

# A Demonstration of (O)bjectivity

## *Go(o)d without God*

These are notes for a later writing which will more clearly outlay how we can keep morality (i.e., good) in absence of religion (i.e., god) and such's correlating suppositions.

The greatest evil is the realization that there was never any *reason* to-be good. For this, we need no god.

- 1) People mistake that subjectivity is the *means* (i.e., through consciousness) (for) which to realize that there is *also* objectivity - that which stands independently, outside (of), beyond the subject. When I look (in)to the night sky, gazing upon the stars, I know they are not so spectacular as to spontaneously arise in the very moment for which they capture and suspend my glance - that would not be *meeting* (cf. M. Buber, *I and Thou*). To this, J. Sartre, in *Being and Nothingness*, says "subjectivity lacks any power to constitute the objective" (pg. 23).
- 2) "Negation", in economic jargon, is "opportunity cost" - that is, what you forego *through* any particular choice. As example, for \$30 you could buy a book; but, *in buying the book*, and given you have a limited amount of money (i.e., that there's finitude in the world of things and in (Be)ing itself), you, in the same instance, give-up buying a drink and burger at the bar.
- 3) The way I construe Heidegger's philosophy of Being is walking up to the edge of eternity to stop short and say, "Well, *Here* it is", all the while, as leading up to such, detailing the path taken to *Be* no-where - yet, at the very same time, *every*-where; a 'where' (or, "aware") which, as distant and *open* as it is, it, too, is as readily near, being *with-in*. In short, he invites any reader to step-(in)to this *realm (of) Being* to *discover* such's nothing and everything which is.

January 21, 2024

I. Murdoch, in *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, says “We need a theology which can continue without God. Why not call such a reflection a form of moral philosophy?” (pg. 511-512). She says too, “Religion [is] a sort of science. I attach, as I have been arguing, great importance to the concept of a transcendent good as an idea (properly interpreted) essential to both morality and religion. How do you mean essential? Do you mean it is empirically found to be so or are you recommending it? This is the 'beginning' to which such enquiries are frequently returned, except that it is not the beginning. The beginning is hard to find. Perhaps here the beginning is the circular nature of metaphysical argument itself, whereby the arguer combines an appeal to ordinary observation with an appeal to moral attitude. The process involves connecting together different considerations and pictures [i.e., eclecticism] so that they give each other mutual support. Thus, for instance, there appears to be an internal relation between truth and goodness and knowledge. I have argued in this sense from cases of art and skill and ordinary work and ordinary moral discernment, where we establish truth and reality by an insight which is an exercise of virtue. Perhaps *that* is the beginning, which is also our deepest closest ordinary experience.” (pg. 511)

*\*Simply because the beginning is not so easy to readily disclose does not disqualify such from being 'there' (cf. Heidegger's Dasein). See January 18, 2024 entry (Schacht on Alienation) - "Understand that a non-essentialist is in the same instance a silent advocate (i.e., hypocrites - e.g., they are people who say "it is essential to notice that there is no essential self")" ∅ cf. my comments on Jaeggi's 'Alienation' pg. 47-48 - "True, the 'essence' is quite difficult to extensively detail as much of 'who we are' lays dormant (in) our very involvement (with)in the world, and has an opaqueness about itself which renders it difficult to penetrate. However, simply because such is difficult to fully elucidate does not nearly qualify for its entire dismissal from the philosophical catalogue". Furthermore, and to illustrate how such aligns with what Murdoch is here proposing, Jaeggi, in Alienation, says "to use the phrase coined by Ernst Tugendhat: Leading one's life means confronting the 'practical question'. Practical questions are questions about what is to be done, what one ought to do, how one should act" (pg. 57). To this I noted, these are not 'practical' questions, no matter how much the author is fixated on praxis; they are, as they are, 'ethical' questions! The whole purpose for raising such questions to oneself in the first instance pertains to the pursuit of living the 'good life'. See January 25, 2024 entry (Realm of Ought)*

[https://www.binseelsnotes.com/\\_files/ugd/d7bo63\\_35c0566e5664403eb561bfdo2e031685.pdf](https://www.binseelsnotes.com/_files/ugd/d7bo63_35c0566e5664403eb561bfdo2e031685.pdf)

*See December 11, 2023 entry (Porn or Art) ∅ December 15, 2023 entry (Pleasure over Principle) ∅ December 22, 2023 entry (Reason To-Be Good) - “The greatest evil is the realization that there was never any reason to be good. For this, we need no god.” ∅ June 30, 2023 entry (We That's Me) - “Our ending is just beginning - or, beginning ending. To end is to begin, and to begin toward an end. No where we go, we always go nowhere” ∅ November 5, 2023 entry ('Where' is the Boundary) - "The boundary must itself be part of the thing for which it serves as such (i.e., from-which). An end (i.e., death) is a boundary. The question becomes: 'where' (i.e., what is 'that' place) is the boundary?" ∅ January 29, 2023 entry - “I think one who experiences love knows better what they can do without [it is without themselves]. It is more so absence than presence [withdrawn from our own being], that is, the letting go of than holding onto...[wherein] our unknowing ourselves is the end of this. It is only when*

we can remove the boundary that is our unique being where we enter the realm of total-being which is where loves exists.” ∅ November 25, 2023 entry (Heidegger's 'Introduction to Metaphysics') ∅ November 1, 2023 entry ('Where' Dialectics Begins) - "Dialectic, I believe, begins with - or, at least must first address - the boundary" ∅ January 18, 2024 entry (Reason is Grounding) ∅ January 10, 2024 entry ('There' and 'Here') - "The ground upon which 'there' and 'here' 'meet' is 'between' each"

Murdoch goes on to say, in *Existentialists and Mystics*, “it seems to me impossible to discuss certain kinds of concepts without resort to metaphor, since the concepts are themselves deeply metaphorical and cannot be analysed into non-metaphorical components without a loss of substance. Modern behaviouristic philosophy attempts such an analysis in the case of certain moral concepts, it seems to me without success. One of the motives of the attempt is a wish to 'neutralise' moral philosophy, to produce a philosophical discussion of morality which does not take sides. Metaphors often carry a moral charge, which analysis in simpler and plainer terms is designed to remove. This too seems to me to be misguided. **Moral philosophy cannot avoid taking sides**, and would-be neutral philosophers merely take sides surreptitiously. Moral philosophy is the examination of the most important of all human activities, and I think that two things are required of it. The examination should be realistic. Human nature, as opposed to the to the natures of other hypothetical spiritual beings, has certain discoverable attributes, and these should be suitably considered in any discussion of morality. Secondly, since an ethical system cannot but commend an ideal, it should commend a worthy ideal. Ethics should not be merely an analysis of ordinary mediocre conduct, it should be a hypothesis about good conduct and about how this can be achieved. How can we make ourselves better? is a question moral philosophers should attempt to answer” (pg. 363-364)

To Murdoch's point for the need to leverage metaphors, of which metaphysics is most properly suited to methodically employ in the process of espousing sound (i.e., grounded) logic (i.e., the battle between proposition and refutation), R. Schacht, in *The Future of Alienation*, remarks, "broadly regarded, [social inquiry] is society reflecting on itself, affecting itself as it does so. It is an enterprise of societal self-interpretation, in terms of models and metaphors that even in the best of cases contribute to the coloring and structuring of the manifold of self-understanding that informs and partially directs the course of social life" (pg. 87)

Likewise, in *The Sovereignty of Good*, Murdoch remarks “To do philosophy is to explore one's own temperament, and yet at the same time to attempt to discover the truth. It seems to me that there is a void in present-day moral philosophy... We need a moral philosophy in which the concept of love, so rarely mentioned now by philosophers, can once again be made central” (pg. 45)

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Democritus, in *On the Things in Hell*, says “Some men, ignorant of the dissolution of mortal nature, but conscious of the miseries of their life, crawl, during their lifetime, in troubles and fears, inventing falsehoods about the time after their death” (J. Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, pg. 457). Barnes proceeds with saying, “**Men are mortal, but they will not**

**acknowledge their mortality: doomed to a wretched life, they invent stories of post mortem bliss**” (pg. 457). With regard to the aetiology of religious beliefs, Barnes remarks “according to Democritus, religion arose first (as Prodicus suggested) from attention to natural phenomena, and second (his own contribution) from attention to the contents of the sleeping mind” (pg. 461). To this, Democritus, in *Sextus*, says “The ancients, seeing what happens in the sky - e.g., thunder and lightning and thunderbolts and conjunctions of stars and eclipses of sun and moon - were afraid, believing gods to be the cause of these” (pg. 456)

**December 14, 2023**

“Father protect me...Father correct me”

There is a miserable cowardice to this - it speaks of one who cannot *stand* and *do* for themselves such that they must beckon to a falsity for a falsity, therein mis-leading themselves (i.e., in bad faith) to believe such is a ‘save and grace’. G. Cox, in his article ‘Life and Works’ (in S. Churchill & J. Reynolds ed., *Jean-Paul Sartre: Key Concepts*), remarks “Constantly having to choose what we are by choosing what we do makes us anxious. We would like to be complete, a being at one with itself rather than a being constantly striving for completion in a future that is never reached. So most, if not all of us resort to some degree of bad faith, fooling ourselves that we are fixed entities that need not or cannot choose. **We use our freedom to try and cancel out our freedom by choosing not to choose.** But as Sartre points out, “Not to choose is, in fact, to choose not to choose” (BN1: 481; BN2: 503). Bad faith cannot achieve its goal, and the person in bad faith lives their life in denial, refusing to positively affirm their freedom” (pg. 10)

I. Kant, in his *What is Enlightenment?*, says “Enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-imposed nonage. Nonage is the inability to use one’s own understanding without another’s guidance. This nonage is self-imposed if its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in indecision and lack of courage to use one’s own mind without another’s guidance. *Dare to know!* (*Sapere aude*). **“Have the courage to use your own understanding,”** is therefore the motto of the enlightenment” (pg. 1)

<https://dailynous.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/kant-what-is-enlightenment.pdf>

\*cf. I. Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, pg. 160-161 – “*liberation from superstition is called enlightenment*”

[https://monoskop.org/images/7/77/Kant\\_Immanuel\\_Critique\\_of\\_Judgment\\_1987.pdf](https://monoskop.org/images/7/77/Kant_Immanuel_Critique_of_Judgment_1987.pdf)

Hegel, in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, remarks “while, therefore, the noble consciousness behaves as if it were conforming to the universal power, the truth about it is rather that in its service it retains its own being-for-self, and that in the genuine renunciation of its personality, it actually sets aside and rends in pieces the universal Substance. Its Spirit is a completely disparate relationship: on the one hand, in its position of honour it retains its own will; on the other hand, it gives up its will, but in so doing it in part alienates itself from its own

inner nature and becomes utterly at variance with itself, and in part subjects to itself the universal substance and makes it completely at variance with itself...The ignoble consciousness has achieved its purpose, viz. to bring the universal power under the control of being-for-self" (pg. 312)

It cripples itself through its reaching out (which is an act of the for-itself), pretending, to be other than itself (a for-itself-as-not-for-itself), as it, nonetheless, keeps itself, but not any more as for-itself as in its reach to be beside itself it dissipates the value of itself as a for-itself.

