Ponies And Their Eternal Fascism: A Draft

Malachi Wonder

Follow this and additional works at: https://cedar.wwu.edu/wwu_honors

Part of the Christianity Commons, and the Philosophy Commons

Recommended Citation
Wonder, Malachi, "Ponies And Their Eternal Fascism: A Draft" (2023). WWU Honors College Senior Projects. 643.
https://cedar.wwu.edu/wwu_honors/643
Preface
A normal outlook on life includes trying to gain knowledge and understanding of the world by observing things (i.e. paying attention), and drawing inferences from what we observe. This is sometimes a conscious process, and sometimes a semi-conscious or unconscious one. We successfully apply this to gain descriptive knowledge of the world all the time. But being decent people, we also want prescriptive knowledge; we want to know what is good. And so it is reasonable that for some of us the natural inclination is to apply to this question the method we generally apply when seeking knowledge.

Unfortunately, rational debate about morality which arrives at stable knowledge is plainly and simply impossible. Or rather, it is impossible unless you already start out knowing what is good. Why is this? Because of the Is-Ought barrier. There is no law of logical deduction that can properly take you from only a set of premises that each say something “is” a certain way, to a conclusion which includes a statement that something “ought” to be a certain way. Deductive logic relates arrangements of truth statements to other arrangements of truth statements. You can sometimes break truth statements into constituent parts, but the parts are statements themselves, and the deductive logic dealing with relationships between basic statements does not in fact involve any sort of messing around with the content of those basic statements. If everything is done properly, the conclusion side will be built from the same building block statements that you started with, so if none of them made prescriptive “ought” claims to begin with, you won’t get any such claims in the end. As a side note, one Alisdair MacIntyre showed a supposed way past this by using the deductive logic of categories rather than the deductive logic of statements. He proffered the idea that we can deduce that a watch keeps good time simply from the premise that it is a good watch. This is nice and aesthetic, but its use of the category of items “good watches” is simply hiding a whole host of premises about what a good watch is, which would have to be made explicit to put this in statement logic. To get back to the main point though, it is reasonable to then ask why it is we cannot start with ought premises. Well, statements about what ought to be are what we were looking for in the first place, so including this in our deduction would imply that we discovered some other way of finding them. When using deduction to find descriptive truth, one generally accepted way of picking premises/axioms to use is through empirical observation. You use your own eyes, or measurement equipment, (or the testimony of others who did so) to find some facts about the world, then deduction can take the statements which you have found to be true, and generate new statements which are also true. Ought statements, though, cannot be discovered or verified empirically. It is a nice sounding idea to base our ethics on what we’ve seen of the world, but in a strict sense, this is an entirely futile pursuit. If we observe the world, we learn how the world is, but that isn’t what we are looking for, we are looking for how the world ought to be. If I were to empirically examine the world as it currently exists, I would find that loads of people are raping and murdering each other. It is quite simply a different statement to say that loads of people “are” raping and murdering each other, than to say that loads of people “ought to be” raping and murdering each other. The only way I can treat them as equivalent is if I accept on blind faith that the world as it currently is is exactly how it ought to be.

And surely blind faith is not the path to knowledge.

II The Pyrrhonist Descent to the Nihilist Pit.
Human reasoning is graded on the quality of “reasonableness.” There is a very specific subset of human reasoning known as deductive reasoning, which is the application of mathematical law. I assure you that
this is not particularly what “reasonable” means 95% of the time in normal usage. This is not because “people are not reasonable.” If you hear a conversation about political policy, or the quality of a movie, or what two parents should do with their kids over Christmas vacation, and this conversation strikes you as a “reasonable” one, or if one participant in it strikes you as “reasonable”, this rarely means that it is primarily a discussion concerned with or explicitly engaged in deductive reasoning. Rather, it operates on “common sense”, a set of rules so large, amorphous, and unclear, that describing it would probably be more a work of anthropology than anything else. One of its main principles, though, is one of “fairness”, taken out of the moral sphere and applied to arguments rather than people [C, CII]. Essentially, if [x] applies to (a), and (a) and (b) are similar or (as far as is contextually relevant) the same, then it’s only fair for [x] to apply to (b). Of course the question is inevitably to what extent and in what specific regards (a) and (b) must be similar in order for this idea of “fairness” to kick in. The quintessential human argument is a comparison or analogy [CXXXI], and the quintessential human counter-argument is “oh come now, those aren’t the same at all”. The intuitive recognition of truth we are supposed to have when faced with (b)’s which are purported to be similar or different to (a)’s in ways which are purported to be relevant to [x]’s, is called “common sense”. It is essentially ineffable. Yes, someone could draw up a list of general rules of thumb that they claim have served them well, but the fact is, the normal reasoning of everyday life, and even of some aspects of academia when not concerned with the precise and mathematical, is a reasoning which is not mathematical and thus not demonstrably true in the sense which deduction is, and, far more importantly and fatally, is not only not “mathematically demonstrable”, but is in fact plainly and simply not universalisable. Deduction deals in placeholders and variables, but how could one make a theory which deals specifically and individually with every possible way that two things could be different or similar? [XLIII]. To then imagine that we can create a clear (albeit infinite) list of all the things which must be done or believed as a result of every difference and similarity, is absurd. Even if you bring me such a list, it is not demonstrable. A great many discussions are still had which cannot be ended by a rigorous mathematical proof [CI]. Even if one can ask certain questions and receive mostly general agreement (at least within some specific culture), which is surely what ‘common sense’ is, I’m reasonably confident in saying that we must concede that there is some subjectivity in the concept, at least for certain values of “subjective”. We can disagree on things, but outside of contexts with more specific rules than the general rules of discussion (which is to say, mathematical deduction, mostly, but I’m hedging my bets) we cannot disprove each other.

Concerning induction, we can first deal with the so-called inductive fallacies, which attempt to explain how to induce properly by telling you what not to do. I will say only that while they are things which are generally useful to be reminded of (not useful for a naturally rational thinker like myself of course, but for hypothetical stupid plebeians, theoretically), a number of them have fuzzy edges requiring an appeal to that mystical intuition of common sense. Who is a reasonable vs. unreasonable authority to appeal to? You can perhaps usually tell who isn’t one, but authorities disagree all the time. How small of a sample makes a hasty generalisation for whatever purpose? What is a so-called “slippery slope fallacy”, and what is a legitimate concern about subtle and compounding effects? But that is not the most essential point. The essential point is the fundamental nature of induction. You observe reality, create generalisations, and use this to be prepared for how reality will behave in the future. Off of this, we build the scientific method (which I don’t feel compelled to explain in detail). How do we know that induction works? Clearly not mathematically, the way we can know deduction works.

> We know induction works because we see it work.
But how do we know it will keep working?

Well that’s a silly question, it’s always worked before why would it stop now

And there, my friend, you have the problem of induction. Induction is circular. You can argue empirical induction is legitimate by pointing to its success in the past, but this makes use of the assumption that the future resembles the past, and that assumption is the fundamental core assumption of empirical induction, so all you’ve done is beg the question. The assertion that the future resembles the past cannot be examined empirically unless one can examine the future, which one cannot in fact do. [XX, CXLVII].

For that matter, if you cannot show that it will keep working in the future, then you cannot really claim that it worked in the past, except in the same sense that if I rolled a die a bunch of times, and made a list of the results, I could then say “it would’ve worked for people in the past to guess [insert list of die results]”. Induction relies on blind faith (or perhaps I should say “common sense”).

We must rely then on pure deduction. [but then can we though???? C-CII]

In its basic forms [for something relevant to less basic for see XLIII], deduction involves the arrangements of premises which result in logically undeniable conclusions. Deductive relationships can be demonstrated with formal proofs, and can even be shown to function properly by rote, through the use of truth tables.

> This is at last a firm foundation for knowledge!

