. Who would want to live in such a world? If everything is flux then how can you mentally participate? If Reality is not set to some degree and there are no set Universals, so how can you determine truth? We end up stultified, unable to act, and in the end that is what even Socrates was talking about.

The world presents itself to us. We interpret that world. In terms of post-modern thought, our existence is based in this relationship. How that presentation and interpretation takes place is the determinate factor in one's position.

Whitehead

All that said, let us get down to brass tacks. Alfred North Whitehead started his career as a mathematician at Cambridge. Whitehead taught Russell, who thought him "extraordinarily perfect as a teacher". He 'fixed' Russell's type theory by assigning a hierarchy to the types and entities to each type. Along with Russell's logician contribution he produced the influential three volume work *Principia Mathematica* (*on the foundations of math*). He moved to London, where he began to philosophically examine science and education. During that time one of his sons was killed during WWI and he was briefly imprisoned for his pacifism. Finally he came to America, to teach at Harvard, where he developed his Process ideas. In a Process kind of kismet he died in Cambridge, but not the Cambridge where he started.

Whitehead's pivotal philosophical work (in an increasingly common practice of naming something *X and Y*) is called *Process and Reality*. For inspiration Whitehead pointed to William James and Albert Einstein, mainly because they created an environment that helped to open up speculation about reality. From James he developed a sense of truth being speculative, that subject and object are one, and the allowance for a certain amount of metaphysics. From Einstein came the understanding that space and time are relative, also helping to place truth into the realm of the speculative. Whitehead desired to create a basis in physical experience for the scientific concepts of space and time. He actually offered an alternate theory of relativity, but experimentation has subsequently discounted it (though not until the early 70's).

Life, the Universe, and Everything

For Whitehead the whole purpose of thought was to unify, a concept he shared not just with Einstein but of many of the thinkers we are encountering. Metaphysics serves a different purpose. All speculative thinking is designed to produce a coherent set of basic concepts capable of interpreting every item of experience. In the past, God is most often associated with this role and therefore metaphysics. His metaphysics, with its different grounding, is somewhat complex but it retains the aspects we would recognize. Like Kant and his re-vamping of Aristotle, Whitehead puts forth a series of categories, four of which we will concentrate on: *actual entities*, *eternal objects*, *nexus*, and *creativity*.

Actual entities are like the noumena of earlier thought, the final real things which possess existence, that is, they come into being yet they also pass away. [As momentary entities, they may be equated with the event constituting the leap of an electron from one orbit in its atom to another, or with an occasion of experience.] They relate to what he calls *actual occasions*, or the moments of experience of that actual entity. *Eternal objects*, are the forms or qualities which *recur* in the process of actual entities. So we can see that universals have no 'existence' outside of the entity, they are part of it. A *nexus* is a group or society of actual entities. These societies of actual entities constitute the eternal objects (like trees and persons) encountered in ordinary experience. *Creativity* is the ultimate category, accounting for the novelty, the creative movement (what we might think of as progress) in the world. This is where God sneaks in. The world is everything, and God, being part of that everything (and not apart from it as

the Medievalists would contend), means that God is a *derivative* notion, an *accident* of creativity. But more on that later.

With those concepts in mind, let us delve into Whitehead's thought. In the Process universe, there really are no official *noumena*, no fundamental 'things' (or 'objects'). Whitehead's *ontological* thought (the essence of the universe) which he calls 'cosmology' contains only *events* or *processes*. Notice the *process* rather than the *object* meaning he applies to this. This is a shift. We are used to thinking in terms of noumena and phenomena, that is, objects or objects of perception, but he does not structure reality that way. Everything stems from this difference. Whitehead's thoughts on time are the result from this seeing reality as 'event-based' rather than 'object-based'. This means that if you add up everything, like perception, consciousness, etc., it can all be expressed as an 'event' or a process (avoiding trying to assign a 'physical' reality to everything). Time, in that view, is a 'thing', a unified, essentially all-encompassing rather than single identifiable point-like moments.

Whitehead was influenced by James so think about this in light of Peirce's example of the musical note from the ***Pre-Processors*** section above. Moments, though they are definable and quantifiable, are not truly able to stand alone, but only in relation to every other moment, except that here the relationship is relative. Recall also Leibniz's '*monads*' (*Chapter 38*) that you can think of like you might think of physical atoms which sound a bit like actual entities. In a sense a *monad* is the thing. For Whitehead, strictly speaking, the world is unitary, not fragmented into 'things'. Unlike Hegel's dialectic, the history of the world is a continuous process, not fragmented into a constant stream of single 'events'. That is not to say that single events do not exist. Things and events are *temporary* 'clusters' of world features. This is different than Hume's associative vision in that it is not an association of bits and pieces to make a thing but all things associated together, in a kind of *Kumbaya*, all things singing *Lean on Me* together.

Real Unity

For Whitehead, even in this speculative system, experience is everything (reality is made up of experienced *events* not experienced *objects*). The fundamental sense, the way we most often interact with the world, is touch. All senses (touch, sight, taste, etc.) are a *physical* interaction between us and the environment. This experience based awareness of the world around us he called *prehension*. As we talked about with Russell and Wittgenstein, perceptions are the foundation of the 'mind', therefore the 'mind' is part of the our physical interaction with the world. Nature (the world around us) is therefore permeated by our mind (as our mind by Nature) because this physical interaction extends out into the world. Every particle is an event having both an 'objective' aspect of matter and a 'subjective' aspect of experience. Some material compounds, such as the brain, create the unity of experience that we call 'mind'. Whitehead's 'subjective forms' complement 'eternal objects' in his metaphysical system with eternal objects being entities not unlike Plato's Forms.

For Whitehead, this thinking answers all the questions. He seeks to integrate and reconcile all of the diverse facets of human experience (i.e. ethical, religious, aesthetic, and scientific intuitions) into one cogent scheme. It stresses the inter-relatedness and unity of all entities. Everything comes together, and there is a sense of the loss of individuality, or at least that it is a fleeting thing. Reality is c a *process* of creative advances, not necessarily in a forward direction, in which past events are integrated in the events of the present, and in turn are taken up by future events. One can think of the Star Trek Vulcan adage: "Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations". Reality proceeds as "*the many become one, and are increased by one. In their natures, entities are disjunctively 'many' in process of passage into conjunctive unity.*" (*Process and Reality*)

The Past Present

Because of this organic-unitary view, Whitehead disagrees with Aristotle about the nature of things. [Things are a whole but that does not stop him from dividing things into their 'subjective form' and 'eternal objects'.] He also disagrees with Hegel's (and others, like Nietzsche and Marx) sense of dynamic history as the basis for understanding reality. Instead he turns to the experiential and empirical pragmatism of philosophers like Pierce and James, who posit the centrality of experience for that purpose. Yet he differs with the likes of Hume who want to make scientific thought the yardstick. For this reason he sees scientific advances towards a deeper understanding of reality (especially biological evolution, physical cosmology and an increasingly rich, if confusing, theory of the sub-atomic) as changing and expanding the playing field, but not as the be-all and the end-all of the discussion. Science fails because it limits itself to static proof and objects, and forgets symbolism.

Simply put, what is real is in process. Anything that is 'actual' is properly understood as a *momentary* event within a *series of momentary events*. Each momentary event is dependent upon and propelled by the previous one, within the context of its environment and in a direction dictated by the available possibilities based on the previous events toward its own completion. Ergo, there is nothing which can be considered static. The things we think of as objects are but momentary events linked together. Think of it this way. Nothing is static because each event endures as an individual for only a moment, but because it inherits the vast bulk of the characteristics of the event which preceded it is always in flux, moving to the next event. Everything which is real is, therefore, temporal; static would not imply time.

What does that mean? That nothing is identifiable? Is it like watching a NASCAR race where all you see are blurs? This is where *events* and *occasions* come together. 'Things' come together, coalesce (*concrescence*), and become understood in a very fluid way, but it is a way wherein we can determine the 'thing'. Time and space are relative contexts for events. Space is the 'place' context and Time is the 'group' context. Time is differentiated from space by the acts of gathering events from the past, what he would later call 'causal prehensions'. "*The events which we see, and which look like freaks of chance, are only the last steps in long lines of causation*." (*Dialogues of Alfred North Whitehead*)

Processing Reality

This 'causal' sense of things really comes down to 'this event is different from all previous events but is dependent upon every one of them'. Change is part of understanding a thing, but it is the 'change' from all previous events. That is, we can only think of something as 'that thing' or 'event' within a certain context. "*'One and one make two' assumes that the changes in the shift of circumstances are unimportant. But it is impossible for us to analyse* [sic] *this notion of 'unimportant change.' We have to rely upon common sense.*

In fact, there is not a sentence, or a word, with a meaning which is independent of the circumstances under which it is uttered. The essence of unscholarly thought consists in a neglect of this truth. Also it is equally the essence of common sense to neglect these differences of background when they are irrelevant to the immediate purpose. My point is that we cannot rely upon any adequate explicit analysis. The conclusion is that Logic, conceived as an adequate analysis of the advance of thought, is a fake. It is a superb instrument, but it requires a background of common sense...My point is that the final outlook of Philosophical thought cannot be based upon the exact statements which form the basis of special sciences. The exactness is a fake." (*Immortality* from *Essays in Science and Philosophy*)

As the scientific (physical) language is insufficient, we need a new 'language' to explain this, hence a *meta-physical* one. This 'context gathering' of prehensions is called an '*Actual Occasion*'. An *actual occasion*

is a *process of becoming* that produces a unified, concrescence (synthesis) of prehensions, that is to say, as the building block of 'reality', it has meaning. The *actual occasion* has meaning, because it is the synthesis of all that has come before it. Unlike the note which Pierce speaks of, which in the moment has no meaning, the actual occasion has meaning because it contains *all of the moments before it* in that very moment. It is a mistake to think of it as an isolated event. Herein we see Russell's 'causal lines'. We can think of the causal idea, not so much as *the moment before 'causes' the current or next moment*, but in the fact that it naturally follows the previous moment, something like the frames of a motion picture reel[62]. Like James though, it does not exist solely on its own and endures only in context of the next event. The two experiences of *cause* and *persistence* are only related to the event. We 'sense' them but as *prehensions* of a causal and a recognizable nature.