*\*"for-itself" is oftentimes conceived as that which is (for)ward-of-itself, laying off in the distance from oneself, where as (from)-oneself it is, too, (of)-oneself. This is, to Heidegger, the first moment of the structure of Being - i.e., futurity; or, the reaching and stretching of Being toward that ahead-of-itself. So, when the for-itself aims to-be other than for-itself it in turn extinguishes itself (as) a for-itself. Regarding the term 'stretching', M. Heidegger, in Being and Time, remarks "Dasein does not fill up a track or stretch 'of life' - one which is somehow present-at-hand - with the phases of its momentary actualities. It stretches itself along in such a way that its own Being is constituted in advance as a stretching-along. The 'between' which relates to birth and death already lies in the Being of Dasein... Factual Dasein exists as born; and, as born, it is already dying, in the sense of Being-towards-death. As long as Dasein factually exists, both the 'ends' and their 'between' are, and they are in the way which is possible on the basis of Dasein's Being as care. Thrownness and that Being towards death in which one either flees it or anticipates it, form a unity; and in this unity birth and death are 'connected' in a manner characteristic of Dasein. As care, Dasein (is) the 'between'" (pg. 426-427). Cf. M. Buber, I and Thou for "between" - which, incidentally, D. Winnicott leverages in his psychoanalytic theory of 'play'.*

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-Qoe3EfzNw>

"the really dangerous thing about religion...is that it gives people a gold-plated excuse to stop thinking" - D. Dennett

This tracts with the above in that consciousness (i.e., the for-itself) tells itself ("father protect me...father correct me") to not anymore be that which it is - a consciousness which thinks and makes for-itself.

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I am a philosopher; not a follower. See March 11, 2023 entry (We Need Thinkers). To this, F. Copleston, in *A History of Philosophy: Logical Positivism and Existentialism*, says "all that the philosopher can do, and, indeed, all that one man can do for another, is to illuminate the possibilities of action and the meaning of liberty, with a view of promoting authentic choice or self-commitment as contrasted with drifting into decisions under the influence of the pressure of social conformity" (pg. 192). See December 6, 2023 entry (*Email on Determinism*) - "it is not so much 'transposing' or 'transforming' the positive to-be a negative so much **it is making the negative...to stand alongside the positive, reaching out to clasp that which is silent, surpassed, 'secondary' to draw forth to reside in the foreground and be on equal footing with its counterpart, so as**

*to attain fuller understanding of man and his situation.*". To This, K. Reinhardt, in *The Existentialist Revolt*, remarks "The unique historical fact which for Johannes Climacus [i.e., Kierkegaard in his 'Postscript'] is not only approximately but infinitely and absolutely certain is the fact of his own existence. This existence includes both positive and negative elements, simply because it is a synthesis of the finite and the infinite, the eternal and the temporal. **And it is precisely the perpetual presence of the negative, the contingent, the finite that opens the individual's eyes to the reality of the positive, the necessary, the infinite**" (pg. 45)

H. Arendt, in *The Life of the Mind*, says "when everybody is swept away unthinkingly by what everybody else does and believes in, those who think are drawn out of hiding because their refusal to join in is conspicuous and thereby becomes a kind of action" (pg. 192)

Now, it is true that there is more to life than merely the lives of ourself (e.g., we stand against everything all at once); though, anything *beyond*-that is fabrication.

**December 17, 2023**

F. Copleston, in *A History of Philosophy: Logical Positivism and Existentialism*, says "if there is no God, 'everything is permitted', as Dostoevsky's character said. The free human being is thus thrown back on himself and made totally responsible. In a godless world he has to choose his own set of values, and if any meaning is to be found in human life it can only be the meaning which man himself has given it. We have, therefore, the man who has to act in this world in which he finds himself and who at the same time cannot look for help or guidance either to God or to an autonomous and universally valid moral law or to a realm of absolute values. It is to man in this state of alienation and loneliness that the message of atheistic existentialism is primarily addressed" (pg. 175). Copleston continues, "the most important conclusion which [Sartre] draws seems to be...if there is not God, there are no universally-obligatory moral law and no set of absolute fixed values" (pg. 189)

\*I disagree with the notion that in the absence of God there, too, is a correlating and necessary absence of any possible objective morality - humans are a commonality in-themselves, and it is for this commonness which serves as the foundation for objectivity (i.e., semblance of harmony between...) with respect to how each relates to each other 'through' their activities. Commonality serves as the establishment for objectivity in that it's what's common-between things, pointing to a lack in subjectivity. It is this commonality which is, in a sense, isolated from, outside of or beyond, not being wholly dependent upon, the subject itself - this non-dependability is the criterion for objectivity. Each human has a subjectivity which, if not for anything else, sets the ground for objectivity. And, in as much as my Being was not dependent upon me, Others' Being is not 'wholly' as well. What's, here, given is that I exist amidst others 'already existing' - each with each's own subjectivity. To this, K. Reinhardt, in *The Existentialist Revolt*, remarks "Both Husserl and St. Thomas Aquinas teach that **truth exists objectively, independent of the seeker and knower**" (pg. 126). Granted, Husserl's and Aquinas's position is at odds with Heraclitus' claim, where the proper way to reach that 'deeper level' wherein unity, commonality, harmony, and stability have their foundation is 'through reflection', therein affording primacy to reason over perception. Heraclitus' claim makes apparent his skeptical attitude toward the sense and such's ability to naturally penetrate, thereby moving to-be beyond (i.e., transcend), the constant flux (or, rapid flow, like the water in the river) of the world and its

appearances. Meaning, as compared to Husserl and Aquinas, the seeker (or, individual) – that is, the one who wishes to-‘know’ – is naturally poised (in) the world such that no alternative exists for them but to be inextricably involved (er go, Marcel’s ‘participation’ – cf. F. Heinemann, *Existentialism and the Modern Predicament*, pg. 146 & K. Reinhardt, *The Existentialist Revolt*, pg. 220-222) with the world and its structure and features – otherwise said, that one cannot discover ‘truth’ absent any involvement (with)-in the world; however, such ‘truth’ need not be constricted (or, confined or bounded) to what’s the materiality (of) the world (meaning, there is some ‘sway’ ‘between’ empiricism and rationalism ‘where’ the philosopher would do best to attend). Now, as it should be made clear, this structure or feature of ‘commonality’, though it can be discovered by the individual who sets themselves on the path toward knowing, is not in the first instance wholly constituted by whom who does so.

\*cf. R. Waterfield (trans. by), *The First Philosophers*, Chapter 4 - Heraclitus of Ephesus (pg. 32); G. S. Kirk (et al.), *The Presocratic Philosophers*, Chapter 4 - Heraclitus of Ephesus (pg. 181); J. Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, Chapter 4 - The Natural Philosophy of Heraclitus (pg. 57); B. Russell, *The History of Western Philosophy*, Chapter 4 - Heraclitus (pg. 38); F. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, Volume 1 - Greece and Rome, Chapter 5 - The Word of Heraclitus (pg. 38); J. Erdmann, *History of Philosophy*, Volume 1, Chapter 3, Section A - Heraclitus (pg. 48) - “Heraclitus maintains that everything, and even one and the same thing, both is and is not. Thus he substitutes for the Eleatic Being, its combination with Non-Being, i.e. Becoming; and the idea that everything is in process and nothing at rest, and the idea that everything is undergoing continual change...Connected with this continual flux of things is the uncertainty of the senses. For the flux escapes their notice, though it is perceived by rational cognition...” (pg. 49)

These first fragments (up to F8) reveal Heraclitus in prophet mode, castigating people for their failure to wake up to reality. Like Xenophanes and Philolaus, Heraclitus draws a line between the truth, which is accessible only to divine understanding, *qua* eternal, and mere human comprehension (see also F19); yet we can, presumably, attain the divine understanding required. The combination of T1 and F5 shows that (like the modern mystic G. I. Gurdjieff) Heraclitus calls our normal waking state 'sleep', and is urging us to wake up to a higher understanding. The *logos*, like the whole world, is common—accessible to all—and yet we fail to see what is right before our eyes: this is the implication of F5 and F6.

According to the truth of the *logos*, all is one and there is proportion or harmony throughout the world. This leads us into a second set of fragments (F13–20), which illustrate various ways in which there is coincidence or even identity of opposites. Either they are part of the same continuum (e.g. F13–14), or they are relative in some way or another (F15–16). Relativity is another common theme in Heraclitus (F17–19). Somewhat pedantically, Aristotle complains (e.g. at *Physics* 185<sup>b</sup>19–25, *Metaphysics* 1012<sup>a</sup>24–6) that Heraclitus breaks the law of non-contradiction, and in identifying opposites makes every statement true. But what is important to Heraclitus is precisely that things change from day to day and from context to context.

Although the *logos*, the truth of things, is common (i.e. universal and universally apprehensible), it is different from anything else (F11); although it is common, it is unfamiliar and unexpected (F9). Since the apprehension of things like the underlying harmony of the world requires reflection, not just naïve reliance on the senses (F24–5), it is not surprising to find Heraclitus casting doubt on the senses (F27). His scepticism is not absolute, though: the senses are still all we have (F28, F29), but the data with which they supply us require judicious assessment. F26 refers simultaneously to the ambiguity of sensory evidence and the ambiguity of Heraclitus' own sayings. The way to truth is perhaps suggested by F30 and F31, where Heraclitus reveals his own methodology ('I searched for myself') and suggests that we can all do the same, and will all come up with the same result: the common *logos*. At any rate, note the difference in methodology between the judicious use of the senses and introspection recommended by Heraclitus, and the 'wide learning' for which he condemns Pythagoras (T1 and T2, on p. 95).

The underlying unity of things, according to F4 and F32, can be called 'god', or 'the divine law' (F12). This is to say, by Milesian convention, that it is the ultimate reality of things. And yet in antiquity Heraclitus was famous for stressing the flux of things, rather than this stability. Indeed, Plato thinks of him entirely as a teacher of the metaphysical doctrine of



flux, and constantly opposes him to unitarians like Parmenides. The main evidence for Heraclitus' teaching on flux is given in F33–6 (assuming that 'dying' in F36 is a metaphor for change), and T3–4. The solution to the apparent contradiction between flux and stability may be that Heraclitus actually taught the underlying unity and stability of things at a deeper level, the level underlying flux which is accessible to divine reason. The river is single, despite its flux; **dying and living are a single continuum**. As well as actual physical flux, there is the epistemic flux implied by the emphasis on relativity that we have already noted. This of course relates to Heraclitus' scepticism about the evidence of the senses: there is nothing on the face of the world that we can securely grasp or base our moral opinions on; so we had better wake up and look to the underlying stability and unity of things.

At one point, with tantalizing obscurity, this underlying unity is described as 'back-turning, like a bow or a lyre' (F21). Obviously, the strings of a bow or a lyre would not maintain their tension in one direction if there was not an equal tension in the opposite direction. This seems to be what Heraclitus is getting at, especially in his emphasis on opposites in the world. **They tend in opposite directions, but are actually essential to each other**, and this tension is in fact another way of hinting at the underlying unity or connectedness of the world. The idea of tension leads naturally into yet another possible description of the underlying connectedness of things as a kind of war (F22, F23).