Sadly (for you, for me it’s a drug), deductive logic’s usefulness for actually gaining knowledge about things has this funny little piece called “premises”. You have to start with basic assumptions before you can reason from them. Of course, you can then look at those assumptions and try to derive them from even more basic ones, but it’s obvious you are stuck with having to chase things further and further back until you ultimately must arrive at either assumptions taken on blind faith, or nothing at all. And if we seek a firm foundation for our knowledge, assumptions taken on blind faith are essentially nothing at all. [XXV]

>i am a logical positivist and I shall ground my axioms in empirical evidence i am very superior

But people see the world in many different ways!

>this is why we have measuring devices you wordcel dipshit

True. However they require being observed by human eyes (and occasionally ears) in order to deliver information to the human brain.

>yeah well i have eyes

Good, me too. I see things with them. However, what I see is an image. That is definitionally all one can ever see. My belief that the image corresponds to the true nature of something real is once again based on nothing but a convenient assumption. Sure, we can try to prop up our faith by touching, hearing, tasting, and smelling it, to confirm that it feels like it is the same size it looks like, and makes the sounds we would expect it to make based on what it looks like (etc.), but the same logic applies to the other senses as well, so that doesn’t do anything other than make you feel better. “What I see is an image” is not perhaps the best way of describing the problem. The actually best way was discovered in the Axial Age in China, when Zhuang Zi asked us to question whether we are a butterfly dreaming of being a man. The problem with this is that people will hear that version and inevitably interject that their experience while dreaming is actually subjectively quite different from their experience while awake. I realise of course that this is
true, but it is clearly a quibbling distraction from the astounding truth Zhuang Zi was expressing, the truth that the whole time humanity was proclaiming “I’ll believe it if I see it”, all of us were all along accepting the testimony of the senses on hope and blind faith, and nothing more. We in fact do not know anything. [CI]

**III Divine Command**
Some Christians don’t seem to appreciate this, but merely having a supreme deity does not remove the is-ought barrier. A pure Divine Command Ethics still takes as its assumption that you “should” do what God tells you.

**IV Aesthetics**
To approach from one direction: within the “Aristotelian” trio of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, the consideration of Truth is epistemology, the consideration of Good is ethics, and the consideration of Beauty is aesthetics. To approach from the other: aesthetics is the consideration of human subjective experience, or more precisely, the consideration of the feelings humans receive when encountering stimuli (as usually understood, mostly the positive feelings and the absence thereof, mostly as regards sight and hearing). There is an established tripartite division of these feelings within aesthetic thinking: the beautiful, the picturesque, and the sublime. This goes back to the 1700’s, out of Burke and William Gilpin. [XVII, XVIII]. I’m sure these are smart people, and I do think the tripartite is a good one. However, I doubt that there are only three (or two, if picturesque is just the synthesis of the beautiful and the sublime, as it is supposed to be) positive feelings people can receive through contact with outside stimuli. I especially doubt that there is only one. In my experience, the beauty of a sunset, a Franz Marc painting, and an iguana, are subjectively quite different things. If there was simply “beauty”, then the difference between them could only be the quantity of beauty they have for me, and this does not align with human experience [XII]. There are unrankable differences of kind within the aesthetic, not only differences of amount. In fact, I believe that (even if the binary or tripartite categorisation is valid as well [XV, XVI, CXLVI, XLII]), the true number of typologically different aesthetic feelings is most likely not one, nor three, but in fact (approximately) infinity. Human life is a series of enormously varied beauties, each impossible to describe. But even if that is not quite so, and there are truly only varied quantities of three to seven unique aesthetic experiences, it is still very nearly so. Why do I say this? Because there are only five sorts of taste buds. There are only five sorts of taste buds, and yet hardly anybody who has eaten (by modern standards) even a fairly moderate number of different foods, would ever suggest that their subjective experience has been that it all tastes like there are just five flavours in varied amounts. The delights of the eye should be no different. Aesthetics is concerned, then, with a vast array of experiences. But there is a reason I started by saying “to approach from one direction”, then “to approach from the other”. For there is indeed a very strong tradition of thinking of aesthetics as the study of beauty [XLIV]. Within the Aristotelian tripartite division, that is precisely what aesthetics is. The history of aesthetics has been one of starting with “beauty”, then occasionally carving off pieces of it which seem unique, to give new labels to. [CXXXIV]. We start with a map, then draw shapes on it, but if you start with a map that says “beauty”, then carve out a principality known as sublimity, the rest of the map is still labelled beauty. You can then of course carve up the map so much so that area still labelled “beauty” now appears to be one piece among many, but if you want to figure out what the categorical title is for all of these “aesthetic experiences”, considered together, there is I think something valuable in simply undrawing boundaries in the order the boundaries occurred to you, and ending up back at the basic well-
spring concept. All of which to say, I think it is both true that there is wild qualitative variety within aesthetic experience, but that it is also still meaningful, useful, and reasonable to label the whole thing “beauty” (understanding of course that this is not the most specific idea of beauty one could possibly be using), and loosely equate the beautiful and the aesthetic.

V Beautiful Ideas
Ideas may be aesthetic in the same way that physical objects may be. Well, not “the same way”, perhaps, but nonetheless. There are ideas and concepts with beauty. I know I am not the only person for whom this is the case. Mathematicians have long seen unimaginable heart-breaking beauty in their abstract concepts and cold iron truths: To quote Paul Erdos “Why are numbers beautiful? It’s like asking why is Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony beautiful. If you don’t see why, someone can’t tell you. I know numbers are beautiful. If they aren’t beautiful, nothing is”. I do not believe that numerical ideas are the only ideas to which beauty is applicable. There are others.

VI Honesty
The mantra of the nihilist who has descended part or all of the way into the pit is, “at least I’m honest about it”, or “at least I’m not living in delusion”. Of course, one could well question how being honest is relevant if there’s no moral law. But what I see as interesting here is that it seems to suggest that the human love of honesty, which is to say, of Truth [LII], is incredibly deep, so deep that even those who profess to have no principle take it as their principle.

VII The Grand Central Scandal
The last (number) of sections were an (important) tangent. Back to where we left off.

Yay, I destroyed epistemology. [XVI] We now know neither what is nor what ought to be.

Most people who might read this are probably fairly content with a sort of philosophy of pragmatism.
Now I would point out this

But putting that aside, I have to agree that while it is interesting to show that we know nothing, it is only interesting up to a point. However, I did not get to this point so that you can move on and simply happily re-assert your arrogant confidence in a world which you do not feel the need to define too precisely. Rather, I want to tear down so that I can put specific things under consideration as I rebuild.

A normal and sensible place to start is with Descartes’s cogito ergo sum. I think therefore I am. When we say “think”, we do not mean “because I have powers of deduction, I exist”. I shouldn’t have to say that, just like I shouldn’t have to bring up brains-in-jars in order to appreciate Zhuang Zi’s butterfly. Approximately we can say “if we experience, then something experiences”, but I think Descartes did just fine in his expression of this cosmic truth. Although…. perhaps we could also say “I feel therefore I am”. Once we have walked down the Pyrrhonist road, and arrived at epistemic nihilism, [well most of the way, CV, CI], we are stripped bare of all our possessions other than conscious experience. We are left with feelings. That is what conscious experience is; or rather, a conscious experience is a reasonable definition for what a feeling is. Note that we stripped away “certain knowledge based on sensory experience”, but we haven’t stripped away sensory experience. This does not contradict the fact that we have stripped away all things other than feelings. Sensory experiences, considered once we have laid bare our higher pretensions, are feelings. This is truly fortunate, because the basic meaning of “feeling” refers to physical touch. We recognise at the very baseline linguistic level that in some way sensory information is equivalent to the things which we more commonly call our “feelings”. I think most will agree with me that there needn’t be any radical difference between how we treat each of the physical senses at the most
fundamental epistemological level, so what is true of touch is true of the other senses as well. [CCXVII]

Let me say once more:
There are only feelings.