Think of an *actual occasion* then as a complete, momentary human experience, embodying *causal prehensions* in its actions of remembering and sensing, and c*onceptual prehensions* in its actions of embodying recognizable patterns (*eternal objects*). The point at which we can call something an *actual entity*, like say, a human experience, lies in the integration (*concrescence*) of all the various acts of experiencing (*prehending*) into *one act* according to a *specific aim* (*the subjective aim*). Metaphysics, at least as Whitehead understands it, lives.

Are We There Yet?

Whitehead called his new thinking the *Philosophy of Organism* and *Organic Realism*. Reality is a unity, an organic process, i.e. one that lives and grows from the 'real' into something 'actual'. If existence precedes essence *and* existence is becoming then metaphysics deals with this movement from real to actual with a logical process. "*A metaphysical proposition - in the proper, general sense of the term 'metaphysical' - signifies a proposition which (i) has meaning for any actual occasion as a subject entertaining it, and (ii) is 'general,' in the sense that its predicate potentially relates any and every set of actual occasions providing the suitable number of logical subjects for the predicative pattern, and (iii) has a 'uniform' truth-value, in the sense that by reason of its form and scope, its truth-value is identical with the truth-value of each of the singular propositions to be obtained by restricting the application of the predicate to any one set of logical subjects.*" (*Process and Reality*)

Russell and Whitehead deeply disagreed about ontology. Whitehead came to reject their earlier attempt to secure an epistemological foundation for mathematics. He also rejects traditional metaphysics and the notion of *substance*. Being is not based in enduring substances, but events, the actual occasion or actual entity. Actual things are related by their space-time context and typify their eternal objects.

Reality then (existence if you will) is a recognition, within space, time, and context, of something. Things which we think of a enduring (since static does not exist) whether they be prehensions, events (things we might call perceptions and objects) as well as scientific, mathematic, theological, or psychological 'objects' are really just repetitions of patterns inherited through a series of events, or occasions. What we think of as physical causality is the inheritance of patterned energy from the past. Our teleological sense of something is two-fold, its *final causality*, that concrescence toward some ultimate one aim, is its process of becoming. This becoming is distinguishable from its inheritance from

[62] Without a sense of predestination or necessity which seems to follow causality until now. Even if my intent is to move my arm from left to right it may not end up being so, as I may hit the wall first or any other myriad of outcomes.

the past (efficient causality), and which gives rise to the process of temporal transition. We recognize the thing in both these ways.

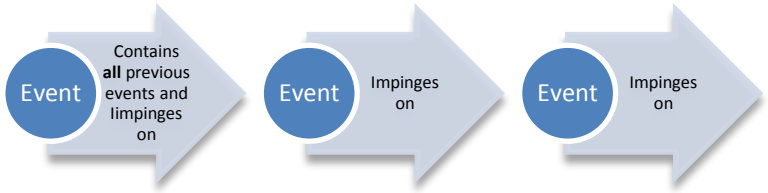

Figure 2: The Process View of Reality and 'Causation'

Subjectively we see these individual events lumped together, with the realization that it is not a state of being but a state of becoming, that is, it is just one piece in the puzzle. We may also recognize that these movements are not linear. Unity, from micro to macro means that no matter where we look we see this. So for example, history is not always a forward, what some would call 'progressive' movement. Process means that things are always becoming, and always changing. The saying 'History repeats itself' in this sense is both correct and incorrect. All of history impinges on the next historical event, yet, like the stream of Heraclitus, it is not the exact same stream. This means that there is process but that progress just means not standing still. You might 'spin your wheels' in place for a while before you move forward. So, rather than a straight line, progress might look more like a stretched out slinky.

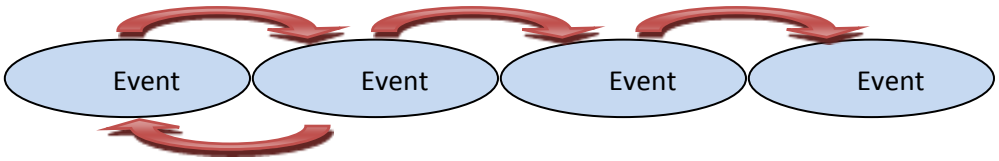

Figure 3: Process Progress

Processing God

Process philosophy has given rise to Process Theology which you may or may not be more familiar with, but is a discipline similar to previous theological approaches like Augustine with Plato and Aquinas with Aristotle. Whitehead himself does an impressive amount of thinking about God in his philosophy. Remember, metaphysics is a part of empirical reality. In his system, God is not some external metaphysical principle that you call upon to explain all of the gaps of other metaphysical principles. God is very much integral to understanding the process system.

This is important to understand because, like Kierkegaard, Whitehead's family was enmeshed in the Church. His father and uncles were vicars and he had a brother who was a bishop. Unlike Kierkegaard, he did not see them as deficient in spreading Christianity, but Christianity as deficient in its understanding of God.

In a nutshell, God and the universe are evolving together. We can perhaps hear Schopenhauer's Absolute lurking somewhere in the background. In fact there is the same kind of Christian/Buddhist mind meld going on here but with the pragmatism of Pierce not the mysticism of Schopenhauer. There is a charge of Deism leveled at Whitehead, but he disagrees, saying that the difference is that his notions of God's independence do not mean that God does not interact with the universe.

Basically, God too, like humans, is an 'actual entity', that is, the gathering and unification of *all* acts of experiencing (*prehending*) into one *everlasting* act of experiencing as opposed to our temporary one. Okay, your moans of 'what?' have been heard. This aspect, what he called 'God's Consequent Nature'

basically means that God is the sum total collection of all that has been, is, and can ever be experienced. God is the ultimate iterative machine. So when we say that God is 'omniscient', for Whitehead that means that while God knows every *possibility*, he *does not know* the exact possibilities which will be taken. Though he has left markers and clues for which is the best path he is willing to give us the freedom to not follow that, but it is okay because he knows every contingency. In fact, it is God's conceptual prehensions of eternal objects that serve as lures for us by providing 'subjective aims' for the finite actual occasions. They in fact do more by forming the very basis of order in the cosmos or what he called the "primordial nature of God" (*Process and Reality*).

Why re-think God? In the past, thinkers like Descartes thought of God and the universe as related, in that God created it all. The *ex nihilo* school assumes that God created everything, and in a sense it follows specific rules. The Stoics did not place God outside of Creation but they still had the sense of Logos, the rational rules of the universe, as part of it. Now, though in light of evolution and physics, there is a sense of materialism which pervades the thinking of the nature of things. Consciousness somehow arises from the right combination of materials. The mind is a 'higher order' actuality which may or may not (depending upon your school of thought) be directly related to this process. We might think about computers and the idea of sentience (which would be a leap), or the 1000s of monkeys at the keyboard (which would be the result of natural progression). Whether it is a new spontaneously produced substance or a new property of existing matter, it eliminates God. Whitehead sees process thought as a replacement for both of these, and dependent upon God.

Hartshorne

This is where Charles Hartshorne comes into the picture. An American, and like Whitehead the son of an Anglican minister, who after serving as a stretcher bearer in WWI returned to graduate from Harvard then went to study under both Husserl and Heidegger. He returned to work as an assistant to Whitehead, where he became familiar with his thought. He retired in 1976 from the University of Texas at Austin and died in 2000 at the ripe old age of 103. Aside from his philosophical works, he was an avid birder and produced seminal works related to birdsong.

Whitehead said that there were two stages to a philosophical system, the lone genius who comes up with it and all of the followers who systemize it. He felt that he was James' follower. Hartshorne then would be Whitehead's systemizing minion, but more in terms of theology than philosophy, at least his concentration was on God and many theologians have picked up on his thinking. He was not concerned with arguments for the *existence* of God (a given per the system), but rather a theory of the *actuality* of God, i.e., *how* God exists. He created a modal proof of the existence of God that was a development of St. Anselm's Ontological Argument.

Hartshorne shares many basic principles with Whitehead: experience is the key to reality, metaphysics has merit, there is unity to all things, and God is the ultimate entity. That said, he does develop these ideas. Experience (prehension), the way in which we encounter the world, corresponds with the structure of experience at all levels of reality, both macro and micro, from electrons to God. Without this thinking we are left with the fundamental unintelligibility of the universe. There could be no self apart from participation in the lives of others; reality is social.

This sense of 'lived life', of empiricism and idealism gives the milieu for understanding things. The empirical world meshes with the metaphysical and for that reason there is a certain amount of relativity to its nature. Any object of knowledge is entirely independent of its being known by any particular subject but, because we are so 'close to it', so to speak, it is difficult for any us to separate ourselves from our experience. Think about it this way. Our individual social and cultural situations are our context for understanding reality; i.e., we live in our own little worlds. The challenge to us is to go beyond our limited experience for both the satisfaction it brings, and for the peace and welfare of ourselves and the

world. He is patently and unrepentantly anti-materialism, as espoused by the likes of Du Bois and the contemporary scientific community. This idealistic context is couched in metaphysical language in what he calls 'panpsychism' (Gk: *all-souls*): "*all things, in all their aspects, consist exclusively of 'souls', that is, of various kinds of subjects, or units of experiencing, with their qualifications, relations, and groupings, or communities.*" (*Man's Vision of God and the Logic of Theism*) As with Whitehead's idea of all the little bits adding up to the big thing. The individual 'soul' a collection of the billions upon billions of events which are themselves psychical entities, that is, every soul is an event which is based upon all of the other events. This presents a certain quandary for the 'life after death' because it creates a situation where there is not *individual* salvation. For Hartshorne, life after death (some form of continuation of the soul) is highly unlikely. His solution is that we, as an individual, 'pass away' but we are not lost – we are remembered by God, and therefore we continue to affect every soul which follow us.