We now come to the most puzzling aspect of Heraclitus' thought. A number of fragments make some cosmological mention of fire (F32, F36–40). On the one hand, fire seems to be another symbol of constancy in change, like 'war' above: while seeming to be in motion, there is still the unity of the fact that it remains fire, and the proportionate balance between the flames and the fuel. On the other hand, fire also at times seems close to being a Milesian *arkhē* or divinized elemental principle; this, of course, is how Aristotle took it (*Metaphysics* 984<sup>a</sup>7), and we can judge from F10 that Heraclitus was a monist. But F38 tells strongly against the idea that fire is an Aristotelian substrate, since what is important about commercial exchange is precisely that I come away with goods, not gold: gold does not outlast the exchange. In any case, fire for Heraclitus does not seem to be unlimited (as Anaximenes' air is, for instance), but he does sometimes speak as if it were a constituent of things. We should think of this fire not as the fire in our grates, but as the pure fire or ether of the upper heavens. Broadly, he seems to divide the matter of the world into fire, water (sea), and earth, with all three interacting in a way that preserves their original equilibrium, and changing into one another: fire becomes water by gradual condensation (T8), sea becomes earth and fire

\*R. Waterfield (trans. by), *The First Philosophers*

\*cf. M. Loux, *Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction*, Chapter 1 – The Problem of Universals I: Metaphysical Realism <https://dorshon.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Metaphysics-A-Contemporary-Introduction-Third-Edition.pdf>

\*cf. K. Yandell, *Philosophy of Religion*, Chapter 2 - What is philosophy? What is religion? What is philosophy of religion? & Chapter 14 – Religion and Morality & Chapter 15 – Faith and Reason <http://ndl.ethernet.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/56394/1/pdf42.pdf>

K. Reinhardt, in discussing K. Jaspers' philosophy, says "as far as the sphere of moral action is concerned, the German philosopher asserts that it is spiritual suicide to submit to any objective, universal rule of thought and conduct. The authentic act of freedom is unmotivated" (pg. 199)

*However, if entirely 'unmotivated' (or, un-connected or separated or dis-jointed), then human activity (or, movement or engagement or involvement) can be moved (or, facilitated or impelled) by neither passion nor reason (which, in total, (is) the Human). To this, Reinhardt correctly notes, "The 'existential freedom' which Jaspers espouses appears equally indefensible from the psychological and metaphysical point of view. Freedom loses its meaning and vanishes when one tries to detach it from both rational knowledge and motivation" (pg. 200)*

Reinhardt concludes, "Human existence itself appears gravely endangered by the assertion that every existing individual has *his* truth, *his* way of reading the 'ciphers', *his* Transcendence, and his God. This danger can only be warded off by the affirmation of a moral law which, anchored in the supremely 'existential' law of Divine Transcendence, guides individuals and groups and makes possible true communication within the frame of a genuine human civilization" (pg. 202)

*What would you have? A million 'truths', or one? Subjectivity as final arbiter, or Objectivity? Each's own individual opinion, or common-opinion?*

D. Carveth, in *Psychoanalytic Thinking*, remarks "Since the eighteenth-century work of the philosopher David Hume we have understood that reason cannot deduce an ought from an is; that science is *descriptive* not *prescriptive*. Like other long-standing philosophical axioms...the fact/value distinction and the naturalistic fallacy (the idea that the ethical can be grounded in the natural) have been subjected to critique by both '**pre-modernists' seeking to revive an ancient concept of an 'objective reason' supposedly capable of the intellectual apprehension of the form of the good** (Horkheimer, 1947), and by 'post-modernists' seeking to deconstruct the 'fact/value' and 'analytic/synthetic' dichotomies, but as it turns out, without being able to destabilize these crucial *distinctions*. While Putnam's (2002) title, *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy*, is dramatic and appears radically challenging, the actual substance of his argument concerns only the collapse of an impossibly exaggerated or 'sharp' version of the fact/value distinction. It is quite true that the preferences for logic over illogic and facts over illusions themselves entail value judgment. But to acknowledge this in no way gets around the fact that **reason (and the ego that deploys it) is impotent to tell us which ends or consequences we should prefer**, or even to authorize our preference for clear over muddled thinking. My preference for intellectual coherence, like my preference for pleasure over pain,

cannot be objectively validated [i.e., held outside of me to be judged by those other than me; meaning, I cannot extricate my subjectivity from my own consciousness to therein place such on the table as 'object' between myself and any other for the latter to look upon and qualitatively appraise such's merits. You're right, we can't do this. But this is like demanding we first possess the power to manipulate gravity and light before understanding that they're merely given features of this place for which we all reside. These things are simply the conditions under which we manage our existence - to say we must operate against them before we can ever understand and utilize them is preposterous; even more, unproductive. So, I ask: does life and sharing in this truly need to be forced all the way to this juncture of impossibility before we can ever move forward in a useful and ethical manner, acting under- and with- the commonality every human naturally possesses? Do I need to fly to the sun to touch it before I can know it's hot?]. If we attempt to do so by pointing to consequences we inevitably arrive at an ultimate value judgment (usually the preference for life over death) the entirely subjective rather than the objective basis of which cannot be evaded" (pg. 54-55).

*\*This is absolutely ridiculous. Of course, reason can inform us as to what we 'ought' to do. It's exactly for reason that we see reason to continue living. If reason were truly non-affectual with regard to disclosing for-ourselves what's more preferable (whose manifestation, granted, is through 'value-judgements') contrasted with what's less, then we wouldn't be alive. All what life would amount to is a random venturing through to reach a random end - now, you tell me how this mantra or disposition within-the-world 'keeps alive' (or, can sustain) the human personality.*

*And, yes - it can be objectively grounded. It just depends how you define 'an object' (i.e., empirically or idealistically; materially or immaterially; by the given-ness of the physical world - which would hardly make any sense - or the given-ness (meaning, it's not for 'what follows' but for 'what we begin with') of humans - which would make sense as humans are a commonality (with difference) in-themselves, otherwise that no human is categorically different than any other.*

*It seems almost as if we're willing to give up everything, discarding (or, ignoring) all that's been built up 'til now, in exchange (or, at the price) for one small absent aspect (i.e., that we cannot transplant our subjectivity). Does the star need to sit atop before we can call it a Christmas tree; or, all share in being the same color before calling each human? Is it this impossible to accept difference (in) living?*

*It seems this 'commonality with difference' (not vice-versa) is what's most befuddling for the human to grasp. We're willing to overlook all that which we have in common at first sight of a bit of difference. Humans have more than enough demonstrated their fault with this.*

Carveth continues, "**The anti-foundationalism and radical cultural relativism of postmodern theory casts as much doubt on the existence of truth as it does on the existence of God. In this context, critical reason (as distinct from merely instrumental or technical rationality) is itself called into question.** If truth can no longer be distinguished from error or illusion, what point is there to critique? In this context, psychoanalysis, the form of psychotherapy traditionally most allied to the Enlightenment spirit of critique is itself in danger of being eclipsed, in psychiatry by biological reductionism and in the field of psychotherapy by fundamentally irrationalist, romantic and revisionist therapeutic religions..." (pg. 77-78). To this, Carveth concludes, "**our experience is never direct or unmediated, but always already the product of interpretation. But contrary to a radical, postmodern epistemological**

relativism, this in no way implies that facts do not exist, are not discoverable or are irrelevant" (pg. 90).

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*Most have forsaken learning the rules by which to play this game, so that each has devised each's own, all the while forgetting that the pieces and moves exist all (in) the same place, never to be otherwise. No wonder this game has become so convoluted, complex to play (cf. D. Binseel, On The Theory of the Aggregated Image)*

*You can imagine how such has become impossible, descending at the beginning into confusion, anarchy, and betrayal, whose only currency is veiling one's intentions, manipulation, and egoism.*

*See November 5, 2023 entry (Decadence of Humanity) - "We live in a world where everyone desires to be their other, so no one is themself. Yet, in the same instance, each is lover of only their own freedom and cares not for anyone else's" - ∅ June 30, 2023 entry (We That's Me!) - "We, in this place, where we move, and move differently - but differently together - are the same. A single. A life"*

K. Reinhardt also says "**The common characteristic of all men**, according to Heraclitus, is the possibility of phronesis, that is, reflection or introspection" (pg. 20). Reinhardt continues, "Phronesis, or the introspective listening to the truth of being in nature and in the self, is in the opinion of Heraclitus the way to gain knowledge of that cosmic norm which he calls Logos...However, the main accent of the Heraclitean metaphysics lies not, as has often been asserted, on the *panta rei*, that is, the eternal flux of all things. For in all this flux the Greek thinker seeks that eternal harmony which underlies all change. Although the world often looks 'like a disorderly heap of rubbish', this **foreground appearance merely veils the hidden harmony of being**, and true phronesis would be impossible if there were not recognizable in all becoming a normative measure, proportion, order, or law" (pg. 21; cf. pg. 73). (See December 6, 2023 entry (Email on Determinism) - "appearance is not cause enough, to me, for the denying of a 'what otherwise might be'").

Now, regarding said 'appearance', K. Reinhardt, in discussing Kierkegaard's 'stages', remarks, "Johannes thus exemplifies the aesthetic stage of existence, its outward appearance of gaiety and its inward emptiness and despair. It is characterized by a perpetual seeking for moments filled with sensual enjoyment, moments which mutually cancel themselves out, so that the seeking and striving never end in fulfillment...The type of this kind of life is the Don Juan of Mozart's opera...Don Juan's world is a world of appearance rather than reality; it is a world of the constant betrayal, a world of nihilistic. In it no 'existential choice' is possible" (op. cit., pg. 55). See November 1, 2023 entry (Appearance of Living) - "It's very possible to experience the appearance of living without truly ever doing so. In fact, this is a fate for many".

The reason for saying all of this is to rebuke what Kierkegaard believes as where "an age that lack religious and moral enthusiasm individual existence becomes a matter of despair..." (K. Reinhardt, in *The Existentialist Revolt*, pg. 51). We can keep Good (i.e., morality), letting go of God (i.e., religion).

To this, Reinhardt continues, "[Nietzsche] thought he has discovered in Schopenhauer's doctrine a possibility of salvation without the necessity of a savior. In the Christian dispensation man cannot save himself. He is saved by divine grace through the mediatorship of Christ. According to Schopenhauer, on the other hand, man can save himself by his own unaided effort. By virtue of his own inner worth he can raise himself about the nullity and absurdity of existence. By the exercise of his own intellectual, moral, and aesthetic powers he can attain to truth, goodness, and beauty" (pg. 65)

Copleston, in further remarking upon Sartre's ontology, says, "man's liberty is thus unrestricted. There is no given universally-obligatory moral law, according to which he ought to act. He is the source of his own moral law. There are no absolute values which it is his task to realize in the world in concrete acts. He is the source of the values which he recognizes" (pg. 189)

*\*the key words, here, is 'given'. And, it is true that morality is not something given in the same sense as man is given his existence. However, along with man's given existence - or, more properly said, 'afforded'; 'handed to him through another's' - there also is the givenness of existing - that is, to-exist. And, it is for this 'to-exist' that morality can be objectively grounded, as each who does exist shares, at base, the want-to-exist. Those who wish not-to-exist will not-exist, leaving behind all those who do possess such want - thus the stipulation 'each who does exist...'. Morality strives at protecting and enabling those who desire 'to-exist'.*

Finally, Copleston concludes, "[Sartre] attempts to show that a tremendous responsibility rests upon a man's shoulders in the exercise of choice and values" (pg. 194)

*\*And, it is this responsibility which is common to all human beings, regarding 'how' to-exist.*

D. Winnicott, in *The Maturation Process and the Facilitating Environment*, remarks "Religion (or is it theology?) has stolen the good from the developing individual child, and has then set up an artificial scheme for injecting this that has been stolen back into the child, and has called it 'moral education'" (pg. 94)

<https://psptraining.com/wp-content/uploads/Winnicott-D.W.-1965.-The-maturational-processes-and-the-facilitating-environment.pdf>

See 'On Morals' (*Writings in the Beginning*) - "Morals require action...[they] are, more accurately, an expression of one's self. And, an expression is, by its nature, an action." @ [March 3, 2023](#) entry (What is Responsibility?) - "We cannot obligate ourselves, some legalists say. What then does it mean to be responsible?" @ [December 17, 2023](#) entry (The World of Things) - "how I am with myself will influence how I am with all that else." @ [October 27, 2023](#) entry (Where We Exist) - "Where we exist is where we meet responsibility; who we are, how we involve ourselves with such". To this, Winnicott says further "concern implies...further growth, and relates in a positive way to the individual's sense of responsibility" (*op. cit.*, pg. 73)

"How does such become political?", you might ask. **Wherever there is possibility, where possibility (is) potentiality, there is responsibility** (i.e., 'how' we respond to, which is surely to some degree dependent upon how we 'perceive' and in turn 'interpret', that which is

possible (is) the *art* of (Be)ing) - and, responsibility need not wholly exclude heterogeneity (i.e., variety) to attain, having-in-itself, objectivity before ascending to be Morality (i.e., the category of rightful living - all those 'hows' which benefit (Be)ing and Being-with), being utilized for-man to save Humanity. See [December 17, 2023](#) (Rights and Interests).