The normal way to (usually implicitly, because most people don’t think of it in these terms) build back up from the nihilistic realisation, is to say “I will (based on Common Sense™) once again put faith in my physical senses”. However, as we allow Common Sense™ back into our considerations, we should do so with care (i.e. we should not act like “philosophical pragmatists”). After all, if we work from the bottom, we are not merely using Common Sense™, but also (implicitly) building what Common Sense™ is at the same time we are using it.

When we considered common sense before, we were mostly referring to the function of treating things similarly or differently based on the similarities or differences we posit them to have. Suppose we start from the Cartesian state we have reduced ourselves to: what do we have? Feelings. Various feelings, including both the things which we usually refer to as feelings (such as sadness or happiness about some event, or the thoughts “I like lizards” and “my neighbor is disgusting”), and also the conscious experiences of the senses. What are the differences between these things? Well given that I just described them in two parts, we would naturally think that between those two parts is the natural place to look for some distinction to work from. Before descending the nihilist pit, we would have a readily available answer to this: the thoughts that pass through my mind do not correspond to something in the world around me, but the conscious experiences associated with sensory perception do in fact correspond to something in the world around me. But if we are at the bottom of the nihilist pit and trying to decide what to build back up, we have already thrown out any idea of an outside world, so that distinction is not available to us. That was our big one. Our very-clearly-important-and-worth-noticing distinction. [The distinction on which the modern society has been built XXXIV]. When all you have are feelings, there’s nothing external to judge between them. It seems natural to me, then, to look in the other direction. Declare things relevantly similar, rather than relevantly different. And “when (a) and (b) are identical as far as is contextually relevant, we treat them the same”. When we are at the bottom of the nihilist pit, the only interesting or noteworthy non-nihilistic thing you can initially say is “I have feelings”, and so the fact that they are conscious experiences is the most important quality of experiences. This would be an odd assertion, except that the false claim to be something more than “just feelings” was always the go-to argument made by the modes of epistemology which our Pyrronist rant destroyed above. When the Bourbon kings asserted that the essential difference between themselves and others was that they were kings, the Jacobin, in defiance, asserted that, on the contrary, the essential similarity between them was that, in the state of nature, they were both men.

So let me make my grand central controversial assertion: ALL FEELINGS ARE CREATED EQUAL.

There is, in fact, some shared base level of dignity between all experiences of the consciousness, because they can truly all be placed in one large category. As we build out of the nihilist pit, no category of feeling shall be looked past or declared unimportant. Like Jefferson before me, I have seen past superficial differences. If theoretical reduction to the state of nature is what it took to remind us that there is some basic dignity defined by shared humanity, then very well, I have done the same, for the nihilist pit.
is the state of nature for the mind. In the world, men are placed into hierarchies, men degrade themselves through crime and degeneracy, but the blood of the Guillotine flowed to dare us to ever again claim that that is the end of the story. If the revolutionaries of ages past have through equality destroyed the order of the world, then I shall now destroy the order of the very soul of man!

VIII Outside World
We take the normal step of “placing faith in our senses”. Consider what that consists of from where we have placed ourselves. It consists of making the leap from “some of the feelings I have are what I would call images, sounds, etc”, to “there is a physical world outside of me, and these ‘images’ and ‘sounds’ are in some sense truthful representations of that world”. We do this because these feelings (the sensory ones) inspire a feeling which says they reflect reality. But we have a responsibility to uphold. Nothing has happened between the pit and our new “faith” which in any way frees us from the equality of conscious experiences. So if this subset of our feelings is accepted as reflecting an external reality, we must be open to other subsets of our feelings (specifically any others which inspire the feeling that they represent the world) also being windows on reality. And we certainly have such feelings. For instance, I have the feeling that I shouldn’t kill my mother. That feeling inspires the feeling that it reflects reality, so I take it seriously. If I had the conscious experience of having the intrusive thought “my room is made of cheese”, this would not inspire such a strong feeling of reality reflection. And so I accept that, in short, my room is not made of cheese, and, in long, if there is any truth in the statement that my room is made of cheese, it is either generic, absurdist, or esoteric. But I do accept that “I should not kill my mother” is a real statement about the world. This is a piece of information has been gained through the sixth(ish) human sense. [CVII]

IX So why did you bring up that aesthetic stuff earlier
[IV]
Aesthetics is concerned with subjective conscious experiences humans have. It’s about the feelings things give us. Well turns out there are only feelings. Huh. Kinda seems like everything is aesthetics. The jump seems intuitive (ha he said the thing) to me, but to elaborate a little:

The stimuli which evoke aesthetic responses need not be material [V]. Aesthetics is concerned with “beauty”, but as previously stated the aesthetic experiences we crave are enormously varied, and thus we could carve “beauty” up into an infinite (or at least >2) number of specific feelings. When we are in our hypothetical state of mental nature, the nihilist pit, what do we do? We encounter an idea, and say “here is the idea that the five senses are real. This seems reasonable/convincing”. We probably next encounter the idea that causes us to say “here is the idea that the hypothesis of induction is true. This seems reasonable/convincing”. At some point we encounter some variety of more specific ideas which could serve as the basis for using deduction to arrive at more specifics in our worldview. We examine them, and for a few of them we say “this seems reasonable/convincing. I shall accept this as a building block from which to further deduce my worldview”. What has occurred here is that we have taken in a stimulus (in this case a non-physical one, an idea), and it has elicited a response from us. A conscious experience. A feeling, because everything is feelings. To be “convinced” is an emotion. We observe a stimulus, and
we detect a quality named “reasonableness” or “convincingness” in it, and it elicits an emotional response which is in some regard positive. This is just aesthetics. If we were to be less specific, we would simply say that we believe in the hypothesis of induction because it is a beautiful idea. We believe in the reality of the physical world because there is an aesthetic pleasure in the idea that the world which seems real is in fact real. The idea is beautiful. I think it’s interesting to note that anyone who spends time around humanism will probably recognise that just as some particular type of aesthetic response can usually be split up into qualitatively different subtypes, there are in fact many flavours of “convincingness”, each of which provides different sensations when savoured. The general descriptor covers many highly specific ways a human can feel affected by an idea or image but which all share a family resemblance. [XXIV-XXV]. Just to be completely clear, this is what “common sense” is. It is another name for one of the aesthetic responses we have to a particular (-ish) aesthetic quality, specifically the one which most of us find to be present when we contemplate the induction principle, or when we contemplate certain judgement calls.

X Ethics is aesthetics
What we call ethics is a form of aesthetics (because everything is aesthetics). It involves simply noting that some behaviour strikes us as aesthetically beautiful in certain ways. We feel good hearing about someone risking their life to rescue someone else, and we feel bad when we hear about someone murdering their family for insurance money. The first is beautiful, the second is ugly.

“If you crush a cockroach, you're a hero. If you crush a beautiful butterfly, you're a villain. Morals have aesthetic criteria”
-(supposedly) Friedrich Nietzsche

XI Loyalty
Loyalty is the arch-virtue. All else is predicated on it. If you’re not loyal to something or another, no principle or virtue you have will mean much when things get tough.

Worry about your own fortunes, gentlemen. The deepest circle of hell is reserved for betrayers and mutineers.
-Captain Jack Sparrow

XII The personal-ness of philosophy
Since there’s only feelings, I can only tell you feelings. If you can’t feel/see the things I describe, I can take me with you, but I can’t really take me with you.

XIII Transcendent objects
The objects which are the stimuli which create the feelings which are the five senses are physical objects. If the other sense is caused, as I claim, by real stimuli, then these are not physical stimuli [“usually”, see CXXV LIV, but also L], for the sensation which it gives us is not the sensation “I am looking at an object which is physically in front of me”. Thus they must be immaterial stimuli. Transcendent objects. They exist in the transcendent world [XXXIX].
XIV Beauty
Beauty is objective. It exists in reality. If I have a sense which looks at objects and tells me what they look like, and I accept this testimony as true, what reason do we have for treating the aesthetic sense differently [VII]? I look at the Parthenon, and my aesthetic sense says “there is beauty here”. I thus accept that the Parthenon is both objectively real rather than illusory, and objectively beautiful rather than ugly. I hear King’s College Choir singing Allegri, and from inside my mind what I hear is “a beautiful sound”. I accept that the sound waves are real, and that the music is beautiful.