His take on God then, is close to Whitehead's except that God and the world exist in a dynamic, changing relationship. A rough analogy is the relationship between a mother and her unborn child. The mother has her own identity and is different from the baby, yet is intimately connected to the unborn on so many levels. The unborn individual is independent yet within the womb and attached to the mother via the umbilical cord. We will not go into that but instead into an aspect he takes on which Whitehead does not: *evil*. For Hartshorne it is both a genuine possibility and an actual reality. Evil exists because we are *truly* free. God has laid out the best path but there is no guarantee that humans will not encounter and even create circumstances for themselves that are evil. We are in the process of 'self transcendence' and God, the ultimate transcendent, is actively involved in the process of ultimate fulfillment.[63]

In a final Whiteheadian 'footnote to Plato' Hartshorne did not accept that creation was *ex nihilo*, holding to instead a creation *ex materia* (from pre-existent material). In the end he felt that Metaphysics is less about concepts which are divined, like say Forms or rational Universals, but more of the observations of what just is. Epistemological realism is as much a part of metaphysics as metaphysical idealism is part of the empirical world around us. The mental and physical world is in unity, and we are in unity with it, and God is in unity with all that, etc., etc., *goo-goo-g'joob*.

Putting It Together

The idea of progress, as put forth by the likes of Parmenides, Buddha, Nietzsche and Whitehead make us pause and think about how we look at time. Modern physics and quantum physics (especially the idea of 'string theory'), can make our heads spin more than ever as we try to approach things philosophically rather than mathematically. The philosophical practice of trying to explain things is often seen as only metaphysical, and unworthy of either attention or time, but as has been pointed out by several recent thinkers it is this philosophic insight which often pre-dates what is coming to be understood, if only mathematically. This is the modern 'nod' to philosophy and the trend toward multi-discipline approaches to ideas and problems.

The trend we have been seeing for the last 500 years or so has been two-fold, a fork in the road if you will, where on one hand we pull things apart to understand them using singular methods or institutions (science, math, theology, physics) and the opposite of trying to undo this segmentation. Process thought (like James') seeks to integrate and reconcile the diverse facets of human experience (ethical, religious, aesthetic, and scientific into which life has become fragmented) into one cogent scheme capable of explaining everything.

The second trend or movement we see is one where the focus is moving from *being* to *becoming*. Process metaphysics falls into this Pragmatism and Existential vein and seeks to highlight the

[63] Here you might keep in mind Jesus' statements "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." (*Rev 22:13*) and "I will draw all flesh to myself" (*Jn. 12:32*).

developmental nature of reality, emphasizing *becoming*, 'process', rather than static existence or being. It does this within the framework of the inter-relatedness of all 'entities', which are made up of experiential events rather than enduring static substances. It is a delicate balancing act. "*The art of progress is to preserve order amid change and to preserve change amid order.*" (*Process and Reality*)

Process metaphysics deals with the observable, not with realities beyond the physical, what we might think of as those aspects of reality that are naturally inherent or would exist in *any possible* world. There is the solid, static world which we experience but there is also the world of possibilities, of constantly becoming which we also experience. Experience then, is sufficient reason to believe in both the physical world and the metaphysical aspect which we experience. The abiding sense of *unity* which pervades Process thought cannot be ignored, and in a sense is the explaining principle for the whole system. The ultimate unity is God. "*The consequent nature of God is the fulfillment of his experience by his reception of the multiple freedom of actuality into harmony of his own actualization. It is God as really actual, completing the deficiency of his mere conceptual actuality*" (*Process and Reality*)

As a side note (and are not most of these side notes?), America seems to be the place to be for thinkers perhaps only because until post-World War II it provides that most stable environment. Whatever the reason, American Pragmatism and scientific thought become driving forces in philosophy, a signal that America maybe has finally arrived on the philosophic sea-shore.

"*The safest general characterization of European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato*." (A.N. Whitehead *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*)

"*Philosophy is the endeavor to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience – everything of which we are aware, which we enjoy, perceive, will or think – can be interpreted.*" **Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality***

"Le seul véritable voyage, le seul bain de Jouvence, ce ne serait pas d'aller vers de nouveaux paysages, mais d'avoir d'autres yeux, de voir l'univers avec les yeux d'un autre, de cent autres, de voir les cent univers que chacun d'eux voit, que chacun d'eux est." (The only true voyage of discovery, the only Fountain of Youth, would be not to visit strange lands but to possess different eyes, to behold the universe through the eyes of another, of a hundred others, to behold the hundred universes that each of them beholds, that each of them is." **Marcel Proust, *The Captive***

Post-Modern and Contemporary Existentialism

Was our earlier discussion insufficient? Well first we want to address the idea of 'post-modern'. Recall what 'modern' meant. Well this is an attempt to define the 'new' modern. Basically we have finally moved past the 'modern' philosophers like Descartes and Kant. Welcome to the future.

The Players

Dates	Philosophers	Main Points
1905 -1980	Jean-Paul Sartre	*French; phenomenologist, existentialist, genuine self*
1908 -1986	Simon de Beauvoir	*French; existentialist,*
1913 -1960	Albert Camus	*French; existentialist, empirical phenomenology; absurdity of the human condition*
1926 -1984	Michel Foucault	*French; Kant & Nietzsche; genealogy of knowledge*
1905 -1982	Ayn Rand	*Objectivism*

Table 9: Contemporary Existentialist Players

What Else Is There To Say?

Let us see. God is dead, check. Life is meaningless, check. *Carpe diem*, check. *Ubermensch* rules, check. Eternal recurrence, check. What is left? Nietzsche seems to say it all does he not?

Once again we need to put away our pop-culture understanding of these thinkers and allow them to speak for themselves.

Sartre

When we think of modern existentialism most people automatically jump to Jean-Paul Sartre. We though, while not ones to jump at the first notion, will start with him as well, mainly because he was born first. And, because he was born, Sartre's life bears some mention.

I put a break here, because I do not want to minimize the facts of his life, especially as this is a minimal discussion of that life. Like many we have studied recently, he is bound up in the changing Europe. His mother's father was the uncle of the famed Albert Schweitzer. His father died when he was 15 months old, and his mother moved into her father's (a mathematician) house where Sartre was raised until he was 12 when his mother re-married. One must wonder about life in the household which produced both Sartre and Schweitzer, but that is perhaps a tangent best left for another time.

Sartre taught in both Paris and Berlin, served in the French army, was captured and sent to several work camps, where he also taught. He escaped and returned to fight in the Resistance, where he met Albert Camus (who we too shall meet later). A communist in principle, he struggled with the emerging Stalinism, but supported the ideals of self-determination wherever the fight was (especially in anti-colonialism fights in Africa and Cuba). He, Bertrand Russell, and others, organized a tribunal to expose U.S. war crimes in Vietnam.

Social and cultural concerns drove Sartre's sense of independence and 'freedom'. The anti-bourgeois spirit of the late nineteenth and early twentieth produced the new French Bohemians, and Sartre and his life-long companion Simone de Beauvoir embodied that spirit. In 1964 he won *and declined* the Nobel Prize in Literature.

When asked the ubiquitous question 'how would you like to be remembered', Sartre replied: "[As a writer] *I would like them to remember* Nausea, *one or two plays*, No Exit *and* The Devil

and the Good Lord, *and then my two philosophical works*, *more particularly the second one*, Critique of Dialectical Reason. *Then my essay on Genet*, Saint Genet, *which I wrote quite a long time ago. If these are remembered, that would be quite an achievement, and I don't ask for more. As a man, if a certain Jean-Paul Sartre is remembered, I would like people to remember the milieu or the historical situation in which I lived, the general characteristics of this milieu, how I lived in it, in terms of all the aspirations which I tried to gather up within myself. This is how I would like to be remembered.*" (*1975*)

A Place For My Stuff

So if we are to remember anything about Sartre, the place to start is the phenomenological roots in his initial discussions of the nature of the *self*. He was influenced by Kant, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Husserl and Heidegger We can easily over-simplify his thought, and run into the bane of pop-philosophy and catch phrases like 'hell is other people', all nihilism and angst – but that is not where he starts. So let us get back there and start with him. What is existence? What is being? What is consciousness? What does it mean to be authentic? Heidegger struggled with the elusive nature of Being (*Sein*). Heidegger's existential ontology speaks of *Dasein*'s *struggle for authenticity*. From Brentano and Husserl we got the connection between philosophy and psychology. Heidegger was more concerned with the question of our Being (*Sein*) rather than our nature as *beings*. Still, thanks to Husserl and Brentano, Heidegger is still interested in this connection between philosophy and psychology.

Suffice it to say, and you will just have to trust me on this one, Sartre picks up on Heidegger's thinking on Kant's idea of *truth* or this idea of *authenticity*. Sartre really felt that there were two selves, the one we are and the one we lie to ourselves about, i.e. the *authentic self* and the *false self* respectively. Notice that the lie is to ourself directly and therefore only indirectly to others. The ultimate truth of the situation is that it is not so much that systems and external agencies lie to us as that *we lie to ourselves*, or what he calls '*mauvaise foi*' (*bad faith*). Think about this for a second. Locke, Marx, Nietzsche...these guys point to external systems as the reason for our lack of freedom. Sartre points the mirror backwards, and says 'we are our own worst enemies' or as Pogo put it "We have met the enemy and he is us."

This internalization of responsibility means that for Sartre, because is not imposed externally and therefore bound to any external rules, human nature is not predetermined. We are *radically* free, mainly because *we control the freedom*. We are cut loose from an indifferent world of determined and static things. So this radical freedom is radical because it has no foundation (except within us) not because it is anything new or in opposition to any external system. Each individual is fully responsible for what he is. We cannot avoid choosing a course because even choosing to do nothing is a choice. The term 'radical freedom' describes this condition. Ergo, ultimately, our existence, our nature is the actions we take. "*There is no reality except in action*". (*Existentialism Is a Humanism*)

As we have seen in classic Existentialism, existence (subjectivity) precedes essence (human nature). This is where God leaves the building. The term 'human nature' implies a sort of universal, all encompassing nature that all humans share, and therefore must be 'pre-determined'. In Sartre's mind, order to be *truly and radically free*, there must be no pre-determined limits on humans. There can be no external influence or foundation. Creation by a God implies a pre-determined nature and a lack of freedom. Ergo, no God. According to Sartre, at first, man is nothing then he defines himself. He will be what he makes himself to be. Like Russell, this brings up a sticky point and sets him at odds with the Phenomenologist and Process systems. Therein lays the divergence from the phenomenological system. There is no 'human nature' because there is no God to conceive it.