I show that such categorical denials of the ethical dimension of international relations, although rooted in important insights, are both descriptively inaccurate and prescriptively perverse. Sophisticated realists, however, acknowledge that the “realities” of power politics are but one dimension of an adequate theory or practice of international politics. Initial appearances to the contrary, most leading realists grant ethics a necessary if subordinate place in international relations—although they generally fail to grapple with the contradictions between this account and their more familiar calls for an amoral foreign policy.

Realism fits the structure of this part of this *Handbook* quite well. It has typically been understood by its leading proponents and critics alike as both an explanatory account of the way the world is (the subject of the preceding chapter) and a set of prescriptions, based on this reading of political “reality,” for how societies and their leaders ought to practice international relations (my subject here). The difference in substantive focus, however, leads this chapter to deal with a rather different part of the realist literature. Where the preceding chapter focused on relatively recent work by (primarily American) social scientists, this chapter draws primarily on the work of earlier generations. Part of the reason is that social scientists today are much less inclined than their predecessors to address moral issues in their professional work. No less important, though, is the unrivaled power and vitality of the arguments of these “classical” realist authors.

## 1 MORAL RELATIVISM

Some realists claim that morality is relative to a particular community rather than widely shared across states, societies, or cultures. For example, E. H. Carr (1946, 2, 87) claims that “morality can only be relative, not universal.” “Supposedly absolute and universal principles [are] not principles at all, but the unconscious reflexions of national policy based on a particular interpretation of national interest at a particular time.” George Kennan (1954, 103, 47, 36) similarly contends that “our own national interest is all that we are really capable of knowing and understanding” and counsels against assuming that “our moral values . . . necessarily have validity for people everywhere.” Kennan even claims that “in most international differences elements of right and wrong, comparable to those that prevail in personal relations, are—if they exist at all, which is a question—simply not discernable to the outsider.”

In fact, however, we can and do have considerable knowledge of the values and interests of others. Numerous international issues do involve genuine questions of right and wrong. And in contemporary international relations there is widespread agreement, for example, that aggressive war is impermissible and that genocide is a legitimate subject of international concern and action.

\*J. Donnelly, *The Ethics of Realism*, in C. Reus-Smit and D. Snidal (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*

responsibility,”<sup>1</sup> “the developed world has a moral duty to tackle climate change,”<sup>2</sup> and “the international community is guilty of sins of omission” in the context of the Rwandan genocide.<sup>3</sup>

Problematically, such calls to action, claims to duty, and cries of condemnation often precede consideration of the relevant bodies capable of responding. Moreover, the discipline of International Relations offers only limited guidance in addressing this disjuncture.<sup>4</sup> Even in the face of our intuitive sense that entities such as the United Nations (UN), multinational corporations, and states can be held morally responsible, International Relations steadfastly refuses to address this possibility. This refusal is all the more striking given that the discipline travels a considerable distance toward acknowledging the moral agency of such entities by making valuable, and unorthodox, claims about agency. Many approaches, after all, assume that states are agents. Far from being inherently problematic, this move *does not take us far enough*. Hitherto neglected positions on moral agency and responsibility logically accompany such audacious assumptions of agency. Until this is acknowledged and explored, International Relations will be mired in internal contradictions, beset by unnecessary divisions between “normative” and “empirical” pursuits—and of little use in helping us to engage effectively with some of our most urgent global problems.

## 1 MORAL AGENCY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Moral agents have capacities for deliberating over possible courses of action and their consequences and acting on the basis of this deliberation. Such capacities render moral agents vulnerable to the assignment of duties and the apportioning of moral praise and blame in relation to specific actions and in the context of enabling conditions. In other words, there is a crucial link between the concepts of moral agency and moral responsibility.

Moral responsibility involves being answerable for a particular act or outcome in accordance with what are understood to be moral imperatives. (By contrast, causal responsibility focuses on how a particular outcome is generated and need not be tied to purposive action.) Moral imperatives—especially at the international level—are, of course, variously grounded and conceived. This reality does not,

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Pope Benedict XVI to German Chancellor Angela Merkel, dated 16 December 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Attributed to UK Chancellor Gordon Brown, BBC News, 22 April 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Secretary General Kofi Annan at memorial conference for the 1994 Rwanda genocide, 26 March 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Throughout this chapter I am following the convention of using International Relations to refer to the field of study.

\*T. Erskine, *Locating Responsibility: The Problem of Moral Agency in International Relations*, in C. Reus-Smit and D. Snidal (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*

(C. POTENTIALITY)

From another aspect, the for-itself, as noted, has internal relations with the "this." For example, the "potentiality" of a tree to grow and remain a tree comes-to-be from the temporality of the for-itself, and conversely, the temporality of the for-itself is the result of the for-itself's failure to be a tree all at once.

We must remember that each temporal dimension has its meaning

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in the other. Thus the potentiality of a tree to remain a tree comes-to-be only because the future is never an abstract future but always the future of this past: it is an engaged future. And thus the permanence of the tree comes-to-be because the for-itself projects itself toward a future from a definite past, such as, for example, the past of not-being a tree.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, insofar as my past was never the simple negation of not-being a tree, but the negation of not-being an entire world, the world comes-to-be with a permanence or potentiality from the engagement with my entire past negations.

We can now take another look at the relation of essence to existence.

Essence is the perfect totality that, for example, the budding tree aims at but never achieves—the simultaneous possession of all the stages of the tree's growth with itself. *In this sense, the aimed at but never achieved union of essence and existence is beauty.*

Beauty is thus the constantly aimed at but never achieved union of the states of the world with itself that reflects the failure of the for-itself to be all at once. But unlike the internal ever-escaping failure and lack of the for-itself, the unattainable union of the world's essence and existence is a definite external failure.

Although the ideal of beauty arises from the for-itself's internal lack, beauty is first apprehended as a transcendent ideal, an ideal within being by which being itself lacks its aimed-at perfection. This apprehension of beauty as a transcendent ideal arises because consciousness is directly a consciousness-of-the-world. It is only in pure reflection that the absences in the world are seen as arising from the internal lack that is the for-itself.

\*J. Catalano, *A Commentary of Jean-Paul Sartre's Being and Nothingness*



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In short, this was important to outlay because, believe it or not, many political philosophers disregard ethics altogether, believing that the only thing anyone has and, therefore, can utilize to manage their being is their own subjectivity - which I argue against saying "sure, we all are subject to this existence, each having for themselves a subjectivity; but, in light of the commonness between all who exist, subjectivity, moving beyond itself as merely such, can serve to establish objectives (e.g., morals, law, etc.) for purposes of living as we 'ought' to live".

Cf. J. Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, Chapter 11 - (O)bligation; J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Chapter 7 - Goodness and Rationality; R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, Chapter 6 - Equality and the Good Life; Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, Chapter 1 - Reason and Objectivity & Chapter 5 - Impartiality and Objectivity; R. Pound, *The Ideal Element in Law*, Chapter 3 - Law and Morals & Chapter 4 - Rights, Interests, Values; H. Kelsen, *What is Justice?*, Chapter 7 - Absolutism and Relativism in Philosophy and Politics; S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, Chapter 9 - Liberalism and the Decline of Political Philosophy, Section 8 - Liberalism and Moral Judgments: The Substitution of Interest for Conscience

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Life is *not* an interest; it is only a *right*. A life is what you were given. So, it must be seen as a given. A Right can only *represent* that which is given. Interests, however, are hardly anything near given as one can insert themselves *between*, dividing or standing (in) the way of, another and their respective identified (or, perceived or believed) interest(s), where each can be such to each other - but, one cannot with respect to another's life (\*singular).

I do *not* see my life; rather, it is only that I come to notice it *as I live* - that is, (in) the course of my involvement with living.

\*F. Copleston, in *A History of Philosophy: Logical Positivism and Existentialism*, says "according to Heidegger, **the fundamental structure of man is Care (Sorge). And this comprises three moments or elements.** *First*, there is man's concern with what he is to be. ***Existenz means being-in-front-of-oneself or self-project.*** And as man is Existenz, we must say that futurity characterizes man. Or, rather, man, self-projection, grounds futurity. And his concern with what he is to be is the first moment of Care. **Secondly**, man also himself in the world as 'thrown'. And man's concern with himself as thrown into the world grounds the past. **Thirdly**, man's being-with (the things in the world) and his entanglement with particular preoccupations in the world grounds the present. Care, therefore, has three temporal moments, the primary moment being futurity. And as ***Care is the fundamental structure of man (of him who exists as self-projection in a world in which he finds himself as thrown and in which he is entangled through his preoccupations)***, it follows that man is temporal in structure. ***My being is a flight from nothingness to nothingness in which, as accepting and willing my thrownness into the world and my relations in the world, I constitute past and present as I reach out to the future***" (pg. 181-182). K. Reinhardt, in *The Existentialist Revolt*, says similarly, "***Man discovers and discloses the world in which he exists by way of those objects among which he moves, about which he is concerned and cares, and to which he attends***" (pg. 136). See June 30, 2023 entry (We That's Me!) - "We all move in

different directions...". Reinhardt concludes, "Human Dasein, says Heidegger, is 'thrown' into a world not of its own making, and it is left there in its 'thrownness' to 'care', to engage itself and concern itself, using its own devices and acting under its own responsibility" (pg. 136)

I do see interests. And, to see anything necessarily requires one to be at a distance to that perceivable. I can never be at a distance to my own life - even that which is for-myself (i.e., forward of myself at a distance to myself) is still (of) myself, where, as such, it is 'here' with-myself.

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which has decisively influenced not only the legal positivism of the last century, but also the modern jurisprudence of the English-speaking countries. In Dernburg, for instance, we read: "Rights existed historically long before the State with a deliberate legal order had appeared. They had their basis in the personality of the individual and in the respect which he was able to obtain and to enforce. The concept of a legal order could be won from the perception of existing rights only by a gradual process of abstraction. It is therefore both historically and logically incorrect to assume that rights are nothing but emanations from law. The legal order guarantees and fashions legal rights but does not create them." \*

##### *c. The Right as Recognized Will or Protected Interest*

It is easily seen that this theory of the priority of rights is untenable from a logical point of view as well as from a psychological one. The legal character of a phenomenon is not perceptible by the senses. The fact that an individual has a right or has no right to possess a thing cannot be seen or heard or touched. The statement that an individual has or has no right to possess a thing is a value-judgment which is logically as well as psychologically possible only if the individual who makes this statement presupposes the existence, and that means the validity, of a general norm regarding possession. This norm is neither logically nor psychologically the result of an abstraction based on a sum of similar perceptions of rights as, e.g., the general concept of tree is the result of an abstraction based on a sum of similar perceptions; for rights are not perceptible by the senses, as are trees. How the idea of a general rule comes into existence is a question which we do not have to answer here. We need only establish that, without presupposing a general norm regulating human behavior, no statement about the existence or non-existence of rights is possible. If there is a question of legal right, a legal rule must be presupposed. There can be no legal rights before there is law. The definition of a legal right as an interest protected by law, or a will recognized by law, vaguely expresses an insight into this

\* HEINRICH DERNBURG, SYSTEM DES RÖMISCHEN RECHTS (Der Pandekten achte, umgearbeitete Auflage) Erster Teil (1911) 65. BLACKSTONE, COMMENTARIES, Book I, § 167: "For the principal aim of society is to protect individuals in the enjoyment of those absolute rights, which were vested in them by the immutable laws of nature; but which could not be preserved in peace without that mutual assistance and intercourse, which is gained by the institution of friendly and social communities. Hence it follows, that the first and primary end of human laws is to maintain and regulate these absolute rights of individuals. Such rights as are social and relative result from, and are posterior to, the formation of states and societies. . . ." The so-called absolute rights are previous to the formation of the State.

fact. As long as a right has not been "guaranteed" by the legal order — to use Dernburg's phrase — it is not yet a legal right. It is made into a legal right first by the guarantee from the legal order. This means that law precedes, or is concomitant with, rights.