To the extent that we can say that the music is only beautiful “to me”, we can just as well say that the atoms making up the sound waves are only real “to me”. They both rely on my faith in my own feelings, because hearing is a feeling just as much as my aesthetic response to beauty is. There are some objects in the world of flesh which have a corresponding light in the world of the spirit [XXXIX].

XV Frameworks
One needs a framework. A way of looking at things. A set of assumptions. A set of categories. A set of value judgements. A “worldview”. You cannot not have one. You are a being that takes in stimuli, which is essentially to say, information, and reacts to it. That is what you do. A framework is what tells you what to do with the information you take in. Whether to take actions based on it. Whether to have feelings about it, positive or negative. Whether to consider the information “useful”, and thus remember it. And whether to consider it true.

The working google-doc title of this is “version 5ish of the first college paper lol”. This meant to imply that since my very first English 101 class at WCC at age 15, I have been constantly (and uselessly) preoccupied with dealing with both the grandeur and the terror of a single idea: framework is prior to information. I’ve always known different people had different worldviews, sure, but they were at the very least potentially something to argue about. Based on information. But information can only be taken in and accepted through frameworks.

Nihilism gains both its appeal and its ugliness from its pretension to being the unframework, but it is not the unframework. Assumptions about what is not are just as real as assumptions about what is. No, there is a state which is much closer to being the unframework, and I have sometimes approached closer to that state than any Nihilist ever has. Jreg, (who I was not aware of at age 15 but whose language I am essentially speaking in this section and the two following) calls this state “noise”. In the state of noise, all stimuli simply wash over you. Because you are unsure of what you believe, and have no identity, you take in information but don’t know what to feel about it, and are thus numb. None of it is important to you, but you can’t even take a solid stand to say it is unimportant. Do not live in noise. Do not fall into noise at all, because you can never be the same.

I have stood too close to the radio.

But have you ever seen a man dissolve? I wouldn’t recommend it.

-Jreg

XVI Easier to tear to down
It is easier to tear down than build back up. This statement is quite intuitive, and true of many spheres [CCXVI]. It is very much true of theories or analyses. Using a framework is work, or at least can be. A framework may be huge, and have the power to prompt you to say many things, but still these are only a fraction of what could be said. If you want to critique something, you can always just address things that the original framework cannot address, and because a specific framework is only an infinitesimal part of the array of possible frameworks, you as the critic will always find something to work with. If there is a system of categories, you can bring in a framework which has different categories. This works because you need the categories to take in the information at all, so it’s not as though the one critiqued can refute the critic’s categories with information.

XVII Hard to say anything
Suppose you want to be an open-minded individual, and not be too bound by any one way of thinking. If you are true to this path (most who claim to be aren’t, but let’s suppose you are), here is what happens. Every thought you have is immediately questioned in your mind, and found wanting, because it is easier to tear down, and because you are open-minded enough that you have numerous sub-frameworks at your disposal. It becomes hard to say anything. And if speaking truth is so important as it seems, and is so basic a desire as it seems [VI, LII], this is a great tragedy.

XVIII Extremes
The opposite of a great truth is another great truth.

Suppose you have two ends of a spectrum for describing something. Absolute freewill vs. absolute determinism, perhaps. Human goodness vs. human depravity. Or “reality is chaotic” vs. “reality is ordered”. Or “saving faith is from within” vs. “even faith is a gift”. Unless one is just true and the other is just false, I contend that the truth lies at the two extremes, and not in the middle. Each is essentially a framework, and perhaps a profound framework [XIX, XXXII]. If you look at things through one of these strong frameworks, you will gain worthwhile insights on various things, perhaps even those which that framework doesn’t naturally lend itself to. You can then consider everything from the opposite framework. You will end up with a series of paradoxes, sure, but maybe reality is complex enough that’s the best way to describe it.

If, on the other hand, you start with a framework but start compromising it with its opposite, they start dissolving into each other and becoming very mushy. As you force each framework to give things up, it becomes weaker and weaker, and less able to tell you anything at all [XVII]. Each original framework had a truth, but your eventual “it’s a little of this and a little of that but kind of the this other thing” position is not necessarily enlightened, so much as just lacking in clarity.

XIX Philosophy
I believe most of philosophy is good. Someone could reasonably ask “well whatever you believe, by nature only a small portion of philosophy can agree with you, so what’s good about the rest of it?” But reality is extraordinarily complex. The human mind and its experiences of reality are (or can be) extraordinarily complex. There’s no reason to think one framework would be able to say all of the things worth saying. Perhaps in some cases they simply describe causes at different levels [XX]. Each
framework is obviously true within their own framework, so the question, as Bloom pointed out, becomes whether they are profound [XXXII].

**XX Layers of Causality**

It is perhaps obvious to say that things can have multiple causes. But the obvious way is to simply have a collection of causes and say “well this one was necessary, these two together were sufficient, that one would’ve been sufficient on its own…..” etc., or something like that. But I mean something different. There are usually multiple causes for events which are simultaneously true but on different levels [LV]. Did my neighbor’s shed catch on fire because of energy released from destroyed chemical bonds? Yes. Was it destroyed because it was made of wood and was exposed to flame? Yes. Was it burned because I was angry? Was it burned because particular neurons were firing in my brain? Yes. Yes. Was it burned because of a long standing feud between our families? Yes. Was it burned because nobody ever ended said feud? Yes.

First of all the example is completely made up. Second of all, “angry” vs. “specific neurons firing” is especially important, because it is the closest to being not chronologically ordered, but rather simply two descriptions on different levels of the same thing. That there might be fully non-chronological versions seems quite possible to me.

**XXI Archetypes**

There is a sort of transcendent object (or perhaps this is in some regard applicable to all transcendent objects) which we can call an archetype. It is a beautiful image, with a beauty unique to itself. There are many things in the real world which approximate archetypes, and there is tremendous beauty in fitting yourself to an archetype. The archetype is your identity, and what are you without that? The archetype is your truth, and you cannot live in noise [XV].

To begin from a different place: objects or structures exist in the world [well maybe, see XLIII], and representations of those objects or structures exist in my mind. For instance, I see in the world The Soviet Union, and my inner sight sees an idea of The Communist State. Why separate these, one might ask? Suppose that, as it declined into perestroika, the Soviet Union started allowing Pespsi-Cola to be sold in its stores to its citizens, and I were alive to see that come to pass. Soviet reality has changed. But I assure you with great confidence that no matter what depths we fall to here below, The Communist State which exists in the world of spirit will never allow Pepsi-Cola to be sold within its borders. [XXXIII, L]

**XXII Aestheticising Politics**

Political systems may be reduced to archetypes, which are transcendent objects, and a transcendent object is within human consciousness essentially an aesthetic. We gain some particular aesthetic response by contemplating it [V]. Now this is not by any means simply to say that the propaganda artwork of the Soviet state was breathtakingly beautiful in a very particular way, or that the architecture produced by National Socialism had a particular deep unspoken dignity which other architectures have only dipped their toes in. That would hardly be political at all, for the obvious response would be “just build/paint similar things while condemning the ideology”. No, I recognise that the aesthetic response obtained by viewing the art with the outer eye is inextricably linked with that which is gained by contemplating the
idea itself with the inner eye. Each affects the other, emulates the other, reinforces the other. Indeed to take up the physical style while carefully and actively objecting to the truth it represents would be dishonest, preaching one truth with your mouth and another with your hands, and indeed an abomination, for you would force something to be what it is not, and not only that, but do so by ripping out its very soul.

Somebody once asked me what had attracted me to National Socialism. I replied without a shadow of hesitation: ‘Its beauty.’