"*If existence really does precede essence, there is not explaining things away by reference to a fixed given human nature. In other words, there is no determinism, man is free, man is freedom. On the other*

hand, if God does not exist, we find no values or commands to turn to which legitimize our conduct. So, in the bright realm of values, we have no excuses behind us, nor justification before us. We are alone with no excuses" (*Existentialism Is a Humanism*)

First we exist, then we choose, then we act. We are the self-contained vessels of our own existence.

Nietzsche Revisited

Okay, you say, we have heard all of this before. But the way that Sartre looks at action adds the subtle difference. At its root though, we can still hear the master. Indirectly, each individual's choice on what to be has an effect on all humans. Existentialism abolishes God, but recognizes that this act increases (not decreases) the individual responsibility for his actions. It complicates, not simplifies, his moral life. "*We are alone, with no excuses*" (*ibid*)

"*Therefore, I am responsible for myself and for everyone else. I am creating a certain image of man of my own choosing. In choosing myself, I choose man.*" (*An Existentialist Ethics*) This is what causes anxiety, not external systems trying to impose broken thinking on the individual. "*…what is meant by anguish?...What that means is this: the man who involves himself and who realizes that he is not only the person he chooses to be, but also a lawgiver who is, at the same time, choosing all mankind as well as himself, cannot help escape the feeling of his total and deep responsibility.*" (*Existentialism*)

The Final Blow

In this context Consciousness is 'intentional', that is, its only function is to *refer* to objects, but the static world, the *objects of* knowing exist outside consciousness. Whereas Whitehead, like Heidegger, seeks the unity of the subject and the object, for Sartre the subject and the object are separated. This places him in direct opposition to the Phenomenologists. Let us walk the chain. Consciousness depends on objects, not the other way around. If consciousness is conscious *of* something, that something cannot be part of consciousness, i.e., it must exist outside consciousness. Consciousness, or the subject, by its very definition, can only *refer* to an object (i.e. the self is an object of consciousness, not the subject).

Consciousness then is like a series of pointers to objects (by reference for you programmer types). There is nothing *inside* consciousness, meaning that *consciousness* (per se) *is nothingness*. This anti-phenomenological thinking is the premise of his work, similarly titled to Heidegger's *Being and Time*: *Being and Nothingness*. As Heidegger places understanding being within time, Sartre places it within nothingness. "*Being is what it is... the being of for itself is defined, on the contrary, as being what it is not and not being what it is.*" (*Being and Nothingness*)

In order to be self, the self needs something to do, a project list if you want.[64] This is part of the core of who we are, our self-made-man project, our *raison d'être* against the nothingness. The source of this project is a *spontaneous* individual choice that springs from the individual's freedom. Not that the project is always a good one, as we can have that *mauvaise foi* behind it, for example any sort of addiction or aberrant behavior. Once we escape our grand illusion of self deception and obtain authenticity, we reveal our true for-itself. This action, this authentic project, can be seen as the one universal dimension of humanity; not that we are all the same governed by a universal, but that universally, to be human is to strive for individual authenticity.

To put it all together then, that thing which defines us (Freedom) is the condition of nothingness that exists when consciousness is not invaded by objects and can truly reflect. To put it another way, if consciousness merely reflects objects, and if there are no objects to reflect, then you are left with empty space within your consciousness, and are only then truly free. This

[64] More likely a 'honey-do' list.

freedom causes angst because, upon reflection (no pun intended), one's own nothingness is reveled. The thing that makes us human also makes the human condition one of isolation from the world around us. Human existence is therefore characterized by 'nothingness', almost a seeking out of this nothingness, the will to negate if you will, and is therefore doomed to failure (this is similar to Heidegger's belief that the state of being tends toward 'fallen-ness'). Absolute freedom of choice is the main moral value, which entails one's responsibility for one's own decisions.

What The Hell?

So why is *hell other people*?

Well, first we have to answer "what is 'other people'?" To do that, Sartre still starts from the self, and then examines the idea of 'the other'. If consciousness is nothingness, how am I 'aware' of others? We each technically have a 'for-ourself' being, that is, we are all self-contained egos. The interaction of for-itself with other for-itselves is known as 'inter-subjectivity', that is, subjects inter-acting. Sartre latches on to Heidegger's understanding that the relation to the other is not an *epistemological* relation but a relation of *being*. Conscious events are 'states' of being. That is to say, it is strictly in terms of being (which we know to be existence) rather than an intellectual consciousness of something else. When outside phenomena encroach upon me I can sense that I am in relation to another consciousness (albeit reflected as an object to the other), but *only* within the terms of being. The 'mind' is basically 'me'. But my mind must interact somehow with other minds, or why would there be something like 'shame'?[65] Since other minds are a *pre-requisite* for me to have a 'conscious state' like shame, this means that the others' minds existence is *a priori*, a given.

So I, the subject, upon interaction, become an object. I am not too thrilled with this subject to object movement. I can overcome this by reacting *against* the 'look' of the other, thereby turning the other into an object for *my* 'look'. It is by this objectification of the other that I affirm my self, distinguishing my self from the other self. But therein lies the problem, right? If everyone objectifies the other in order to be un-objectified in themselves where does it end? Denying the other's selfhood means that I deny the respect that I want to affirm in myself.

Take a moment and work through the paradox. The essence of consciousness is its negative power, by which we can experience 'nothingness'. The by-product of this negative power is the creation of a self-identity of 'nothingness'. The awareness of the self is understood as a *project* for the for-itself rather than as a built-in given. I am dependent on the reflection of another to establish my self, because basically all I have in my self is nothingness. But at the same time I am only aware of another because I become an object to them and they to me. So, this dependence upon the other, which is the means to each of our individualization, is simultaneously denied to us both. This is the root of the conflict between selves. In the end, as we have a *mauvaise foi* with our self, we have a similar one with each other because we deny the humanity of the other. In other words we treat each other badly because we objectify each other in order to keep from being an object ourselves.

Our self-reliance comes into question in the realization of the other. The conclusion in *No Exit* is based not so much on Sartre's view of the world, but his view of the inauthentic self, on the characters' inability to be self-realized for-selfs. When each character arrives in the room they begin to understand that Hell is not all it is cracked up to be. Each expects to be tortured, but to their surprise, no torturer arrives. What ensues is realization of the others in the room. They taunt, needle, seduce, and begin to probe each other's sins, desires, and unpleasant memories, until suddenly realizing in their laid-bare souls that their true punishment is that they are *each other's* torturers (per the objective reflection).

[65] "Man is the only animal that blushes...or needs to." Mark Twain

Even when given the chance to leave, based on the character's call to unlock the door, he refuses the freedom and bends himself back to the desire for acknowledgement and acceptance based within the others' (*in-self* rather than *for-self*). When taken out of the context of Sartre's notion of authentic self, this quote is often misused. These are not self-absorbed egomaniacs but weak, pathetic people willing to be objectified in order to find a sense of self.

As a note aside from *No Exit*, Sartre felt, similarly to Marx and Engels that the modern Industrial-Age society causes 'serialization' (*Critique of Dialectical Reason*), which is in opposition to Hegel's idea of the dialect triad. Rather than a progressive synthesis, what you end up with is 'sameness', a crushing of the creative spirit and ultimately a loss of the self. To regain individual freedom from such forces in society, one must seek out groups for revolutionary action. This was true of any modern system as he saw in an examination of the Marxist dialectic as exemplified by the Soviet Union, which because of the persecution of individuals and the loss of freedom, produced similar results. In the end he concluded like so many others that Marxism was too rigid and universalist to deal with the ever-changing situations that are particular to existential, 'real-world' circumstances.

Speaking of Nothingness

At this point you might complain that Simone Beauvoir deserves her own section, and you would be right, if I was concerned about fairness.

Camus

The classic quote to start off any discussion of Albert Camus is "*There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy.*" (*The Myth Of Sisyphus*) so we might as well get it out of the way. If you are thinking, 'hey, that sounds just like something Kierkegaard would say', well you would not be far off. Camus, although often spoken of in the same breath as Sartre, did not believe himself associated with either Sartre or Existentialism[66]. We are not afraid to ignore his wishes and place him here, because in the end, the principle he espouses, the *Absurd*, relates to existence.

Camus' place in the pantheon is not diminished by his relatively short life. If we want to examine his influences we can start with his dissertation, a study of the influence of Plotinus and neo-Platonism on St. Augustine. He became a world class journalist and writer and like Russell he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature (which he accepted) for his writings against capital punishment. Sartre said of him that he was less a novelist than a writer of philosophical tales and parables in the tradition of Voltaire. We still think of *The Stranger*, *The Plague*, *The Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Fall* as quintessential Existential novels. It would probably safe to say that he would say if asked, that Sartre was the philosopher, but that he was merely a writer. He survived the War in the French Underground and died in a car accident, which has a certain irony to it, as he had said that the most absurd way to die would be in a car accident.

Don't Make Me Laugh

Kierkegaard (*Chapter 48*) taught us that *angst* rises from the inability to make decisions. He further tells us that the situation known as the *Absurd* arises when even after using all of the rational and cognitive tools at one's disposal, a person is unable to determine which course of action to adopt, and yet in the midst of this very uncertainty, he is forced to act/decide. Absurdity then is being forced to act even when you cannot figure out how. Kierkegaard turns toward the *leap of /to faith*. Camus observes

[66] In fact, many thinkers, like Rand for instance, specifically avoided the Existentialism label because they felt that Sartre had appropriated it, and they did not want to be associated with him, or at least their thought. Ha, we showed them.

the same thing but takes a different route, in essence rejecting Kierkegaard's solution. Without question this uncertainty in life causes feelings of meaningless and purposeless, and that yes, people take refuge in some faith or religious belief to fill in the void arising from this apparent lack of meaning. It may even be true, but it is a meaningless effort. "*I don't know whether this world has a meaning that transcends it. But I know that I do not know the meaning and that it is impossible for me just now to know it. What can a meaning outside my condition mean to me? I can understand only in human terms. What I touch, what resists me – that I understand.*" (*The Myth Of Sisyphus*)

In that we can hear the echo of Russell's idea of not being able to know anything apart from this world, basically eliminating any metaphysical answer to any question (though Camus does not completely reject the possibility of metaphysical answers). For Camus, Absurdity is the thing, so like Rand and Objectivism we might say that he is really an Absurdist and not an Existentialist, but I digress. Actually it is probably that early Existentialists reliance on God which bothers him the most. They should just be happy with Absurdity and call it such. If you call the Absurd 'God', it is still the Absurd. So, contrary to the pop-culture view, the absurd is not just some vague perception that modern life is fraught with paradoxes, incongruities, and intellectual confusion resulting in angst. This is certainly part of it but it is more. The idea of the 'Absurd' expresses a deep gut-level understanding of a fundamental *disharmony*, a *tragic* incompatibility, in our existence. It is an internal to external motion. This collision or confrontation between our human desire for order, meaning, and purpose in life and the 'void', that blank, indifferent "*silence of the universe*" (*The Myth Of Sisyphus*) which confronts us. Things are not right and we can just 'feel' it.