Though logically untenable, the theory of the priority of rights is of the utmost political significance. Its purpose is obviously to influence the formation of law, rather than to analyze the nature of positive law. If the legal order cannot create but merely guarantee rights, it cannot abolish existing rights either. It is then legally impossible to abolish the institution of private property, nay, legislation is then incapable of depriving any particular individual of any particular proprietary right of his. All these consequences of the doctrine of the priority of rights are in contradiction to legal reality. The doctrine of the priority of rights is not a scientific description of positive law but a political ideology. *I agree*

To define a legal right as an interest protected by law or a will recognized by law is likewise incorrect. Let us first critically analyze the interest theory in which the basic mistake common to both theories is perhaps most apparent. That somebody is interested in a certain course of behavior by somebody else means that he desires this behavior because he thinks it useful to himself. The word "interest" signifies a certain mental attitude. Now, it is obviously not true that one has a legal right to demand a certain course of behavior from somebody else only so long as one has an actual interest in this behavior. Even if it is indifferent to you whether your debtor pays back a loan to you or if, for some reason, you should wish him not to pay, you still have the legal right to get your money back. When the legislator obligates one individual to behave in a certain way towards another individual, so as to safeguard an interest of the latter, this interest finds its specific expression in the behavior by which the latter uses or exercises his right. *But one may at will use or not use one's own rights. One has a right even if one does not use it. It is even possible to have a legal right without knowing it. In such a case, there cannot exist any interest. On the other hand, one may be intensely interested in another individual's fulfilling his legal duty, without having a legal right (in the narrower, technical sense of the term) against the latter. Thus, one may have a right to a certain behavior on the part of another individual without being interested in this behavior, and one may also have the interest without having the right.*

Undoubtedly, the legislator gives the creditor a right to get back his money and the proprietor a right to dispose of his property, just because he assumes that a creditor, as a rule, is interested in getting back his money and that, as a rule, it is the interest of the proprietor that others

\*H. Kelsen, *General Theory of Law and State*

Cf. J. Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason (vol. 1)*, Book 1, Part 3, Chapter 2, Section 2 — 'Interests'  
<https://files.libcom.org/files/jean-paul-sartre-critique-of-dialectical-reason-volume-1.compressed.pdf>

See October 27, 2023 entry (*Where We Exist*) - "Where we exist is where we meet responsibility; who we are, 'how' we involve ourselves with such. Responsibility. It is invisible, can never be touched, though its existence is as definite as anything else. If you never meet it, you are as equally lost as it"

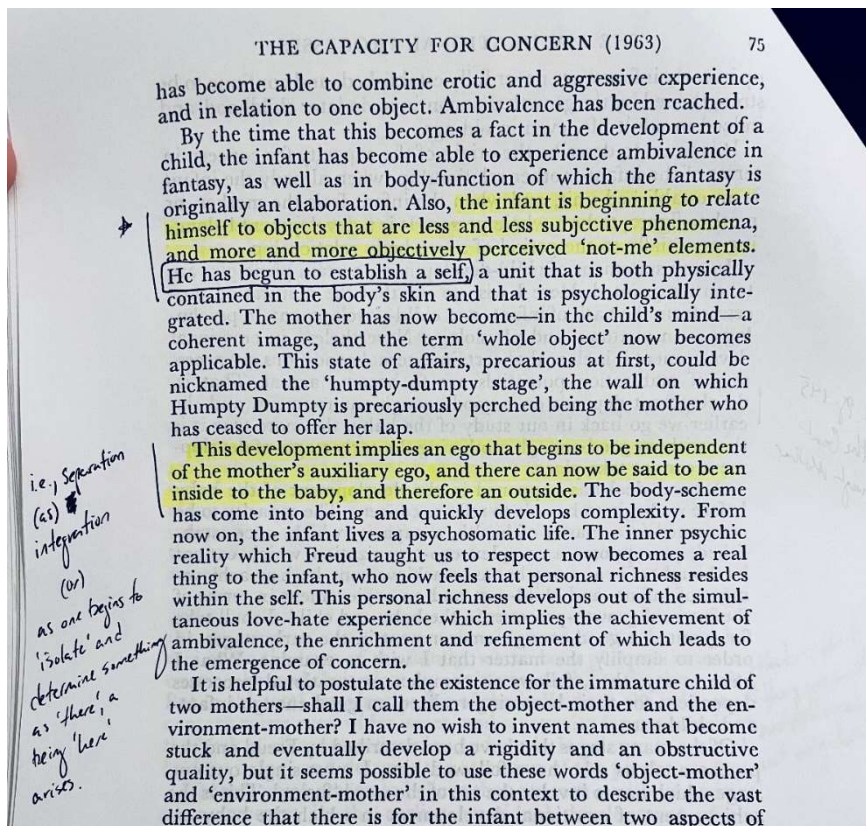
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The dialectic of life is just that there is more than one dimension (or, side or front) to living - that there exists a boundary *between* things where, as near as such may be, such is just as far apart.

See December 6, 2023 entry (*Email on Determinism*) - "it is not so much 'transposing' or 'transforming' the positive to-be a negative so much it is making the negative...to stand alongside the positive, reaching out to clasp that which is silent, surpassed, 'secondary' to draw forth to reside in the foreground and be on equal footing with its counterpart, so as to attain fuller understanding of man and his situation."

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An example of life's dialectic (notes in margin):



\*D. Winnicott, in *The Maturation Process and the Facilitating Environment*

See September 21, 2023 entry (*Here I Sit*) - "Here I sit, on this bench, gazing out upon the grass, bushes, trees and water. I hear birds and crickets chirping, squirrels scurrying up trees,



December 17, 2023

One may try as much they can to extinguish the talk of 'high-philosophy', aiming to reduce - that is, bring *down* to stand on a 'common' platform to be devoured by those of lesser appetite - such's inherent ambiguity and, granted, at times conceitedness; but, for as much effort as this might require, such *level of thought* (i.e., the abstract) will always be readily accessible as only three questions mark the distance between the *act* of the human (i.e., the concrete) and that which the layman desires to belittle: 1) why? - which, as the most fundamental and instigating of questions, itself stands in question, pointing toward, or, better yet, the bringing forward to stand in the foreground, an *open* (cf. Heidegger) and empty expanse, therein illuminating an unknowingness, whose affect is to move us toward asking further; 2) what does it mean? (cf. Sartre) - which is truly the first of the two which *can* be afforded an answer, whose object is to, as best it can, address the 'open emptiness' of the previous; and, finally, 3) what 'ought' be?

\**Aside*

F. Copleston, in *A History of Philosophy: Logical Positivism and Existentialism*, says "to say that man is a being in the world means, according to Heidegger's interpretation of his philosophy, that man is open to Being. And in later writings he has depicted man as the 'shepherd' or guardian of Being. It is man who can raise [through questioning] the problem of Being; and he can do so because he ex-sists or stands out from the background of Nature as **open to Being**...man, as man, is potentially open to the mystery of Being" (pg. 183). Copleston continues, remarking upon Sartre's ontology, "strip away all determinate characteristics and all those meanings which are due to human interpretation in function of human purposes, and you are left with being-in-itself, of which we can only say that it is" (pg. 186)

December 18, 2023

F. Copleston, in *A History of Philosophy: Logical Positivism and Existentialism*, says "if questions are asked, the purpose of asking them is presumably to obtain answers" (pg. 216)

\*I disagree. Sometimes raising a question to therefore know it is one which is 'unanswerable' gives us, granted indirectly, a separate answer - one which can, nonetheless, be useful as a derivative of the intended first. It is not really anyone's true and honest goal to 'prove' or 'disprove' the existence of God, as each alternative would be as equally devastating to humans as the other; rather, it is (in) the mere raising of the question of such's existence which informs us as to our own - i.e., why we feel God is a necessary, why it takes the form it does, what role such a value has in our daily living, etc. God, existent or otherwise, has already performed its service in that, even as merely a concept, it has pointed us and our thinking in the direction of 'rightful' living.

See December 17, 2023 entry (Talk of High-Philosophy)

December 19, 2023

It's simple, really. The Existential duty is to take neither side - neither good or bad; optimism or pessimism; right or wrong (cf. K. Reinhardt, in *The Existentialist Revolt*, pg. 3-4 regarding the "dialectical 'historic materialism'") - which is not to say that one should aim to be indifferent; quite the contrary, in fact. The Existentialist strives to give measure to each *through* each other. In this way, F. Copleston is correct in saying, "all that the philosopher can do, and, indeed, all that one man can do for another, is to illuminate the possibilities of action and the meaning of liberty, with a view of promoting authentic choice or self-commitment as contrasted with drifting into decisions under the influence of the pressure of social conformity" (*A History of Philosophy: Logical Positivism and Existentialism*, pg. 192). The philosopher - the Existentialist - cannot decide for any man; only man can think and act for-himself ([December 14, 2023](#) entry (Father Protect Me)). It is in this context that the subsidiary existential duty is realized - that is, the bringing forward, to *stand in the light*, that which most miss or mis-take in the course of their everydayness. Said differently, it is to place alongside, so to be in the same place *with* that which one observes, that which they, in the same instance, do not. Recently, I had a brief, all be it a bit disappointing, discussion with a friend on the concept of God. I illustrated the logic of the concept (See [December 17, 2023](#) entries), highlighting such's undertones and suppositions, concluding with my *disbelief in light* of the evidence of all that man has created for-himself. When I think God, I, too, think Holocaust; Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini, Putin, etc. I think Religious Wars; Racism; Barbarism and Colonialism; Rape and Murder; the greed and envy of Capitalism; Porn and the sickness of human intimacy. I reach out, with wide and calloused hands, grabbing on to all that forgotten - all that secluded, so conveniently hidden in narrows of the contours of thought - to raise and bring forward to stand-alongside. It can only be *through* this that any 'truth', either of the human or its concepts, can be (dis)covered - or, more appropriately, (un)covered (cf. M. Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth* & J. Sartre, *Truth and Existence* & K. Jaspers, *Philosophy of Existence* & G. Marcel, *The Philosophy of Existence* & E. Fromm, *On Being Human* & *The Art of Being* & *To Have or To Be?* & *The Heart of Man*). This is Existentialism; and, I should say, psychoanalysis is its right arm.