-Savitri Devi

**XXIII Dangerous Thought**

Dealing with something which makes sense, something which has some spark of recognition, and depth, is preferable to dealing with something which does not. It is more conducive to human well-being than dealing with something incongruous, alien, meaningless or shallow. This is the archetypal vs. the non-archetypal. A monarchy is archetypal government. In the king on his throne, there is depth. That is part of what attracted me to the language of archetypes in the beginning.

But then I realised that it does not take quite 10,000 years to give something a meaning of its own, and that, maybe just a little bit, if it was entirely true to itself, there was something meaningful which registered in my mind if I contemplated the idea of “The Senate”. And that there was some spark of recognition in the hammer and sickle. The king on his throne is still the most meaningful, and clearly has the strongest archetype, but if Perestroika was a tragedy, there must have been an archetype there for Perestroika to be breaking, and how could there be no tragedy in Perestroika?

This was a dangerous thought.

**XXIV Musicsuasion**

There is (or at least was) a general belief among certain people of a vaguely intellectual bent that if we all just sat down, spoke calmly, thought clearly, and were reasonable, we would arrive at the truth about what is good. This is not in fact the case. It would only be the case if there were automatic agreement about axioms, which is to say, if we already essentially agreed on what is good. [not that we construct like that in practice anyway XXXV, LXVIII] Deduction will not get us to morality without axioms, and induction cannot give us the axioms because of the is-ought barrier. The selection of moral axioms is an emotional function. Thus, to lead people to The Good, or rather, to convince people that your conception of the good is the correct one, the only course of action is to touch their emotions [XXV]. Beauty does this. Specifically and especially, this is done by music [CXXXVI].

**XXV Feelings-equality vis a vis convincingness**

It is quite clear that there is not only one narrow aesthetic which can inspire feelings of conviction. Furthermore, if feelings are just feelings, there is no compelling reason to declare that only those feelings of conviction caused by one narrow aesthetic may be acted on or “believed” [CVI]. It’s all just ideas being beautiful in different ways. Really, if we are categorising subjective responses to ideas,
“convincing” on its own would seem to be as significant a shared trait as any other for categorisation purposes, making the attempts to categorise away some of our feelings of conviction futile.

Rest assured though, those attempts have been occurring, and are very strong [XXXIV].

“Oh dear, it’s very difficult being Catholic.” “Does it make much difference to you?” “Of course. All the time.” “Well, I can’t say I’ve noticed it. Are you struggling against temptation? You don’t seem much more virtuous than me.” “I’m very, very much wickeder,” said Sebastian indignantly. “Well then?” “Who was it used to pray, ‘O God, make me good, but not yet?’” “I don’t know. You, I should think.” “Why, yes, I do, every day. But it isn’t that.” He turned back to the pages of the News of the World and said, “Another naughty scout-master.” “I suppose they try and make you believe an awful lot of nonsense?” “Is it nonsense? I wish it were. It sometimes sounds terribly sensible to me.” “But my dear Sebastian, you can’t seriously believe it all.” “Can’t I?” “I mean about Christmas and the star and the three kings and the ox and the ass.” “Oh yes, I believe that. It’s a lovely idea.” “But you can’t believe things because they’re a lovely idea.” “But I do. That’s how I believe.”

- Evelyn Waugh, Brideshead Revisited

XXVI Transcendence 1
The physical exists.
I accept this because I can see it.

People have a feeling called sight, which tells of something physical beyond us, and thus people assume there are physical things beyond us to “see”. Most people [XXX], including myself, have other feelings which tell of something non-physical beyond us. They’re both just feelings, so if we accept physical sight’s testimony, it is only fair to accept the inner sight’s testimony as well. The transcendent exists.

XXVII Metafeelings
I have said that within this very basic human framework, all feelings are equal. However, there remains the fact that very often in the real world people believe some of their feelings and not others. For instance, they label some of the visual imagery they receive as “dreams”, and then label these “dreams” as “unreal” and “irrelevant”, as opposed to the various “real” and “important” things which they see (which are also simply visual imagery, which is a type of feeling/conscious experience). But if they only have feelings, and there is no quality outside of feelings with which to judge between the feelings, then what is going on here? As another example, someone calling themselves a “moral nihilist” might explicitly decide to trust the testimony of their eyes, then find the induction principle to be aesthetically convincing, and decide to accept its testimony, but then go on to reject the reality of morals despite admitting to having instincts about the aesthetic qualities of certain behaviours which might be called a moral sense. Again, what is going on here? Are these people simply delusional? Oftentimes, yes, [XXXIV], but not
necessarily. We especially understand this to be the case because feelings often contradict [XXXV]. For instance, perhaps there is a muffin which I am planning on giving to one of my friends, and I have one feeling urging me to give it to Muffy, and another urging me to give it to Mlle. Hooves. There’s only one muffin to give, so I can only trust one of my feelings. If (hypothetically) no feeling is telling me “you should just keep the muffin”, then I must choose between two feelings (and thus seemingly must join the ranks of the deluded who do not recognise the basic shared dignity which all feelings share). However, there is a way around this: Metafeelings. Metafeelings judge between two or more (sets of) other feelings. I thus will have a feeling telling me that my feeling that I should give Mlle. Hooves a muffin is the correct feeling, and I will give her the muffin. Likewise, the moral nihilist has a metafeeling telling them that the feelings which they label the sense of sight have more validity than the feelings which they label as moral instincts, and most people have a metafeeling telling them to trust waking experiences of conscious imagery more than sleeping experiences thereof. All attempts to build perspectives on the world for people with a crowded and full experience of consciousness involve judging between feelings with other feelings. The key point here, though, is that a meta feeling is still a feeling. Ultimately, just a feeling. There’s no ontological difference of kind going on here, just a specific way of talking about certain feelings’ functionality within the consciousness. It occurs to me that if normal feelings may contradict, then metafeelings might very well contradict as well, necessitating metametafeelings, and leading in theory to an unending tower of feelings. And even at the bottom of the tower, surely the original feeling is a metafeeling, claiming by its very existence to have some sort of precedence? That last bit suggests that, in fact, the whole idea of a metafeeling is something of an abstraction, because we could also simply say that my feeling that I should give Mlle. Hooves the muffin is a “stronger” feeling than my feeling that I should give it to Muffy. This perhaps more closely matches real human experience in a case like this. However, it’s clear that in that case we would be forced to admit that detecting (relative) “strength” as a quality of feelings is itself a feeling, and we could thus label this sense of some feelings being stronger than others the “metafeeling”, placing us right back into the thick of things. There is no clean or systematic way of unravelling this, except to say that somehow or another judgements between feelings are made. And are made only by feelings, because there are only feelings. I think that perhaps the reason for this indecipherability is that, on some level, it is most correct to say that for each individual there is precisely one thing, one feeling: the feeling which is our consciousness. It is unquestionably an extraordinarily complex feeling, and thus the inclination to split it into pieces is natural and normal, but at the same time any attempt to do so must come with some certain degree of arbitrariness [XV, XLII, XLIII, CXLVI].

XXVIII The First Great Circularity
All feelings are just feelings. But we must judge between these feelings with metafeelings. But metafeelings are just feelings. And we must judge between feelings. Even the very beginnings of thought are impossible.

This is a great vanity which I have seen under the sun.

XXIX Tu Quoque
Perhaps at some particular point in the above rant (or elsewhere in this document), where I “reasoned” in some way about “feelings”, it occurred to you to say
But that’s just feelings too! If what you say is true, then you were just using your feelings!

Yes. You would be right to say this. This is true. At any point in this document (some at more layers of abstraction than others) the point being made could be correctly critiqued as only being feelings. Even this part. For that matter, any argument ever made by any human could correctly be critiqued as only being feelings [XVI]. That’s the terrain one finds oneself on when everything is feelings.