This is different than Sartre's internal nothingness. For Camus, we are something in the face of nothing, living not under a pall of incompleteness in the face of everything, but experiencing a basic disconnect between us and the world around us. "*In this particular case and on the plane of intelligence, I can therefore say that the Absurd is not in man nor in the world, but in their presence together. For the moment it is the only bond uniting them.*" (*ibid*) As Wittgenstein points out, there is a certainty built from common-sense.

Workers Of The World Unite!

So like Sartre's paradox of self-other, Camus sees a world of dualism and paradox. The difference is that we can live with a dualism, but not with paradox. Dualism is not a body/soul dualism but more of two sides of the fence thing. It is the understanding that there are dualisms like light/dark, poor/rich, and happy/sad. They are short-term things will always get better. Paradox on the other hand has two things which cannot be reconciled, like 'my life is important' and 'life has no meaning'. So the great question, and this is tied to the opening statement, how do we live with paradox? Camus wants to understand how we experience the Absurd and how we live with it. Our life must have meaning for us to value it. If we accept that life has no meaning and therefore no value, should we kill ourselves?

In what seems contrary to the pop-culture understanding, Camus answers with a resounding 'No!' Nihilism is not the answer! Revolt! This is the *only* proper response to the Absurd. This singularly reasonable, courageous and morally valid response to the Absurd is similar to Nietzsche's *amor fati*. We must continue living because life is still worth the journey even if there is no destination. Meaning is created by what we decide. "*If nothing had any meaning, you would be right. But there is something that still has a meaning.*" (*Second Letter to a German Friend*, pulled from an introduction to *The Plague*) Suicide is the 'easy way out', the surrendering of what it means to be human in the face of absurdity. Ergo suicide is not an option because it is not life or living.

This is because, like Schopenhauer, death is the challenge to life. All the meaninglessness and absurdity capped off by senseless death flies in the face of the fact that we actually live. If meaninglessness and death was all there was, then why would we live in the first place?

This belief informed his personal life. In the face of disease, poverty, oppression he fought back. Camus, in his short life, and in something which may seem to the unaided eye at odds with his philosophy, became a champion of the underdog and opposed totalitarianism in all its forms. No doubt, Nietzsche would not have been proud.

And finally, oddly enough, in light of the first statements above, he and Sartre were good friends and, as with the separation of so many thinkers of this period, it is political differences which caused them to drift apart. Sartre was for Communism and Camus was agin' it.

Putting It Together

Post-Modern existentialists seem to come from their 19th century parents but like all children, set off to make a name for themselves aside from their famous parents. Sometimes they succeed.

We can see the subtle differences in view. We have not just the existentialism of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, but a mature, hard-knocks view of the world. Two World Wars have perhaps colored the thinking to less of a triumphant or purposeful vision of existence and replaced it with unthinkable inhumanity and pointless purpose, or at best with no teleological form. The language of alienation, of authenticity, of frameless angst which arose in Schopenhauer has been fine tuned, perhaps in this furnace of war and despair, to become the language of the human condition. It is this voice which we hear reflected back in such writers as Thomas Merton.

One thing we can probably say about modern existentialists is that they are very self-centered.[67] Like Descartes' adjudication before them, they have to ask the question 'what can *I* know?' For all the world, the world is truly unknowable, and regardless of which position you take, completely separate from us. So, knowledge, morality, pleasure, pain, they all center around me. As the sensory subject, armed only with self-knowledge I alone am the judge, jury and executioner for action and being in life, specifically, my life. It is the clashing of selfs which cause problems. The ultimate question and meaning of existentialism, as envisioned by Sartre, like Whitehead's vision of metaphysics, is narrower than we have seen before. Sartre focuses on what it is to *be human* regardless of being in general. This is centered in the baseless and radical freedom which characterizes the human condition. The being of the world around us, by contrast, is a simple and unproblematic being of things, which have no true bearing on us complex beings, except perhaps in the fact that we are surrounded by this lop-sided relationship. We are complex beings of freedom in an uncaring, indifferent static world.

How do we approach this freedom, which seems to have no basis?

Walt Kelly, 1971

[67] Ha, ha, ha; sometimes I crack my self up!

Contemporary Philosophy

So what are most people thinking about today? This chapter is an attempt to look at that question but is more likely merely a survey of the survey of recent thought.

The Players

Dates	Philosophers	Main Points
1908 -1961	Maurice Merleau-Ponty	*French; Phenomenologist; contemporary of Sartre and de Beauvoir; critique of rationalism and empiricism; lived experience denies the detachment of subject from object*
1926 -1984	Michel Foucault	*French; Kant & Nietzsche; genealogy of knowledge*
1932 -	Umberto Eco	*Italian; Semiotics;*
1940 -	Saul Aaron Kripke	*American; modal logic; naming theory*
? -[68]	Rosalind Hursthouse	*New Zealand; virtue ethics*

Table 10: Contemporary Players

Thinking About Thinking

Many branches of academic thinking are about systems, as in philosophy of philosophies, or the philosophy *of* something. There are many extensions of the classical divisions of philosophy we discussed way back in Chapter 5 (as in thinking about thinking i.e. the philosophy *of* epistemology, rather than just epistemology). We might say that inquiry rather than innovation has become the *idée du jour*. This can be attributed to many factors, but probably the most likely is the institutionalization or *professionalization* of philosophy. What basically happens to any form of innovation or inquiry is the establishment of norms by which one judges and decides the merits of explorations and standards, as well as who can be a member of the club. For example, this trend can most recently be seen in the computer and tech world. Philosophy started this process toward the end of the 19th-century and it is one of the key features of the contemporary philosophy era in western philosophy, observable in most universities.

The Continental Divide

With that in mind, the mid to late 20th and now the 21st century still relies on the thought we have just covered. That said, there is a division which developed that consists of two 'schools' if you will. The first, based in mainly European systems is called 'Continental' for obvious reasons which become more so when you look at the players. The Continental branch begins with the likes of Brentano, Husserl, and Heidegger and centers on the development of phenomenology and a heightened sense of psychology. The second fork 'Analytical' which developed about the same time with Russell, Wittgenstein and that crew, is based on the analysis of language via modern notions of logic.

At best this is a rancorous division. Although they share a common Western philosophical tradition up to Kant both Analytic and Continental philosophers often hold a disparaging view of each other's respective approach to philosophy with the result being that they largely work independent of each

[68] A lady never reveals her age, at least not in a place I could find it....

other. That may not sound like much, but if you think back most thinkers at least acknowledge the other side or integrate and contrast with one another.

So basically, Analytic philosophy, as non-continental, is the dominant approach in most English-speaking countries while Continental philosophy is prevalent throughout the rest of the world (and by that I may mean France and Germany). While this is the main division nowadays, it does not mean that there are those who have not attempted, like Kant before them, to reconcile the two.

Doing The Continental

On the Continental side of the pond we see what we might consider the landscape of 20st century thought, or the common, accepted paradigms of thinking today. Most still rely upon the fresh-in-our-mind folks like Nietzsche, Marx, Heidegger, Sartre...that crowd. No real need to re-hash all of that. Suffice it to say that in Sartre, Continental philosophy's inspection of reality led to suspicion of the external, every metaphysical and religious system and found that they were lacking.

Say What You Will

In the Analytic camp, Language becomes king, but as said, mainly in English-speaking countries (basically the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Scandinavia, Australia, and New Zealand). Perhaps the ascendency of the United States at this time begins turning heads. Perhaps it is the richness of English and its ability to encounter, adapt and swallow up other languages. Perhaps even the reliance of Phenomenology on Pragmatism speaks to this coming change. Whatever the historical cause, it does produce a world-wide following as influential as the Continental school. If we want to take an amateurish stab at it[69], then we contend that French was the *lingua franca*, ah, but we could argue, in a colonial system. English is the language which stepped into the post-colonial, pro-democratic vacuum.

But perhaps, that is neither here nor there except that, in a way, language has come to inform almost all of today's thinkers in some form or fashion. The advancements in psychology and neurology have boosted the brain into a realm outside of the mere speculative explorations we have seen until now. So in a way, the earlier attempts to put meaning to the mind inform the scientific discussion which is exploding today. At the same time that discussion is forcing a re-look at all of the philosophical discussions, challenging them to update at times and re-affirm at others.

Stop Sign

Language is a driving force. The ability for a word, an idea, a sound, to convey meaning, to be the form of logical analysis differs slightly from Aristotle's idea of predicative logic and even propositional logic. The focus is less on the Square of Opposition and the achievement of meaning and more on the *process* of language and meaning. It looks, therefore, less at the 'truths' and more at the, well, let us be cagy and call it the 'phenomena' of language, that is, the *perception* of language. This is the idea of *analytical* logic.

Sign and Symbols are not terms we have really looked at but they are the form for understanding the thinking about language; them and Wittgenstein. Well, we have looked at Wittgenstein so let us move on to sign and symbol.

Succinctly put:

Symbol: points to a meaning beyond itself, as in Symbolic Logic.

Sign: contains its meaning within itself, as in a Stop Sign. This is function most often applied when discussing language.

[69] And how, you rightly ask, would that be different than anything else in this work?

We can see this distinction within many of the systems we have studied, albeit an unspoken distinction. We might think of symbol as 'rational' and signs as 'empirical'; these could also be argued to be 'modes' of thinking. Anyway, you get the general idea. So if we begin to explore language as a means of embodying and conveying ideas and meaning, i.e. 'truth', then we can see how these distinctions inform the whole argument. This makes sense if we start thinking about what a word *is* and what a word *does*. The mental processes of language and the assignment of meaning, wander about these two basic ideas. We will see this more evidently in the modern terms used in the discussion.