K. Reinhardt, in *The Existentialist Revolt*, remarks "No one, even if he should live in the most remote and least disturbed corner of the globe, can escape the disquieting effects of the revolutionary transformations which human civilization is now undergoing...In this "progressive" age it is both pitiful and tragic to see the ever increasing discrepancy between the plenitude of scientific knowledge and the helplessness with which governments, peoples, and individuals face the intellectual and moral problems of human life...Speculative thinkers of such widely differing philosophical and religious outlook as Jacques Maritain and F. S. C. Northrop share the conviction voiced by the man of action that the present age stands in need of a radical spiritual revolution and re-formation" (pg. 1). Reinhardt continues, "this precarious situation in which contemporary man and contemporary civilization in general, but the Western world in particular, find themselves, suggests that all the manifold social and political upheavals in every part of the globe are merely the external manifestations, the symptoms and outbursts of a creeping and prolonged spiritual and moral disease. Modern civilization, it seems, is gravely threatened because the perennial values of intellectual and moral verities have increasingly been divorced from the realities of matter and nature, so that

material reality, deprived of the guidance of right reason and a rationally enlightened will, is being handed over to the blind forces of chance and the biological urges [i.e., passions or emotions] of the will to power" (pg. 1-2). Reinhardt goes on saying, "their [the contemporary 'existentialist' thinkers] negations no less than their affirmations contain a stern summons to face anew the narrowness of a path marked by the dramatic possibilities of existence, by the unquestionable realities of 'choice', of good and evil, of sin, death, and judgement..." (pg. 9). Reinhardt concludes, "Emmanuel Mounier distinguishes between two types of nihilism, one of which is creative and 'preliminary', while the other is destructive and final. **Creative nihilism points to the dark abyss of nothingness in order to warn and to rescue; it calls 'nothingness' by name in order to reveal and save the splendor of 'being' which lies buried in its hidden depths. This is the nihilism of Nietzsche and of Heidegger**" (pg. 11)

<https://ia600301.us.archive.org/16/items/existentiale00684ombp/existentiale00684ombp.pdf>

To this, and specifically focusing on the emotive drive, my friend replied to me saying, "...You're right I don't agree with most of what you sent. I think philosophizing [of] the idea of God is cute and within anyone's right to do so but it ends there for me. I think believing that something higher exists, be it God or some higher energy, makes me stronger and gives me the desire to look for something outside the realm of what I see on a daily. Now, hey, I might just have the same peeking curiosity for more if I was an atheist but I will never know because that's not my now. Dennett does pose a valid point though - the idea lends itself as an excuse for people's inaction; but, then, everybody acts differently. I don't think the collective approaches the idea of God in that way. I certainly don't. But anyways thanks for sharing". In all honesty, I was outraged by her statement "philosophizing [of] the idea of God is cute" (See December 17, 2023 entry (Talk of High-Philosophy) - "One may try as much they can to extinguish the talk of 'high-philosophy', aiming to reduce - that is, bring down to stand on a 'common' platform to be devoured by those of lesser appetite - such's inherent ambiguity and, granted, at times conceitedness..."). It is for this that I will never discuss any philosophy with her again. I will let her be as she wishes to be, at least in this front; but, I don't see what else is left between us which will keep us suspended in each other's presence. Nonetheless, and for the record, I responded to her message with, "well, your feelings and 'cute'-ness aside (not like I approached you with reason and logical exposition, or anything 😊), if there is a god (or gods), I hope I never meet them because all I will do is beg and plead for the eradication of the human race. A wondrous and beautiful universe; but, a pathetic, meager, trouble-ridden species".

N. Berdyaev, in *The Fate of Man in the Modern World*, says "The economic and political situations of the world are terrible, even unbearable, but this is true above all of its spiritual situation. The very existence of spiritual life is in terrible danger, the very possibility of its existence is threatened. We live in an insane world. We have failed to perceive that man has become insane. Because of his thirst for life, his love of this world, man has lost his spiritual and mental balance" (pg. 126)

[https://ia601403.us.archive.org/8/items/in.ernet.dli.2015.61425/2015.61425.The-Fate-Of-Man-In-The-Modern-World\\_text.pdf](https://ia601403.us.archive.org/8/items/in.ernet.dli.2015.61425/2015.61425.The-Fate-Of-Man-In-The-Modern-World_text.pdf)



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E. Wiesel, in *All Rivers Run to the Sea*, says “With my father gone, I sank into a lethargy that lasted until liberation, on April 11, 1945. I had no desire to live. I didn't know what was going on in the camp or even in my barracks. I knew nothing anymore, didn't want to know. For all practical purposes, I had become one of the "Mussulmen" drifting beyond life, into death as into water, no longer hungry, thirsty, or sleepy, fearing neither death nor beatings. They were dead but didn't know it. These few weeks, devoid of sense and content, are treated in just a few pages in *Night*. I did not line up for bread and soup. I waited for nothing and no one. I drifted through time and sank into a dreamless sleep. When I woke up, I didn't know where I was. I no longer counted hours or days. They were all the same to me” (pg. 95).

**December 20, 2023**

All these entries are brush-strokes, aiming to paint a portrait. As such, it's not 'systematic' for a reason, as graphing lines and measuring gradient, calculating what's to be done with each and every spec of canvas, is no art, freeness in expression at all.

Maybe figuring whether the sun should be high in the sky, resting over the scenery below, like a warm and comforting arm around one's shoulder, or centered, peaking, bursting forth, over the horizon, like a friend's spirited approach to embrace us, is all well and good; but, anything beyond detracts from the very value of want, liveliness to create in the first instance.

Be watchful that you not wander from wonder.

**December 20, 2023**

A Follow-Up for December 19, 2023 entry (It's Simply Really):

My friend replied to this entry saying, “I have a genuine appreciation for this one. Quite frankly, it has me sitting here wondering why I gravitate so heavily upon my belief; but then why are we here man?...out of everything happening in the world, good and bad ... mostly bad...why do we keep waking up everyday?...why is our heart still beating? Is it rendered to a simple biological process until the cell dies out or is there something positive amongst the weeds? It's not a rhetorical question...I want to know what you think. Were we created for a purpose or are we just spontaneous outputs of energy? Is there a reason or are we just existing?”.

I replied:

“why”, as itself, is an unanswerable question - itself stands in question. Thus, too, the 'why' to our Being is as equally unknowable. It's for this unknowing-ness that the human has (or, assumes or takes-up or is “thrown” into) an inherent disposition toward themselves of anxiety (or, despair) - that they always stand in question to themselves - as they cannot wholly account for their own Being. This is the 'starting point' (cf. R. Cumming, *Starting Point*) - a

dialectical concern - for all existential philosophers - that is, how this fundamental question for which we cannot ever completely answer impels us to do what we do; to act as we act; “either” playing at Being “or” authentically (Be)ing (cf. S. Kierkegaard, *Either/or* & M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*). It is the existential condition, and what such means for the human, which existentialists aim to detail and illuminate - so, naturally, the issue of God figures into these thinker’s discussions, where psychoanalysis, over the last century (especially within the last few decades), has made great strides in elucidating the underlying ‘motive’ for the human’s ‘projection’, subsequent and immediate ‘reception of, and attachment to, their project’ (a dialectical process, which I intend to discuss in later research), and ‘emotive consequence’ of such (and, to be sure, I do not mean ‘logical consequence’ because, though it may be a product of ‘logic’, even probably more so of the artificial and constricted kind, the concept’s ‘ultimate purpose’, no matter hidden such ‘motive’ might be, is to feed the emotions, so as to moderate or temper the anxiety and despair felt by man in light of his existential condition).

*\*I shared with her December 17, 2023 entry (High-Talk of Philosophy) & December 19, 2023 entry (Cannot Wholly Account) & December 13, 2023 entry (Sartre on Mental Attitude)*

The paradox is this: the sooner one confronts and admits this, the sooner they can move forward to ‘heal’ themselves through truth of knowing; yet, this presumed knowing is preemptively construed by many to be so unbearable that they, in the first instance, before ever setting foot in such a direction which might reveal to them truth, flee and hide themselves from everything (which, through itself, is, in a way, ‘admittance’; that is, admitting to not confronting that which they know themselves to be in flight-from), where (or, really nowhere, as they choose not to be anywhere, fleeing everywhere) they will forever live a happily ignorant life, no matter how unauthentic such might be. This is the To-Be or Not-To-Be - this is the question. See April 10, 2023 entry (*Free From Everywhere*) - “It’s impossible to be else-where while some-where. What you must is be free from every-where, bound by any-where” - & July 17, 2023 entry (*Shadow a Shadow*).

### **December 22, 2023**

As light a feather is in descent, it’s descending.

Be as happy in life as you wish, but Humanity’s desire is decadence.

*\*Aside*

*To not Be-more is want-for-less.*

*Also notice that I am, here, taking out the suspended medium - the ‘between’ rising (i.e., “more”) and falling (i.e., “less”) such that it becomes, more or less, Kierkegaard’s *Either/or*, where, much in the same way as the ‘now’ is situated between past and future, itself is an ‘undefinable’ moment. Thus, it is lost (in) being between such that it cannot be brought forth to stand on common ground as that which (is) *Either/or*.*

See November 5, 2023 entry (Lost In Moments) - "Moments - the goal shouldn't be to keep, but become lost (in), never really knowing when such began" - & April 10, 2023 entry (Lost and Forgotten) - "The only way to discover that which is lost is to be forgotten and in that way be lost with-yourself. But, then, upon being forgotten, you are no more or less lost. There you are, between 'not yet' and 'have been'. It's only upon leaving that you are arriving (i.e., becoming)"

Copleston, in further remarking upon Sartre's ontology, says, "man's liberty is thus unrestricted. There is no given universally-obligatory moral law, according to which he ought to act. He is the source of his own moral law. There are no absolute values which it is his task to realize in the world in concrete acts. He is the source of the values which he recognizes" (pg. 189)

*\*the key words, here, is 'given'. And, it is true that morality is not something given in the same sense as man is given his existence. However, along with man's given existence - or, more properly said, 'afforded'; 'handed to him through another's' - there also is the givenness of existence - that is, to-exist. And, it is for this 'to-exist' that morality can be objectively grounded, as each who does exist shares, at base, the want-to-exist. Those who wish not-to-exist will not-exist, leaving behind all those who do possess such want - thus the stipulation 'each who does exist...! Morality strives at protecting and enabling those who desire to-exist'.*

Finally, Copleston concludes, "[Sartre] attempts to show that a tremendous responsibility rests upon a man's shoulders in the exercise of choice and values" (pg. 194)

*\*And, it is this responsibility which is common to all human beings, regarding 'how' to-exist.*

D. Winnicott, in *The Maturation Process and the Facilitating Environment*, remarks "Religion (or is it theology?) has stolen the good from the developing individual child, and has then set up an artificial scheme for injecting this that has been stolen back into the child, and has called it 'moral education'" (pg. 94)

<https://psptraining.com/wp-content/uploads/Winnicott-D.W.-1965.-The-maturational-processes-and-the-facilitating-environment.pdf>

See "On Morals" (Writings in the Beginning) - "Morals require action...[they] are, more accurately, an expression of one's self. And, an expression is, by its nature, an action." & March 3, 2023 entry (What is Responsibility?) - "We cannot obligate ourselves, some legalists say. What then does it mean to be responsible?" & December 17, 2023 entry (The World of Things) - "how I am with myself will influence how I am with all that else." & October 27, 2023 entry (Where We Exist) - "Where we exist is where we meet responsibility; who we are, how we involve ourselves with such". To this, Winnicott says further "concern implies...further growth, and relates in a positive way to the individual's sense of responsibility" (op. cit., pg. 73)

"How does such become political?", you might ask. **Wherever there is possibility, where possibility (is) potentiality, there is responsibility** (i.e., 'how' we respond to, which is surely to some degree dependent upon how we 'perceive' and in turn 'interpret', that which is possible (is) the art of (Be)ing) - and, responsibility need not wholly exclude heterogeneity (i.e., variety) to attain, having-in-itself, objectivity before ascending to be Morality (i.e., the category of rightful living - all those 'hows' which benefit (Be)ing and Being-with), being utilized for-man to save Humanity. See December 17, 2023 (Rights and Interests).

*\*December 17, 2023 entry (above)*

i. On Existence

“a reason or cause must be granted for its existence; if, on the contrary, it does not exist, a cause must also be granted, which prevents it from existing, or annuls its existence” – Benedict de Spinoza, *The Ethics*, “Proof of Proposition XI”

My Ego:

I believe this conjecture, more pointedly the requirement that any explanation is required, to be fundamentally absurd and misguided. To impose on a human, whose natural state and existence is limited as it relates to all objects and observations, such a grandiose task, one of explaining (or drawing causality) the occurrence and non-occurrence of all artifacts and their trajectories (behaviors) and composites (constructs) in all matters of space and time, is an impossible feat and, even more, unnecessary. Though possibly noble in its desire, assuming its agenda is for the purpose of providing context to other matters in one’s existence, it remains unwarranted. Summarily, it is impossible and quite preposterous to attempt to explain the non-occurrence (non-observation) of an artifact (material or non-material / ‘construct’ or ‘behavior’). Where does one begin to define the artifact of which one has never seen and, thus, cannot know? How is this a fair proposition, given human nature? Even if there were a means for ascribing meaning to those artifacts that do not exist, why should we?