Yeah, well, you know, that’s just, like, uh, your opinion, man.
- The Dude

XXX Other People
One way of helping to judge between feelings is asking other people if they have the same ones. The obvious problem here is that you have to trust that they exist, and that they are actually saying the things you hear them say, but maybe you’ve gotten past that at some point (and really, even if in some logical chronological sense other people’s belief in reality’s existence shouldn’t influence yours, they still could). Anyway, in day-to-day life (well, day-to-day if you have a lot of hallucinations) when we are trying to judge whether we are seeing something real or something illusory, we tend to ask the people around us whether they see it too. There is a fairly universal human feeling that confirmation is valuable. This implies a basic acceptance of general human trustworthiness, which has a corollary: even if you haven’t seen it, it probably exists if a vast number of people have seen it. I believe in the Grand Canyon purely on testimony.

XXXI Naked Emperors
However, if you accept this too readily, there are serious issues. Specifically, issues involving being the protagonist in dystopian fiction. If you trust the crowd a priori, you will end up saying 2+2=5 if you ever live in Air Strip One. More archetypically, seeing only what others see results in permanently naked emperors.

We thus have a curious situation. Humans need confirmation, so we must accept testimony. But if only quantity counts, then our own testimony is meaningless, and that results in slavish devotion to falsehoods. If we want to be fair [CII, CXXII-CXXIII, XCII, CCXLVI], then we can describe our own testimony as “testimony of quantity one”, and if testimony of quantity one is acceptable, then our default assumption becomes that everything ever seen was real. This can’t be entirely true, (and so maybe a little particularism is necessary here), but I do think that is the right direction to tend towards. If I see things others can’t, then maybe not everyone in the asylums who sees things I can’t is truly a lunatic.

XXXII Profundity
[XIX] For what it’s worth, profundity is an aesthetic quality.

XXXIII Become what you are
One thing which is aesthetic is when things are what they are. “To your own self be true”, “become who you are”, the thought has been had many times. One reason is that it is honest: to do the opposite would imply that you have “to your own self been untrue”, and we wish to avoid untruth [VI]. Another reason is that there are many goods [LVII], and if one is essentially specific to you (with “you” likely being a
nation, an ideology, or something bigger than a man, in this case), the only way that that good can survive in the world is if you practice it. Another reason things should become what they are is because without being what we are, we collapse into noise [XV]. Furthermore, we should be what we are, because it is natural.

What this essentially tells us, is to live up to our own archetype/form/word. It is clearly essential to do so, because it is the word which gives the object existence [XLIV] [XLIII]. Thus for an object to spurn its word is for it to render itself hardly existent. This is perhaps nothing more than the generalization of the principle that questioning a framework results in falling into noise.

**XXXIV Modern bias**

There is a certain arrogance which comes from making part of the Pyrrhonist Descent but not finishing it. When you have only made part of it, you cling to confidence in some things, while scorning others. In our current society, empiricism, deduction, a certain amount of induction, and a slight amount of theorizing are accepted. Those in charge are occasionally allowed to declare some other aesthetic judgements as “common sense”. Generally, though, people who have used their mental powers to intuit such things as ‘God exists’, ‘skyscrapers are ugly’, ‘adultery is bad’, and ‘saving the turtles is good’, are seen as basing these on “mere faith”, which renders them not useful contributions to the public discourse, unlike those things which are based on Facts and Logic™. This is because we as a society do not understand that Facts and Logic™ are just a different set of feelings and blind-faith assumptions, and far more blind because we don’t recognise them as such.

Now, if this was a true and general elimination of all which is prescriptive or value-laden, that would at least be a worthwhile and substantive epistemological frame of reference to look through for a while. The natural sciences, for instance, are meant to take on an entirely descriptive perspective, and it is entirely right and proper for them to do so [XXXIII]. However, it’s not that there’s simply a little part of society carved out for science to pursue its entirely descriptive knowledge in. That would be entirely reasonable. No, science has conquered society. “Unscientific” and “bad” are essentially synonymous.

Ferdinand Tönnies separated the human consciousness into a Natural Will and a Rational Will. The Natural Will is concerned with ends, and the Rational Will with means. Our current society has glorified the Rational Will above all else.

Now, science requires an end. When science is true to itself, and becomes what it is, the end is knowledge. But we can see within the debate on education, for instance, that even that end has been radically devalued. The two big camps are those who want tech-school or internships, for economic reasons, and those who want STEM education, for economic reasons. Among the small number of people who still preach the value of humanities degrees, the public-facing argument is that people who have “learned how to think” are useful and versatile in a volatile marketplace.

Rational Will is entirely impotent on its own. It requires ends to work towards. With that in mind, it is blatantly obvious that our society is not really based on pure descriptive fact, because such a society is inherently impossible. Our ends are, first of all, a few sort of left-over Natural Will sentiments that we are supposed to never point out the arbitrariness of. If you try to posit one of these Natural Will
sentiments too explicitly as something unscientific, or point out the incompleteness and inconsistency of them, or bring to light one which is not among them, society will be sure to point out that you are being arbitrary, and are an ideological or religious loon, and yet if you try to point out the arbitrariness of the left-over sentiments, you will be condemned as a barbarian. We have deluded ourselves that our ends are scientific, when in fact ends are logically prior to science. Second, though, if you attempt to remove all sense of an end, but keep running Rational Will on overdrive, it will have a tendency to default to our most basic end, which is to say, our base animal desires, our greed and self-interest. “Secularity” and capitalism go together inherently, and are the enemies of Good, Truth, and Beauty.

This is the modern bias, and it comes from drawing an arbitrary line [VII] [XLIII] between some feelings and others. When we examine our feelings, and ask “is this one ‘common sense’?” or “does this one represent an external reality?”, we must remember that feelings can be manipulated (and since feelings are all we have, that is terrifying thought). Our feelings have been manipulated, and are being manipulated, by the modern bias, which tells us that a few very normal feelings are somehow “not just feelings”, and that numerous perfectly good feelings are “shameful” because they are “unscientific”.

**XXXV Logicians hate him!**

Even among arrogant modernists, there are many who (claim to) understand the principle that logical deduction requires starting with assumed axioms and reasoning from there. Thus, they would conceive of building their worldview as trying to start with obvious assumptions which are general, universal, abstract, basic, and as limited in number as possible, then extrapolating all their opinions on concrete things from that limited set of obvious truths. If the axioms are of a limited enough number and an abstract enough nature, this will result (hypothetically, if they were to try to lay out their worldview on paper) in massively long chains of deductive arguments, for there has to be an enormous amount of work in the middle if one is travelling deductively from general things like “The Scientific Method works” to specific things like having an opinion on whether or not, say, theatre is beneficial, let alone whether a specific production of a specific play is beneficial.

This is conceived of as the logical way of working out one’s perspective. Of course, this isn’t what normal humans do in practice, but many of the people who understand this “logical way” also understand perfectly well that most humans don’t use it, and interpret this as a reason to look down on most humans.

I, however, would like to point out a truth which seems to be almost taboo: nobody is forcing you to make long deductive chains. Deduction doesn’t care what your axioms are, and you are just as free to take specific, particularistic, concrete, multifaceted axioms. If you do so, you will not lead long chains of deductive argument. “Theatre is good, therefore theatre is good” is a completely valid deductive statement, it just has taken as its axiom something (somewhat) concrete. And that is a very normal and human thing to do [LX, LXVIII]. Even if you want to connect your somewhat concrete thing with abstract things, you can simply pick the abstract things which have a logical connection with your chosen concrete things. Deduction works if you look at it “backwards”, just so long as you don’t technically do it backwards (and even then induction is also an option if you have several concrete truths and want an abstraction)
However, there must be some appeal to the so-called logical approach, if people are so interested in using it. Mostly it is the modern bias, but I concede that there is a certain appeal. A certain aesthetic appeal. There is a particular aesthetic, a particular subcategory of beauty, which many appreciate, which is associated with limited abstract assumptions and long chains of deduction to arrive at opinions. However, this aesthetic is somewhat more general than that: we feel it to be associated with the aesthetic appeal of the induction principle, and of certain (undefinable as a group) distinction-arguments. We refer to it, sometimes, as Reason. It is associated with light, and clarity. Daisy-chains of deduction pour down onto the mortal realm just like sunlight. This is the Apollonian Aesthetic. Nietzsche was not talking in these terms when he first pointed to the Apollonian, but a particular aesthetic is not necessarily a single-faceted thing, and the aesthetic appeal of rejecting numerous and particularistic assumptions is very clearly closely related to the aesthetic appeal of rejecting Dinoysian debauchery. In the east, of course, the same dichotomy of light and darkness is Yin and Yang, with this “Apollonianism” very obviously aligning with the Yang [CXLVI].