Signs and symbols might have different meaning to different people, so in and of themselves they are insufficient to determine meaning and therefore require another catalyst. The other aspect can be perhaps called the 'setting' for these ideas, and the word used to describe it is 'culture'. Culture, i.e. the context in which a sign or symbol is used, becomes part of the definition of that truth. The analytic school focuses in what they call 'semiotics' or the idea that you study the cultural process of language: analogy, metaphor, signification and communication, signs and symbols. Semiotics is closely related to *Linguistics*, which more specifically studies the structure and meaning of language (not necessarily related to culture).

Semiotics is usually divided into three branches, which include:

Syntactics:	this refers to the relations among signs in formal structures; more precisely, syntactics deals with the 'rules that govern how words are combined to form phrases and sentences.'
Semantics:	is the relation between signs and its *designata* (the things to which they refer), their *denotata* (that which they *denote*), or their 'meaning'
Pragmatics:	looks at how between signs and the effects they have on the people who use them relate (the 'biotic' aspects, that is, with all the psychological, biological, and sociological phenomena which occur in the functioning of signs)

In general, semiotic theories take *signs* or *sign systems* as their object of study.

Structure

Structuralism comes to us out of mid-century France as a reaction against the non-concreteness of phenomenology and focuses on aspects of humanity, like culture, sociology, language, literature, specifically the system of signs (its semiotics) each uses and then how society's miens become accepted, and finally, how they define a person's reality.[70] The 'Structure' of Structuralism refers to *mental* models built based on *concrete* realty, models that are not obvious but demand an understanding of hidden factors. So at its root, Structuralism is an attempt to build models which can help understand the world around us.

Based in Wittgenstein's ideas, Structuralism maintains that aspects of a culture can be understood through the means of some sort of structure, usually language, which is distinct from those which belong to reality and imagination (phenomenology, empiricism, rationalism), that is, beyond what is observable and what is within reason. Of course, it has been pretty much pooh-poohed and replaced by:

Post-Structuralism attempts to gather disparate thinkers together and is basically [the rejection of the self-sufficiency of the structures that structuralism posits and]focuses on the fact that supposed 'binary opposites' are not as distinct as we think (they are not 'self-sufficient') and that they are and are in fact, made-up distinctions with no meaning.

Deconstructionism is of course the opposite of Structuralism. It attempts to tear down the Structuralism's position by purporting that there are no definitive meanings to words and phrases, and the history of culture can provide no reasons for why things were or are how they are. Instead it contends that the distinction between the *denoter* and *denoted* cannot be made legitimately, that is, the manner of expression is inseparably bound with its content.

[70] This sometimes causes a confusion as to whether it is history or philosophy.

Cheating

Okay, I'm going to cheat a bit and put Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Michel Foucault together here, instead of back in the ***Phenomenology*** (*Chapter 53*) and ***Contemporary Existentialists*** (*Chapter 57*) chapters. Foucault once dismissed Sartre as a man of the nineteenth century trying to think the in the twentieth (*La Quinzaine littéraire*), so we can only assume that he placed himself in the latter group.

Merleau-Ponty, on the other hand, I have mentioned in *Players* lists but have cagily not given him a voice. Merleau-Ponty is one of the voices that attempt to finalize some of the arguments floating about. He is definitely in the Continental camp but his form of phenomenology, as his classification as an existentialist, is different than we have seen. He did not advocate the same level of existential anarchy as do his good friends Sartre and de Beauvoir (radical freedom, being-towards-death, angst/anguished responsibility, and relations with others as conflict, for which existentialism became both famous and infamous). What he does put forward is a sense of 'embodied experience', that is, the idea that empirical experience is part of being and that it is neither external to the being nor is it fully just an intellectual exercise. Accordingly, both pure empiricism and 'intellectualism' in and of themselves fail to fully explain being or phenomena. Everything exists together. "*I can identify the hand touched in the same one which will in a moment be touching… In this bundle of bones and muscles which my right hand presents to my left, I can anticipate for an instant the incarnation of that other right hand, alive and mobile, which I thrust towards things in order to explore them. The body tries… to touch itself while being touched and initiates a kind of reversible reflection*" (*Phenomenology of Perception*).

What he is concentrating on answering (for our purposes) is what is known as *dualism*. We have seen this before in the garb of 'mind/body', 'subject/object', 'light/dark' and the like but this is more the pairing of ideas. According to Merleau-Ponty, these dualisms are not truly separate, as the denoting terms seems to indicate, which the 'hand that both is touched and can touch' example above. Instead they are intermeshed, intertwined together. Merleau-Ponty is trying to pull away from the 19th century forms of thinking about phenomena. The object 'world' is not a separate thing from the subject 'me' because there is a two-way-street of perception.

Existence then works the same way. There is no need to push to the edges of angst and conflict because the subject and the object are inexorably linked, that is, you are not flying solo. Experience shows us this. The '*reversible reflection*' answers Sartre's reflection problem. The way we naturally operate is inseparable from the way we perceive. The body is the gateway to the world and we are aware not only *of ourselves* (as subject) but of *ourselves in the world*. There is no separation of subject from object or of the action of perceiving from actual perception, as if we were some sort of external observer. *"The analysis of motor habit as an extension of existence leads on, then, to an analysis of perceptual habit as the coming into possession of the world. Conversely, every perceptual habit is still a motor habit and here equally the process of grasping a meaning is performed by the body.*" (*Phenomenology of Perception*). ["*All consciousness is perceptual...The perceived world is the always presupposed foundation of all rationality, all value and all existence.*" (?)] So we hear Heidegger's *Dasein*, but a *Dasein* which also *in-itself*.

Foucault belongs in the Structuralism/Post-Structuralism school. He focuses not so much on the 'why' of things but the 'what', or what he calls the 'archaeology' of something. While his ideas became politicized in the late 1960's and 1970's, there is still a basic current which run within them, a historical investigation of the production of truth. The idea of the investigation is to understand the *structure* of the thing. Through 'archeology', that digging into the past, he comes to a 'genealogy'[71] of a thing. As

[71] The word 'genealogy' is drawn directly from Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals* meaning that genealogy is a Nietzschean form of history, though his method is rather more meticulously historical than anything Nietzsche ever attempted.

with your personal genealogy Foucault sees it as getting to the "history of the present", that is, understanding what got us to this point (you might hear an attempt to exercise Whitehead's sense of process, but I'm not sure Foucault might not beat me up for saying that). So, a genealogy is an explanation of where we have come from with the purpose of telling us how our current situation originated, and now, in its present state is motivated by contemporary concerns.

Truth, or at least various truths we discern, like politics, justice, and sex have an intimate association with the power structures of modern society hence the study of truth is inseparable from the study of history. The method, while looking at subjective effects is designed to be objective in nature, ultimately looking at each shift in thinking as discrete units, in and of themselves, without trying to impose any practical relevance. So in the end what we end up with is a sense similar to Whitehead's process of impinging choices in that whatever meaning we are able to assign contains all of the other meanings which led up to it.

Eco

Umberto Eco is probably best known as the author of *A Name of the Rose*, but for us, is best known for his work in semiotics.[72]

Eco starts with the understanding that Language is generally seen as a collection of symbols used to convey meaning. So, at its heart, Semiotics is the 'study' of those symbols, but there is more to it. In a kind of opposite notion to Foucault's historical exploration idea that culture is the milieu of language, Eco proposes that it is the cultural phenomenon which should be studied as communication. That is to say, culture, rather than being the boundary of language, is the result of language, a communication of some truth.

His work, *A Theory of Semiotics*, looks at the established notion that objects determine the meaning of the language (signs) assigned to them, as opposed to the other way around. We might understand better this in terms of foreign languages. Think of it this way: if I show you a picture of a hat, no matter what word you assign to that object (*hat*, *chapeau*, *cappello*) it is still the same denoted object for each of those words, that is, the object itself is independent and predicative of its sign's meaning. From this he also dismisses the notion of 'icons', that is, that the sign is a 'likeness' of the object, or points to it in direct relation to the object (kind of like *onomatopoeia*, words that sound like what they mean). By doing this, he is able to extract the sign from physical objects, meaning that there is not a one-to-one meaning. To put it another way, by not being tied only to objects which 'exist', we can have signs which do not rely on something existing to still have meaning (or *significance* – signifying something).

"*Semiotics is in principle the discipline studying everything which can be used in order to lie. If something cannot be used to tell a lie, conversely it cannot be used to tell the truth: it cannot in fact be used 'to tell' at all.*" (*A Theory of Semiotics*)

Kripke

Saul Kripke might sound like a name from *Guys and Dolls*, but he is possibly one of the top ten 'most influential philosophers of the last 200 years'.[73] A fascinating character, he began his long career when he developed modern standard modal logic while still in high school. With Wittgenstein as his main

[72] Albeit that well known book combines "*semiotics in fiction, biblical analysis, medieval studies and literary theory.*" (*www.umbertoeco.com*)

[73] At least according to Brian Leiter's on line poll, in his *Leiter Reports: A Philosophy Blog*, titled "*So who *is* the most important philosopher of the past 200 years?*" which choose Wittgenstein over all. But he is not alone in this estimation.

influence he set about defining the ideas which are now becoming the language we use to discuss knowledge. His work, *Naming and Necessity* focuses on language as it is used to express concepts *and* as a reference for individual things.

This small introduction will by no means do service to the insight he has cast into the fray, but his works are hard to come by. As with Peirce and others before him, he does not publish much, and in fact that seminal work is really as transcription of a series of off-the-cuff lectures, which can make for difficult reading.

He begins by examining the question which lie at the heart of analytic philosophy: how is it that the 'name' of something is able to refer to that thing? In opposition to Russell, who said basically that names and designators are unique to their possessor, Kripke argues that if that were so, then all properties associated to the possessor belong to their possessor *necessarily*, and that cannot be right, otherwise no matter what the situation, perhaps one where some property did not apply to the possessor, the name could still only be that one possessor. Kripke counters with the idea of direct reference, according to which a name "rigidly designates" (*Naming and Necessity*) what it refers to in every possible world in which it can exist.