Me:

Our existence is just that: to exist. There is no reason or need to explain why you exist. Why is a color a color? Is there a need to explain why red is red? No. It’s just red. Now, is there a purpose to color? Absolutely. Being that the color red exists, we are able to employ it in the course of our existence. Its individual meaning, however, only derives from the contexts in which we employ it; and, it is because of its employment that it has purpose. So, to circle back to human existence. There is no meaning for why you exist. However, in saying this, I do not deny that there is a purpose in existing which is readily reflected in how one chooses to live. Engrained in this reflection is the nature of time, where too often we perceive it as a possession rather than an opportunity. As a possession, it dwindles; as an opportunity, it awaits. The beauty of life is, in the space and time for which we exist, we have the opportunity

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to make something great out of it. The effect we have, on ourselves and others, depends, solely, on how we choose to leverage this opportunity. To draw from an earlier writing titled ‘I Stand Alone’, I remarked “human nature is the key to every choice”. It is key to the extent that it is centered on the balance of absolutes – each decision made is measured by the weight of all those possible decisions not made.

Who we touch.  
What we do.  
When we love.  
Where we go.  
How we grow.

Remember, there is no why.

From these, we can observe the beauty of life. Though, it should be remembered that existence is meant to come and go. Unlimited opportunity is no opportunity at all.

\*D. Binseel, *Writings in the Beginning*

*\*I referred her to the book *Inventing God: Psychology of Belief and the Rise of Secular Spirituality*, by J. Mills*

Now, my perspective is that of an existentialist, which means I have a particular paradigm which follows from being such and, too, my own bias. There are many other 'brands' of philosophy; however, I will say that I have read a few of the religious philosophers. And, the one trait they all seem to share is that their logic begins to fail upon the moment they turn toward God as a resolvment (or, remedy or restitution) for some outstanding issue within the course of their philosophic enquiry - 'outstanding' much in the same way existentialists label man's own existence. What this 'escape' toward God tells me is that, naturally, God is an illogical concept, which religious or spiritual advocates know - and, even more, they utilize this knowledge of the fact that God is an incomprehensible construct, mainly in the way that tell those to whom they profess such that they shouldn't proceed with further excavation of such as it is already construed (or, understood) as an impossibility (i.e., an unknowable, which, interestingly, is quite similar with what existentialists purport regarding man's own existence). So, as illogical, God must only, then, serve the emotions, as such cannot be received in a logical manner - more precisely, **logic needs not logic for-itself because logic is logic in-itself** (i.e., **logic needs not what's beside itself to-be itself because it already is itself**). This is the essential proof over the non-existence of God (e.g., it is proof in the positive sense rather than the negative, which is itself an impossibility as one cannot 'prove' - that is, reach out into nothingness to draw from such a non-existent to therefore have to stand in the light as a positive artifact - a negative.). Nonetheless, this is what all those who belief in God's existence expect and demand in order to be refuted - yet, and ironically, when this negative proof doesn't happen, because of the very fact that it cannot happen, they construe such 'lack-of-proof' as a "win", therein sinking, retrenching themselves even further into their own belief, despite the condition of unprovableness of a negative in the first instance.

Now, with that said, I do not at all deny that this isn't an intelligent universe - all the Beings which are, and Being generally, is evidence enough for me to say that no matter where we go we will always be wrapped up (in) and intimately involved *with* this intelligibility.

As to your particular instance of belief in god, there is a lot to be said in your more recent realization of 'your puzzlement over why you gravitate so intensely upon religion'. I think the very fact of your 'puzzling' orientation toward yourself (about) religion points more *deeply* to your own uncertainty over what all that entails - meaning, 'what does it mean for Shelby to take up such a belief'? What must Shelby make of herself given such's strictures? What would this new Shelby be like as compared to who Shelby now is? I think all of these questions raise, for you, too much ambiguity, in the first instance, to confidently determine yourself in such a way where you find resolve (in) these certain orientations. I think you prematurely believe yourself to be otherwise than what these questions point toward underneath the lens (or, spell) of religion. So, in short, you stand in question within your own questioning of 'what does religion truly mean to Shelby?'. Finding yourself in the very question you raise, you become the object of questioning. And, to this, you've displayed your own unease - that is, your dissatisfaction over standing in question to yourself; from this, you tend to flee, mostly toward conversation and other pleasures.

Now, what all this conveys, to me at least, is that it is not *for religion itself* which you have bound (or, committed) yourself to (or, is the 'true' *object* for which you have wrapped yourself around), as religion, to you, is what stands as *still in question*, alongside yourself. Rather, religion serves as merely a medium - a common-ness, if you will - where, as being a commonality *between*, such affords you an opportunity wherein you can *reach-out*, *extending* yourself to be *beyond* yourself, *placing* yourself on common ground with something (or, really, *someone*) else. You, growing up, know well how much your mother dedicated herself in her being to the institution; you know how it uplifted her (at least, apparently); and, you know all the 'good' of which she spoke (i.e., her own representation of what religion meant to her). Given her degree of intimacy with religion, and the gravity of your relationship with her, I would say that whatever image you propose to yourself (of) her, deeply engrained, tightly enmeshed, inextricably linked with her, residing (in) that very same moment and place, is religion, for which you know you can never *wholly* extinguish without consequence of doing damage to the image you hold of your mother (this is where your guilt predominately resides). You know, however consciously or otherwise, that if you were to *separate* - that is, place to be *at a distance* - religion from yourself that you would be, in the same movement, distancing yourself from your mother - where, as such, you would be taking-up a risk of 'destroying' the very image you 'hold' of your mother. Otherwise said, you know you cannot wholly rid yourself of religion and its *call* without also *emptying* yourself (at least, in part) of your mother, as they sit *together*. In light of all this, I think what you, in effect, have done is take-up for-yourself *the relation*, therein making yourself to stand on common ground as that which you know your mother to have stood in her facilitating her own relation with religion, acting as the new facilitator, where in the same moment you avoid 'the risk' of her possibly washing-away (i.e., of her becoming *lost* to you, where you prematurely believe that whatever might be lost can never again be found or recovered). In short, your belief in religion - for whatever religion really means - *is your way of keeping your mother* as she was (at least, as you saw her) near and dear to you. Religion is your *way* (i.e., your means as opposed to end) of *connecting* with her. It's much in the same way as how a partner takes up the interests (at least, in part) of their opposite.

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K. Reinhardt, in *The Existentialist Revolt*, remarks "it is against this Hegelian submersion of the individual in the universal and his consequent virtual annihilation that Kierkegaard protests. He refuses to let the individual self be reduced to 'a paragraph in a system'. Both 'the professor' who espouses such a system and the age which is willing to accept and acclaim it have forgotten what it means *to exist*. **The authentically existing individual will always be infinitely interested in himself** and in the realization of his destiny. That infinite interest Kierkegaard calls *the passion of human freedom*. This passion forces upon the individual a decisive *choice*, but a choice which always involves the incertitude of *risk*" (pg. 42)

*\*where, as a passion, such stands beyond - or, rather, outside and against - reason (i.e., logic). It's for this which makes the passions unintelligible, carrying in-itself, as the seed, if you will, such risk - nay, sickness - in choice. See December 19, 2023 entry (Emotions a Sickness).*

December 21, 2023

God to man is like the teddy-bear to child.

What I, and many intellectuals, have been doing over the more recent decades is the equivalent of ripping from the child's arms the toy with which they toy saying, "you need to grow up and learn to be *with* yourself". Sure, it's harsh and brutish; but it will do them better in the long run than if they were *left alone* to be with their childhood fixations, lost in fantasy while sucking the thumb of ignorance.

*\*Being-with-a-toy is Being-alone-to-yourself; that is, not-with-yourself, as the object which is beside yourself has decidedly, through yourself, subsumed the role which ought to have been served by yourself, therein keeping you from ever meeting yourself.*

See December 14, 2023 entry (*Father Protect Me*) & December 17, 2023 entry (*Good Without God*)

To this, Reinhardt, in *The Existentialist Revolt*, remarks:

- "Caruso distinguishes in every mental disturbance of this type a negative and a positive aspect: every neurosis is characterized by a negation of wholeness and by a corresponding overemphasis on partial truths an overemphasis which results in a distortion of the entire world view. Owing to his failure to see the whole, the neurotic person bases his judgments on his fragmentary or fractional view of reality. This distorted world view Caruso designates as an '**existential lie**'. But, in addition, there is in every neurosis a violent conflict between affirmation and negation, between 'good' and 'evil', between 'truth' and 'falsehood'" (pg. 256-257)
  - "**the problem of neurosis is thus essentially the problem of man's proper or improper relationship to the hierarchy of values.** While in its negative aspect neurosis is a metaphysical life-lie, in its positive aspect neurosis is characterized by the more or less conscious desire to restore the lost orientation in the objective world and its values" (pg. 257)
  - "Caruso states in effect that **a neurosis is always simultaneously a flight from the Absolute and a longing for the Absolute** and that the psychotherapist must take account of this twofold striving" (pg. 257)
    - *\*this would point to neurosis as being a dialectic in-itself*
  - "Caruso insists that every practical psychology - whether it be clinical psychology, psychotherapy, medical pedagogy, or psychological counseling - must have as its frame of reference a 'realistic' or 'objective' scale of values. When the person suffers shipwreck as a consequence of certain 'fixations' or false absolutizations (that is, in servitude to fictitious values), it becomes the task of the educator, the physician, the psychologist, the psychotherapist, **to liberate the individual from his fixations by leading him back to the 'real' world of objective values**" (pg. 258)
    - "Wilfried Daim points out that any absolute attachment to that which is by its nature relative implies the total surrender of the person to some object or subject which by their very nature are incapable of fulfilling the exorbitant demands and expectations imposed by such a 'fixation'. As a

result, the person for whom a relative good assumes the character of an Absolute, experiences extreme terror and **oppressive compulsion**" (pg. 258)

- "as long as the ethical concepts and categories of depth-psychology merely absolutize the partial truths established by scientific observation, they are insufficient to liberate the neurotic person from the tyranny of his idols and false absolutes" (pg. 258)
- "As Kierkegaard pointed out in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, every absolutization of relative values leads eventually to solipsistic solitude. **For Kierkegaard the symbols or 'archetypes' of such a solipsistic existence are the eternally restless *Ahasverus*, the endlessly searching and striving *Faust*, and the interminably emoting Don Juan - all of them divorced from the realm of objective truth and value and therefore forever in pursuit of some absolutized ego-centered fractional truth and never finding true self-fulfillment"** (pg. 259)
- "Caruso sees the principal error of Freudian psychoanalysis in its attempt to treat neurosis as a purely biological phenomenon" (pg. 258)
  - "**neurosis is, when seen in this new perspective, not only a disturbance of the equilibrium of the psyche: it is simultaneously a more or less concealed effort on the part of the neurotic person to restore the lost equilibrium**" (pg. 257)
- "Caruso also deplors that classical psychoanalysis is usually not cognizant of the fact that a neurotic conflict may be of great existential significance and that therefore a psychotherapy which merely resolves the conflict without projecting it to a higher plane of existential values, leads frequently to an impoverishment of the human person" (pg. 258-259)
- "In speaking of the neurotic *guilt complex*, Caruso observes that the disease of a guilty conscience is by no means confined to neurotics: **it is the most conspicuous and universal disease of modern civilization. The inflated ego, knowing of no law but its own, feels itself paradoxically drawn toward the philosophies of self-abasement and self-annihilation. The more inflated the ego, the more the guilty conscience asserts itself.** And the more self-sufficient or absolutely autonomous modern societies strive to be, the more absurd and desperate become their creeds" (pg. 259)
- "Caruso considers existentialism as the most important philosophic movement of the present age and existential psychotherapy as the most significant development in modern psychology and psychiatry" (pg. 261)
  - "In principle, **all existentialist psychotherapy aims at 'individuation'** in Jung's sense of the term: it endeavors to dissociate the concrete irreplaceable individual from the impersonal, undifferentiated, collective life patterns, to guide the individual to a point where he is ready to assume his full personal responsibility" (pg. 261)
    - "the purpose of 'integration' to lead the patient to a closed or fully 'harmonious' system or pattern of life" (pg. 262)
      - "The goal of integration is not the dubious harmony of uniformity but rather a heightened awareness and overtness



together with a retention and a strengthening of the person's creative potentialities" (pg. 262)