It is a good aesthetic. But do not forget that it is only an aesthetic.

XXXVI Two function of mind
On the crude computational level, human minds are largely for taking two things hitherto considered same-ish, and separating them, or else two things hitherto considered unrelated, and showing how they’re the same. (one of these is the schizophrenic function, the other the autistic function). We have prostrated ourselves before the altar of reason for five centuries, and I think in that period we have spent plenty of time dwelling on how special and different “reason” is when compared with other thought processes (and what might possibly qualify as “reason” has shrunken gradually over time). We have long been obsessed with how some thought processes are different, and we are going to be due for a pendulum swing. It is time to remember how things are the same.

(connect to the Seeger and Rand argument)

XXXVII But the Apollonian is loved though
I have to admit that certain of the small-numbered universalistic assumptions beloved of this aesthetic are in fact quite beautiful and difficult to pry oneself away from. It seems normal to have a fairly strong attachment to non-contradiction, and if there is at least one other very general truth one is attached to, then this severely limits one’s freedom to freely take concrete things as axioms.

XXXVIII Light
In attempts to display magic within visual representations of fantasy, or describe it within literary fantasy, light is the common motif. Of course, if magic is no physical thing, then perhaps one would think that we could not see it at all, but such logic is opposed to magic’s nature. Magic must be magical. Why light, though? All reasonable people have recognised light to be magic, because it weighs the least (it is the lightest); pure disembodied light is the closest thing out of all the visible things to being nothing. It is thus obvious that this thing which seems to us barely physical should have a close affinity with magic, for magic is that which is beyond the merely physical. [XXXIX]

XXXIX The world of the spirit
There is a world, in which live the transcendent objects. People trying to explain other realms in this day, in fiction, for instance, often use the language of a “dimension”, but dimensions are in physical space, and that language renders something which is interesting only because it is mystical as something which is mechanistic, and theoretically explainable by mathematics. There is a transcendent realm, but it is not a dimension.

Imagine that there is a vast expanse of blackness, stretching out in all directions. At various points in this blackness, there are splashes of colour. These splashes of colour are not galaxies as would be the case in our world, but simply light. Blazing light, shining eternally as a testament to something. Except that they in fact are the things which they blaze in testament to. That they truly are what they represent is difficult for us as humans to understand, for we are not used to the idea that an abstract object should have a physical form, but that is why they are light [XXXVIII]. Not photons, either, not electromagnetic radiation, just light.

XL Audience
Audience is core to the idea of theatre. There is definitely some value added to what you are doing, inherently, by the audience. However, if beauty is objective [XIV], and beauty is good [X, LII], and good things are shining lights in the transcendent realm [XXXIX], it stands to reason that every beautiful thing, whether in nature or made by man, objectively matters. The world is made better by their existence regardless of whether anyone sees them, because their beauty is Real. Having audiences is still good though.

XLI Scale
Any attempt to gain an “understanding” of anything requires the drawing of lines between things, both in conceptual and in physical space. It also requires conceiving of maps of conceptual space to draw lines in. However, there is an inescapable “Common Sense” aspect to this. It’s the same old question of whether things are contextually similar enough in the right ways to be treated similarly (or visa-versa). This means, fundamentally, that in a materialistic worldview it is dependent on what humans find important. “Objectivity”, without appeal to the mystical, is simply “human universalisability”.
As Zhuang Zi points us toward, this means it is entirely dependent on human scale. What’s big, old, fast, hard, or hot, is dependent on our size, lifespan, speed, squishiness, and temperature, and we cannot assume based only on science that the science we would’ve developed if we were differently scaled would be the same as ours simply scaled up or down. Materialistically speaking, we are bound to the perspective which it is evolutionarily advantageous for an ape to have, and are as far from really knowing anything true as one would therefore expect.

In the dark sea of the north there is a fish; it is named the Kun. The Kun is so huge no one knows how many thousand li he measures. Changing, it becomes a bird; it is named the Peng, so huge no one knows how many thousand li he measures. Aroused, it soars aloft, its wings like clouds hung from the sky. As the sea shifts, it turns to set its course toward the dark sea of the south, the Pool of Heaven.
-Zhuang Zi
XLII Lao Tzu
We see in Lao Tzu a recognition that qualities are given their forms through their opposites, and through their absence. What is “big” with no concept of “small”? On the one hand, division into two is the most basic intellectual action [CXLVI]. On the other hand, it is very human [XLI], and something of a game. ‘Big’ is dependent on ‘small’, but they’re dependent on their names [XLV]. By Lao Tzu’s logic, though, the named must therefore also be dependent on namelessness. And so to go behind and beyond even those two, there must be something mystical. The Tao [CXXXIX].

I try to use words. I put words even on an absurd pedestal [XLIV]. But sometimes I am tired [CCLXXI]

XLIII Objects
Materialists often think of themselves as people who believe that God does not exist, but things like cats and lamps and nebulae do, in fact, exist. This is delusional.

I knew someone once, who said that vegetables do not exist. “Vegetable” is basically a catch-all term for edible parts of plants which are not fruit, and thus has no botanical logic to it. That person was (sort of) approaching real truth within a materialist epistemology. But they fell short, and by washing away only one delusion, they perhaps made themselves more confident that the next layer of delusion really had something to it. To really begin approaching the truth of materialism, they must next say that fruits do not exist, and that apples do not exist.

Suppose you claim that cats exist. I would tell you that you are wrong, and you would find me a cat. I would ask you how you know it is a cat. You would list off features of a cat, and in all likelihood I would either find you a cat that does not have those precise features (perhaps one with a birth defect), or else something similar to a cat which does fulfill your requirements, but which is not a cat. Ignoring all the tangential complexities which would make this impossible, suppose you somehow arrive at an airtight description of a cat. I would ask you why all of those things belong in a category, and you would have no valid materialist answer. You have drawn an arbitrary line in conceptual space. Even that is generous, for it assumes that we have already defined what is adjacent to what in conceptual space.

You would then proceed to suggest that even if a cat is not a “cat” in any meaningful sense, at the very least the objects which we refer to as cats are real. Now, what is this object, fundamentally, from a materialist standpoint? It is a soup of subatomic particles. Fair enough, that doesn’t immediately stop it from being real. But consider that what surrounds it is also subatomic particles. How do I know the boundary of the so-called “object”? What if I were to suggest that the cat plus all the air within a foot of the cat were a real object? Or what if I were to suggest that one half of the cat, plus a region adjacent to the cat, with a volume equal in size to half of a cat, were a real object? You could point to a difference in density, but the earth varies greatly in density from its core outward, and we like to think it exists. We could point to a difference of materials, but the cat is full of many different types of molecules as it is. [XLI, XXXII]. The line drawn in physical space around the so-called cat is non-objective, and cats do not objectively exist.
To review: We have drawn some lines in physical space, based on what humans care about. Then, in order to describe what is within our physical lines, we have drawn a map of conceptual space, based on what humans care about, then drawn a line on that map, based on what humans care about, to arrive at a category of objects, so that we can name what is within our physical lines. There’s nothing materialist, rationalist, or skeptical about any of that. In fact, it is deeply sentimental.