In his attempt to explain this, he examines several of the foundational questions for analytical philosophy. Most of them look at how names refer to something in the world, and what the implications of association are: Do objects (including people) have any essential properties, that is, is there substance? What is the nature of named things? Do names refer to things in the world? What is the nature of identity? What is the intent when a name is applied to something? Are all statements that can be known *a priori*, necessarily true, and all statements that are known *a posteriori*, contingently true?

Kripke settles on a *causal* theory of reference, in which a name refers to an object by virtue of a causal connection with the object. This connection is mediated through groups of language users; that is to say, the connection is made clear not within the context of name/object but the name/community/object process, if you will. He disagreed with the idea that every mental fact is identical with some physical fact. Language stands outside of its context, and if I understand it correctly, is brought into context by the speakers. Proper names and types are not so much 'definite descriptions' (as Russell contends) but 'rigid designators', whose reference must be viable in all possible worlds. Therefore Kripke holds that the necessary/contingent and *a priori*/*a posteriori* distinctions do not coincide, that is, that the idea of necessity, a state of the mind, coincides with an *a priori* understanding, a mental event is doubtful. Yes, he said this off-the-cuff at 29 and I am not sure I really understand it.

Hursthouse

Finally (literally), an on her own honest to God female philosopher, Rosalind Hursthouse. Very briefly, Hursthouse specializes in ethics, specifically 'virtue ethics'. Virtue ethics is a type of ethical theory in which the *notion* of virtue or 'good character' is the focus rather than actions. It looks at what sort of person one should try to be, and speaks about the sort of characteristics a virtuous person has. This differs from most of what we have seen, especially those Kantian and utilitarian systems where behavior is dictated by some system of guiding principles for actions, that is, instructing one in the ways of deciding regardless of the situation the best choice and behavior.

Virtue ethics, by contrast, focuses on what makes a *good person*, rather than what makes a *good action*. The end of this system is the person not the actions. Focusing on making good people means that actions will be good; this may seem like a chicken and egg situation, but it seeks to define the proper teleological understanding of the human person, not just the actions that person does. It recalls Aristotle and Confucius, even Hume but contends with more modern views which extol action, like Sartre.

Action alone is unbounded, and unrelated to the person. Something is considered a virtue because it is necessary in order to promote the wellbeing of the human, as opposed to something being a virtue because it is an externally defined action to which one conforms, and by conforming is considered virtuous.

Putting It Together

Perhaps it can be argued that original thinking is dead and that the big questions are answered by various systems and all we are doing now is haggling over the motes and fighting over the scraps or being reduced to talking about talking.

The reduction of philosophy to ideology and it professionalization have perhaps hampered new and innovative thought. That does not mean that original thought is dead. Many are seeking to define and understand what it means to be human within the new technologies and discoveries which are coming fast and furious, many which put previously held beliefs about humanity into question. Perhaps they will look back one day on this time as we do on the 15th, 19th and 20th centuries. The thinkers covered here are providing rational for specific thinking about thinking. While some break new ground others seek to rectify lost thought overshadowed by the Continental thinkers.

In a sense perhaps we are at the point which, as with the joke, *we are merely haggling on price now*. Meaning that the great questions of philosophy have all been answered and we are merely seeking to hone the arguments about those answers.

"These common thoughts are expressed in a shared public language, consisting of shared signs...a sign has a 'sense' that fixes the reference and is 'grasped by everybody' who knows the language..."

Noam Chomsky, *Language and Thought*

"*Before Kripke, there was a sort of drift in analytic philosophy in the direction of linguistic idealism — the idea that language is not tuned to the world...Saul almost single-handedly changed that.*"

Richard Rorty

"*The great thing about Saul is that he never confuses a real philosophical issue with a merely technical problem.*"

Paul Boghossian

The Final Chapter

So the ultimate question is: have you learned anything? How do you feel now that you reach the end? Some people feel overwhelmed and confused; it is almost as if it would have been better to never have started at all. Others feel enlivened, invigorated, and ready to pronounce judgment on a variety of topics. Others reach a more Zen-like state, meditative, contemplative, with a weathered eye open on the world.

Family Portrait

Okay. Let us take a moment and reduce all of philosophy down to a few catch phrases, shall we? Give a one line summary of what point struck you or what you brought away from each of the following philosophers.

Philosopher	Main Point
Heraclitus	
Buddha	
Pythagoras	
Confucius	
Lao Tse	
5TH CENTURY B.C.E.	
Parmenides	
Protagoras	
Zeno of Elea	
Mo-Tzu	
Socrates	
4TH CENTURY B.C.E.	
Plato	
Aristotle	
Diogenes	
3RD CENTURY B.C.E.	
Epicurus	
Zeno	
1ST–3RD CENTURY C.E.	
Philo of Alexandria	
Marcus Aurelius	
Tertullian	
4TH CENTURY	
St. Augustine	
5-10TH CENTURY	
Boethius	
Alkindus	
John Scotus Eriugena	
Alpharabius	
Avicenna	
11TH CENTURY	
Avicebron	

St. Anselm	
12TH CENTURY	
Averroes	
Moses Maimonides	
13TH-15THCENTURY	
Albert the Great	
Thomas Aquinas	
Meister Eckart	
John Duns Scotus	
William of Ockham	
16TH CENTURY	
Thomas Hobbes	
Rene Descartes	
17TH CENTURY	
Blaise Pascal	
Baruch Spinoza	
John Locke	
Gottfried Leibniz	
Georg Berkeley	
18TH CENTURY	
Ben Franklin	
David Hume	
Immanuel Kant	
Johann Fichte	
Georg Hegel	
19TH CENTURY	
Arthur Schopenhauer	
John Stuart Mill	
Soren Kierkegaard	
Karl Marx	
William James	
Frederick Nietzsche	
Edmund Husserl	
20TH-21ST CENTURY	
Alfred Whitehead	
Bertrand Russell	
Ludwig Wittgenstein	
Martin Heidegger	
Jean-Paul Sartre	
Albert Camus	
Ayn Rand	

Table 11: Main Thoughts

Framing The Question

Okay that was painful enough, eh? Now try doing that every day for about three years. The following sections are by no means exhaustive, but are more for provoking thought. So to start with, what all this it really comes down to is '*how do you frame the questions*', that is to say that we want to ask what is the first principle from which you will ask the questions of life. Each of those thinkers began with some given or set of givens. By identifying them we give ourselves a sense of some of the possibilities. This is a

useful practice not just for examining the thinking of others but of our own questions. So let us begin to think about it ourselves. Here are a few of the possible *weltanschauungs*.[74]

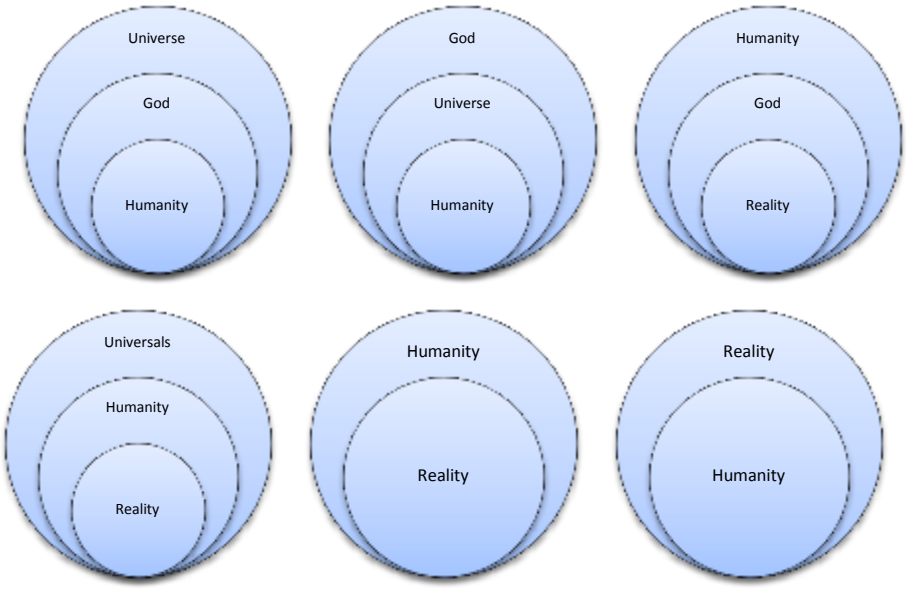

Figure 4: The Several Views of Reality

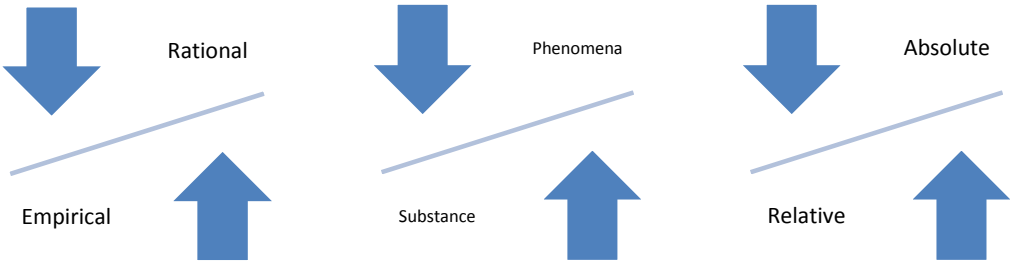

Figure 5: The Sliding Scales of Knowledge and Reality

Figure 6: The Active and Passive Consciousness

Knowing how you want to approach reality and how you want to think about reality make a big difference in your final view of reality. What empirical 'proof' drives you to believe one way or another, knowing that the sense may possibly be deceived? What intangibles lend credence to your view,

[74] "'*Weltanschauung*' is, I am afraid, a specifically German notion, which it would be difficult to translate into a foreign language. If I attempt to give you a definition of the word, it can hardly fail to strike you as inept. By *Weltanschauung*, then, I mean an intellectual construction which gives a unified solution of all the problems of our existence in virtue of a comprehensive hypothesis, a construction, therefore, in which no question is left open and in which everything in which we are interested finds a place. It is easy to see that the possession of such a *Weltanschauung* is one of the ideal wishes of mankind. When one believes in such a thing, one feels secure in life, one knows what one ought to strive after, and how one ought to organize one's emotions and interests to the best purpose." (Sigmund Freud, *A Philosophy of Life*)

knowing all the while that intangibles are possibly not just metaphysical? Is there anything such as logic or it merely pre-dictated relationships?