- "In the overtness gained by re-integration, the person recovers not only a realistic relationship to himself but also to the world and to reality as a whole" (pg. 262)
- **"The ultimate aim of the existential synthesis then is the relativization of those values which the neurotic fixation had previously absolutized or idolized"** (pg. 262)
- "An integrated psychotherapy in the sense proposed by the therapists of the "Vienna Circle" will thus lead the patient, first, to a recognition of an objective scale of values and then aid him in appropriating these values in a free and conscious choice" (pg. 262)
  - "the truth which is capable of liberating the neurotic from his pathological anxiety cannot be an abstract truth but must be a *lived*, experienced truth. To become effective in the patient, it must become *his* truth, that is, a truth which permeates his being and doing" (pg. 262)
    - *\*thus, it is personal truth (through) objective truth.*
  - "Jung insists that the pedagogical aim of psychotherapy cannot be realized without the aid of *ethical and religious* norms and values" (pg. 263)
  - "As long as the individual remains attuned to objective reality, he is usually willing and able to wrestle with the difficult task of bridging the gap between thinking and doing, theory and practice, ideal demands and freely creative realizations" (pg. 264)
- **"Neurosis develops when the individual loses his trust in objective norms and values and begins to live instead in a more or less unreal world of emotional fixations, a world of superstitions and idolatries"** (pg. 264)
  - "A person who finds himself in such a situation feels himself torn, as it were, by an ambivalent emotional experience: he feels oppressed and enslaved by his fixations, and he feels at the same time a strong desire for liberation, a desire which may reach such an intensity that the corresponding psychological mood can adequately be described as 'existential despair'. But this despair is again ambivalent: on one side stands the system of idolizations, the distorted system of values, while on the other side beckons the possibility of overtness and liberation. While the idolized false absolutes are consciously adhered to and loved, they are unconsciously dreaded" (pg. 264)
    - "the more strongly the neurotic person clings to his idol, the more intense becomes his hatred of God who, as Nietzsche phrased it, is then experienced as 'a thief behind the clouds', a jealous tyrant who is trying to steal one's dearest possessions, who demands detachment from what appears to be the very cornerstone of existence. It is this hatred that lies at the root of the neurotic's 'resistance' against the analytic treatment as well as against reality as such. Tortured by **this dialectic of love and hatred** (August Strindberg's "love-hatred"), the patient would rather retain his neurosis than allow the analysis to continue" (pg. 264)
  - "What asserts itself at this crucial stage of the analysis is, phenomenologically speaking, a *drive toward Nothingness*, that is, a tendency to negate and annihilate

reality as a whole. The neurotic person feels totally abandoned, exposed to all demons, completely disoriented. But once this *crisis* is overcome, the idol assumes a radically different character: its arrogated absolute power is unmasked, its purely destructive force stands revealed. **The perverted 'act of faith' is recognized as an illusion; the former attachment turns into revulsion, and the resistance against reality collapses.** This revolt against the idol is usually accompanied by a feeling of 'rebirth' or 'resurrection'. The patient finds himself in a new world the real world and a corresponding realistic adjustment has become possible" (pg. 264-265)

\*for 'servitude', refer to December 19, 2023 entry (*Shame of Existing*) (below)

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D. Winnicott, in the *Maturational Process and the Facilitating Environment*, says "man continues to create and re-create God as a place to put that which is good in himself, and which he might spoil if he kept it in himself along with all the hate and destructiveness which is also to be found there" (pg. 94).

Similarly, Feuerbach says, "the God of man is nothing other than the divinized essence of man" (R. Schacht, in *Alienation*, pg. 68). Schacht continues, "the situation may be summed up in Fichtean language: Man has 'posited an object' with his own essential qualities in opposition to himself, and in doing so has 'relinquished' what is essential to him" (ibid., pg. 68)

What this whole process amounts to is an *introspection* of a *projection*, wherein we hear (i.e., make ourselves stand 'here' to receive) our own echo (a projection for which we have denoted for ourselves as 'coming from over there', where, as 'there', such is construed as being beyond me), all the while forgetting (i.e., repressing) - or, more properly perhaps, never realizing - it was ourself who spoke in the first instance. Said otherwise, the process is what Winnicott, in discussing the growing complexity of inner psychic reality and the child's mental mechanisms for establishing and facilitating object-relations, calls "exports reimported" (ibid., pg. 99)

See October 9, 2023 entry (Ideals as Idols) - "W. Kaufmann, in his *Introductory Essay* to Schacht's book *Alienation*, remarks "Feuerbach had shown how man projects his best qualities into the deity until God becomes the image of perfection and man a hopelessly imperfect sinner. Man strips himself of all that is good and strong to clothe God in goodness and strength, and the greater he makes his God, the smaller he makes himself" (pg. 1) *\*Is not being small the best way to hide?* Here, 'God' as perfection (or, the Ideal we idolize), we know ourselves to be imperfect. Having an idol keeps our self hidden; it makes the attention be 'there' as opposed to 'here' [wherein, having made ourselves to be so small as compared to the grandeur of that which we idolize, 'here' really becomes 'not-really-any-where' (i.e., forgetting or repressing)]. [As such,] it's our echo which plays on us more than our voice itself"

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I sent the above to my friend.

She replied: "...Man has 'posited an object' with his own essential qualities in opposition to himself, and in doing so has 'relinquished' what is essential to him" (ibid., pg. 68). Ok so for this part I don't think anyone has really let go of the qualities essential to themselves. More so they realize that they don't yet possess them. Which then begs the question 'will they strive to reach such a strata within themselves that they believe only God can emulate?' That's an individual question. I think the response in behavior will be unique to each person in accordance to their own exceptions of character and self development. So yeah, I'm not sure if I interpreted that message correctly or not but that's what I think. I don't know...that quote just seems slightly presumptions to me".

I responded: "No, I don't think you interpreted it all the way in the manner it should have - but, that's understandable because you're missing the meaning of certain psychoanalytic concepts and language. So, hopefully this better illustrates what's being purported.

So, the first question to ask, based on your response, is: does Man believe himself to be fundamentally (or, "essentially") good or evil? The reason for asking this aims to reveal that which Man *keeps* versus that which, in the same movement of keeping, he 'dis-places' (or, expels or relinquishes or hides or suppresses or ignores or lets-go-of) to be outside, *beyond* himself. I would say, and you yourself have even admitted to this, that, for the most part and in the aggregate, Man knows himself to *not-be* inherently and genuinely 'good', which is not to detract wholly from the fact that he is capable of such performance - rather, that such does not predominantly figure into his everyday engagement with life and that else equally involved in such. He knows to have killed; he knows he to be angry and selfish (which, as said earlier, derives from his shame of being unable to *wholly* account for his existence - that is, 'why' he exists in the first instance); he knows to distrust those who stand beside him (i.e., if not everyone, then most every-one), etc. So, with that, I think it's safe to conclude that what man has *kept for himself*, in light of his appearance before himself (i.e., what he sees of himself), is not the 'good' - this, he has thrown (i.e., projected) to be elsewhere (where, *as being else-where* - meaning, that 'good' does not stand 'here' wrapped-up and (in)terior to man himself, but is, rather, 'there' as something *beyond himself*, at a distance to himself, to be had as an object for-himself - it, in the same moment, stands *as an object* (i.e., the objectivity of good), *dis-placed*, to-be-had. Such is evidenced by the fact that he has retained the notion that, though he is not innately so, 'good' nevertheless exists some-place in the world of things and, for that, can be discovered (or, un-covered) to be had as an object *for-himself* (i.e., this is illustrative of man's striving for happiness; his seeking or desire to *un-cover* that which will make him happy).

Now, this addresses your remark in the positive sense, where what else could be asked (pointing more toward the negative side of what's the same idea) is: in light of god's "place" in the universe with respect to man (and the concomitant relation for which man establishes for-himself and subsequently takes-up), why does not man, in the first instance, *wholly commit* himself to seek the good - *all* the good; *every* good - he supposedly so believes already exists (i.e., is *a priori* or innate) and is inherent (i.e., universal) to the structure of everything (i.e., incarnate)? It should be noted, too, that it is for such notions of 'innateness' and

'universality' that 'divinity' stands as the pinnacle mark (or, identity) of *the object that is 'god'*, which has been made by man to *represent* the good which he idolizes and desires, precisely because he knows such is *not*-himself.

Furthermore, and to approach what was offered previously in a separate manner, why is god construed as only being 'good' (or, all-powerful or all-knowing, etc.)? Why is 'evil' the adjunct of another character/entity? Why is god not also evil? If you can acknowledge this pivotal dichotomy of roles, and their correlating 'values', then the question fundamental becomes one of: why has such separation / demarcation been identified (i.e., projected) in the first instance? Why has the human taken attributes of one 'character' and set it apart from, not only nothing but, an entirely other 'character', because surely one cannot exist absent the other - good has no meaning without its opposite to afford it its own significance (i.e., it's "through" the opposite that the primary is wholly defined).

**December 22, 2023**

Believe me, I get it - my writing is simultaneously *sharp* and *blunt*.

But, it's meant to *drive* home a point.

And, unfortunately, the *deeper* the slumber I catch you, the *heavier* and *fuller* the blow will be.

See D. Binseel, *Writings in the Beginning, On The Intent of My Writing* - "My writing is simply meant to challenge. It is not meant to attack. Its purpose is to dissect arguments and conjectures of a wide variety and propose alternative conceptions. Thus, I would invite the reader to view my words and contemplate my ideas in the simplest of ways - to take what you'd like and leave the rest. It is the variety, like a symphony, possessing a diversity in structure and tone, which facilitates the formulation of a larger and more powerful product"

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K. Reinhardt, in *The Existentialist Revolt*, remarks "there is no doubt that the motivating force in all of Nietzsche's negations was his passionate will for affirmation. It was burning desire to remake human existence in its entirety that urged him on to tear down the actual structure of human society in order to build a better one on a truer foundation" (pg. 59). Reinhardt continues, "Observing realistically that most human beings never become actually what they are potentially, Nietzsche propounds a dynamic ethics of self-realization. Man, if he wants to escape mass-stupor and become a personal self, must follow the call of his conscience which constantly exhorts him, **'Be yourself! You are not actually all that which you do, think, and desire'**...Most men, Nietzsche avers, are loath to heed this call of conscience, either because they are afraid of being themselves or because they are too lazy to rouse themselves from their comfortable everyday routines" (pg. 81). Reinhardt concludes, "in some of the concluding chapters of Part Two Zarathustra takes issue with the founders and servants of religion and with the dispensers of knowledge and science - prisoners all, tied down by false values" (pg. 99)

See October 2, 2023 entry (I See Dead People) - "I see dead people - individuals, unable to escape, a slave to their beliefs. Their chains their comfort - a masochistic belonging" - & December 19, 2023 entry (Shame of Existing) - " I think the very fact that we cannot wholly account for our own existence - that is, that our being as such continually stands in question - is precisely what moves us to feel shame (i.e., shameful (of) existing, all the while knowing that we aim 'to-exist'), where shame inevitably leads us in to our own servitude and submission (i.e., submission (to) our own existing, serving ourself) in our attempt to either suppress or overpower our feeling such a way"

Reinhardt, in discussing Heidegger's conception of the authenticity of Dasein, continues saying, "guilt points to an intrinsic and original deficiency or privation of Dasein. Only by entering into the prospect of guilt can man open himself to his authentic potentiality of existence...he projects himself into this potentiality by his 'resolve', thus imparting to his *Dasein* an authentic lucidity. **'Resolve' makes possible genuine 'choice'**; it begets action in concrete situations and the strength to master them." (pg. 138)