We must also count into the mix the advancement of thought, whether philosophical, scientific or mathematical. Each, like so many other types of knowledge, feed and build off of the others. Try to imagine science without Aristotle, or Process without Einstein. But are these 'advances'? We can argue Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, or Whitehead for the 'positive' side or Plato, Augustine, Kierkegaard, or Heidegger for the negative of this debate.

And what about material reality? Is it even important that things physically exist?

The Question Of Truth

Speaking of truth, let us get back to the matter at hand. As we drift through that list of great thinkers we can see, within a short view, the long list of diverse *and* similar thinking about ourselves and the world around us and what we define as *Truth*. That which is 'true' is that which we can depend upon, repeat, be guided by. Think way back to the beginning, when we talked about logic and truth, in that logic would help us determines 'truths' which become the basis for subsequent 'truths" and any discussions of 'truth'.

Logically that remains true, but is that what we have come to understand as the pursuit of 'truth'? The question of truth develops into the question of reality, of certainty, of order from chaos. I say 'develops', but is it not really true that it is the logical notion which develops. The pursuit of truth is the pursuit of knowledge, the pursuit of meaning, the pursuit of order, and for some, the discovery of self-purpose.

The quest for meaning in an internal and external world of unknowns is one of the primary impetuses to philosophical exploration. Nor does it look as if that is going to change any time soon. The more we empirically learn about ourselves and the universe, the more mysteries remain. The question becomes 'where do we find truth?' It is this question combined with the questions of 'how' and 'to what degree', which take up so much of our philosophical energy. Often the answer is a determination or settling on 'enough'. We obtain 'enough' truth, or we determine that this is all the 'truth' we will ever be able to pursue, sense, or understand.

The Question Of Physics

But what is true? What means can we use to determine truth? From the earliest thinkers there is a struggle as to whether to turn outward in their search for explanation or inward. Today, we most often turn to external quantification and reinforcement of the sense of 'real'. '*I pinched myself, to see if I was dreaming*' is a common symbolic phrase and it speaks to a reality within us: physical sensation dictates what I know to be true. But how sure are we that the physical world exists? We are seeking a foundation for truth, and the scale has two sides, one of which we usually assign to the tangible. A thing is a thing is a thing, we so often hear (albeit in several different formats), yet the nature of nature itself is often under debate. Is matter bad, an idea we can trace back to Plato yet is echoed even by Hobbes centuries later? Is matter good echoed from Aristotle to Heidegger?[75] The other more intangible, based on the understanding of the language and images within my head having meaning and a reality aside from the physical.

So the scale swings back and forth. Is the world the only knowable? Are my perceptions alone the only knowable? Are my perceptions informed by the world or is the world informed by my perceptions?

The Question Of Metaphysics

[75] Mind you, none of these 'traces' have tried very hard to extend in either direction.

But what about all of these non-physical things I seem to be able to think about? Does life have a metaphysical aspect or is it merely a ghost image we perceive as part of perception of the physical? Is metaphysics that thing which lies right outside in our peripheral vision or is the only thing which lies in my vision? Is reality merely a figment of my imagination? Is my imagination informed only by external, pre-determined categories? If we take the Socratic/Platonic line, then there is a separation of the physical from the metaphysical, a dichotomy of planes, which may even be extended into the person in a body/soul way.

If we stick to a strict Aristotelian understanding of metaphysics, i.e. those known or knowable things which fall outside of the realm of the *physical* knows or knowables, then it is merely a category for things which fall out of the *physical* substance group. Even metaphysical substances have qualities, categories in this strict sense. All that we experience is knowable, whether the experience is sensory based or mentally based.

There is the argument that the mentally based things are therefore physically based, because they belong to a physical object: the brain. The mind is therefore a function of the brain, and is therefore not *meta*-physical. There is therefore the tendency to un-dichotomize, to unify, which is a way is still very much within the lines of Aristotle's intention.

In the end, most of the time, we become the center of whatever process links or replaces the metaphysical and the physical.

The Question Of Consciousness

Are we conscious beings or only consciousness? Are we a unity or a dichotomy? Is consciousness a 'thing' or is it merely an ordering factor laid out by things, which by their nature group naturally together? How does consciousness relate to the world around me? How does it relate to other consciousnesses? Is consciousness 'me' or is it a *function* of 'me'. Does consciousness mean that individuals exist or does it mean that individuals all share a type of group understanding?

Consciousness determines how I view myself and others, but it also speaks to how I connect with myself and others. What means, what vehicle is Consciousness? Is it the thing-in-itself or is it the perception, a mental connection only, of the thing. How does language, and in particular my chosen idioms, speak to others of myself? Or is it a Sartre plays it out, merely a false image of my 'self', externally driven, of no true consequence, like matter for Berkeley, merely existing to the level that I delude myself? Does it even enter into the question of who I am or is it the only means for ordering and explaining the world and my 'self'?

The Question Of Existence

How sure are we that the physical world exists? What separates us, if anything from the world? Where does the world end and 'we' start? Does life end at 30? We can attempt to look at existence as a sense of 'self', or we can look at it as a particular function of matter, i.e., if something 'is' then it exists. Existence is about our place in the world, and our place within our 'selves'.

What is existence then? Can we define it solely as personal existence, or does it contain a heaping portion of essence? Can we use existence as a proof for anything, or is existence merely a byproduct, like consciousness? How we ground our understanding of existence, if we separate it from consciousness or combine it with an individual sense of 'self' extends the question of 'it' and 'me'. This question drives questions of belief, of deciding when and if someone is a someone, if something deserves my attention or even my moral action.

The Question Of Faith

Does it matter if you are a 'person of faith'? Is faith merely a designation for those who cling to a metaphysical-based notion of reality, or is it what others, for lack of accepting the possibility of external control, deny?

There is no question that those who profess or at one time professed faith are affected by that. For some, they seek ways in which to center or at least include the possibility of a metaphysical being. Some see God merely as the ultimate being, that is, the best state of being, whether it is a God of power or a God of possibility. Others seek to push God completely out by compressing being down to the physical or by exercising the possibility of metaphysical substances from their systems.

The idea of 'proof', and in a way this includes all other questions, is a tricky one. What does one mean by 'proof'? If we rely on logic, or phenomena, or other metaphysical substances, then 'proof' is obvious in an *a priori* fashion. If we rely upon empirical sensation, then 'proof' is based solely upon *a posteriori* possibilities which may or may not allow for physical acknowledgement of being, and even of a being of a higher order. Proof then is either in the pudding or in the eye of the beholder. Relativistic views allow more flexibility, as with James' thinking that if we can think it, it must have validity, and yet we can also end where Nietzsche does, where no system is better than any other, and therefore that flaw makes them all null and void. Dogmatic views can leave us high and dry for similar reasons. A completely static universe does not allow for the explanation of the experience of creation which we have, yet it can also provide a framework which prevents the descent into individual irrelevance.

The Question Of Socio-Economics

Are all of these questions merely a rich man's game? If most men 'lead lives of quiet desperation', or simply exist hand-to-mouth, what can be said of any of these questions? People who are starving do not ask questions about existence, and in fact may have not a sense of future and can view their own and others existence in an acrimonious way, or without a sense of personal self and only as a community which can support the individual.

To wit, is it all about inter-personal relationships? The established view of the individual, as parlayed by a state, a religion, an individual, and within an economic or political framework can cast most of these and other concerns aside, or seek, as Marx did, to place them all within the struggle of class against class, or belief system against belief system.

The Wisdom Of The Ages

Therein lie some of the core ideas we have followed throughout this work. So what are the answers to these and many other questions? Is there even a sense that there are answers out there? Certainly, many of these thinkers were convinced that they had arrived. Many take what ultimately is the Pragmatist's route and pronounce what is, is and whatever is, is good.

In the end though, Gödel's principle (*Chapter 2*) comes into play. If any of these systems was sufficient in itself, then there would be no others which try. Most often they are used as a springboard by others to try to justify their own incomplete ideologies or personal agendas, and are reduced down to petty arguments and pop-culture references. We have heard the wisdom of the ages put forth to us most eloquently by its speakers, and perhaps most eloquently by Socrates: 'I know that I know not'. If wisdom has taught us anything, it is that she is best when she is pursued!

Putting It All Together

When we began this journey, we laid out what seemed to be some fairly ambitious goals. We challenged our notions of logic, bias, and belief in an attempt to develop a discipline of thinking which will help us evaluate the information which assails us every day. To make decisions and value judgments

unhampered by advertising and social engineering. Well, maybe just to understand our lives better, and to form a personal philosophy.

Remember that what you have covered here is but a mere scratch on the exploration of the ideas and individual philosophers covered here, as well as the myriad of uncovered ones. The function of this work is to provide a thread by which you might understand different ways of approaching the questions of life. Deeper exploration, like nit-picking, will only serve you better.

Hopefully, what you have discovered is a means to be more reflective, more tolerant of other's thinking and also more critical (in the good sense) of it, as well as of your own thoughts. It is important to see where we have come from and where we are going. The ability to listen is enhanced by the ability to understand others and their referents. Discussion opens up, and while we may never convince one another of the merits or weaknesses of an argument, we are at least able to civilly engage one another in true argument, and to appreciate the multiple foundational rules which guide ourselves and others. In the end it always comes down to you. This is a journey not of ideology but of wisdom. When you begin to put it together for yourself, you will start on the journey of a thousand steps (well, 59[76] at least). The journey begins, so take advantage of it![77]

Fry: Hey, uh, what was the purpose of life anyway?
Professor: Who knows? Probably some hogwash about the human spirit.
Bender: Hm-hm.
Fry: Sounds about right.

Futurama, Season 6, Episode 7, *The Late Phillip J. Fry: In Search of a Backwards Time Machine*

[76] Not to be confused with the very fine 1959 thriller *The 39 Steps*, though if there were just 39 chapters, we would have been done a long time ago.

[77] Technically you should never end an argument with a cliché – it lessens the impact of all that you have said before and it is, after all, so…cliché.