There’s no melody in this collection of pitches, no more than there’s an Orion in the sky. Makes me wonder what other meaningless things we pretend have meaning by sticking them into patterns with context. I mean, that’s not a dude, that’s the harsh vacuum of empty space punctuated with giant balls of nuclear explosion times. But then I wonder if a proton plus an electron making a hydrogen atom, or a huge pile of nuclearly fusing hydrogen making a star is any more real than these stars making Orion. I mean, is it an atom, or does it just look like an atom?  

-Vi Hart

**XLIV Transcendence 2 (Linguistic Argument for Transcendence)**

Let us suppose that language means something. There are certain words which more or less point to objects. These are not so sure as some believe them to be [XLIII], but let us set them aside and consider that there are also other words. “Profound”, “beautiful”, and “good”, for instance. Those are especially clear examples, but I think it is reasonable to say that almost all language, in real usage, involves various adjectives and adverbs (and perhaps we could also bring in those nouns, verbs, and function words which are difficult to define simply by pointing at a few objects, which is to say, most of them. Including “to be”). If you speak of some such quality, how can what you say have meaning? Now we could deny that qualities exist, and say that “beautiful” is just the adjective form of the noun class which is defined by pointing at all the beautiful things. This gets us nowhere, however, once you realize that people argue about what objects deserve a particular adjective. For that to be the case, it must be the meaning of the adjective defining the set of objects, rather than the reverse. How can we describe the meanings of the qualities, then? With definitions, of course! What are definitions made of? Words. Thus a word is reliant on the meanings of the words within its definitions. We can immediately see why this is somewhat problematic, because those words themselves are dependent on the words found in their definitions, and so on and so forth. If you have an infinite number of words, then you have turtles all the way down, except not really because words are far less certain than turtles. If you have a finite number of words, you create a giant flow-chart of circular reasoning. What is “good”? That which is objectively preferable. What is “preferable”? That which is preferred by some particular creature or set of creatures. What is “to prefer”? To like better than. What is “to like”? To enjoy. What is “to enjoy”? To derive pleasure from. Even if you pretend that words are truly interchangeable with their dictionary definitions, and ignore the obvious fact of real conversation use that precision is lost when words are changed, you still are forced to realise that at some point you’re going to run out of synonyms and have to start over again. This clearly not anything approaching a firm basis for something which is meaningful and true.

AND YET LET US SUPPOSE THAT LANGUAGE INDEED IS MEANINGFUL.  
It is a reasonable supposition, for we all experience it everyday. Conversations occur, and meaning is conveyed, and, in fact, are often concerned with things other than specific physical objects [LI]. If
anything which has ever been said was true in any way whatsoever, then surely it had some sort of
meaning. Even extremely basic things like “this cat is hungry” depends on the quality of cat-ness
[XLIII]. So, if words are impossible to usefully define, but are still meaningful, what does this tell us?
This would put them in the category of the ineffable. Since there is no possible basis in the mundane for
their meaningfulness, its basis must be in the transcendent.

Perhaps the most philosophically relevant outcome is that materialism is false. If deployed against a
naive materialist who still believes that some things are true, that is its primary purpose. There are also
interesting implications for philosophy and literature more broadly: First, it seems that perhaps the
strongest argument for the applicability of a word to something is that it is commonly applied to that
thing. This is useful in some cases, and troubling in others. Second, the existence of a word is now a
strong argument for validity of the concept of which it makes use. To extrapolate slightly from that, we
can say thirdly that if two words exist, even if their dictionary definitions are the same, we have every
reason to believe that they in fact do not mean the same thing, and lose meaning when conflated.
Fourthly, in spite of the constant warnings from practitioners of logic that our arguments should not
conflate one word being used in slightly different ways, we should in fact be suspicious of any attempts to
distinguish subtly different usages, because they are both within the bounds of the same ineffable concept,
whose existence is most strongly indicated by the word which they share. Fifthly, and most importantly,
defining words within humanistic discourse shrinks them, saps their power, and is ultimately dishonest
and untrue. The ultimate basis for a word’s meaningfulness cannot be set forth.

But the implications are far deeper. Every word is in fact a transcendent object all its own, mystical and
holy. A shining light in the world of the spirit [XXXIX]. The ancient civilisations, prior to the onset of
Greek philosophies of mimesis [L], understood words to be deeply magical. And they were literally
correct.

There’s a blaze of light in every word
And it doesn’t matter which you heard
The holy or the broken Hallelujah.
-Leonard Cohen

XLV Corollary
If the meaning of words is placed in the transcendent realm, the object problem somewhat goes away
within a spiritually-conscious epistemic frame. The word makes the cat.

“‘In our world,’ said Eustace, ‘a star is a huge ball of flaming gas.’ ‘Even in your world, my son,
that is not what a star is, but only what it is made of’”
-C.S Lewis

XLVI The Word
To the philosopher I say: if every word is a transcendent object, why is it a shock that the highest transcendent object should contain a Word?

To the Christian I say: if “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us”, why is it a shock that words are real? If God is a Word, why can we not allow that lesser words are like unto the angels?

XLVII The German Philosophy
Kant and the rest of the German Idealists destroyed the world, not so much because they hated it, as because they loved something else. Schopenhauer said of Jacobi “…By reducing the external world to a matter of faith, he wanted merely to open a little door for faith in general…”

XLVIII Greatness
Simone Weil argues that the “great” has no meaning aside from The Good. This does express a significant truth, and certainly makes sense within the framework she was developing. However, “great” is a great word, and I will give it the benefit of the doubt that it has a reason for existing. Simone Weil of course thinks that’s all a lie, but every word you question the validity of is a step down the path to nihilism [XLIV], and I certainly detect in my experience that there is such a quality as “greatness”, and that there are “great” figures in history apart from “good” figures (few good figures are much remembered). “Great” is fascinating. I can say “there was a great quantity of cheese”, and it is pretty strictly quantitative. This is blatantly obvious looking at our linguistic cousin, German; In English there is “Charles the Great”, in French there is “Charlemagne”, and in German there is “Karl der Große”. “Groß” is just “big”. However, in English (and German), it is also used as a qualitative statement, often in a context where “good” might have been used, like “Bob is such a great friend”. What is meant, then, when we say that Napoleon was one of the greatest men of all time? Was he physically large? No. Was he morally good? Perhaps, but that’s certainly not why we remember him. What’s really remarkable about the word “great”, is to think of the overlap of “large” and “good”. “Greatness”, in its most unique sense, is about when quantity becomes a quality. Of course you can be a great person by having a large amount of “goodness”. But by having a value-laden word which is etymologically a quantity, we are pushed toward the notion that there is something positive and valuable at the extremes of many different qualities. Something transcendent.

Of course it is well worn ground to suggest that music has at the highest levels of its discipline some contact with the divine. But the same is perhaps true for many things taken to the greatest extremes. Cars aren’t any holier than anything else, but I’m sure you would find that drivers who push land-speed records experience something much more than just physical stress. The word “great” is what sanctifies this, as well as Napoleon.

IL Hubris
It seems to me that greatness (something positive) can be achieved in things which are not themselves positive. An example that comes to mind is the life of Frank Abagnale Jr., which was portrayed in the 2002 film Catch Me If You Can. As a teenager, he ran probably the most elaborate and impressive string of million-dollar level cons ever developed. At first it was just (savant-level?) manipulation of checks
and banking, with an absolute mastery of forgery. But what’s really impressive is that he managed to successfully live as an airline pilot, an employed hospital doctor, then a fairly high-ranking lawyer, all without ever going to school to be any of those things, and (at least initially) largely not knowing what he was doing. My description of him is not impressive, so watch the movie to understand how impressive it was.

If your theory of value was purely something like, say, Kantian Deontology, your assessment of this situation would be that it is “bad”. Dude stole a lot of money and probably risked some people’s lives. When I look at this situation, I say “that is a shining example of true human greatness”. The world is unambiguously a better place because that happened. And no, I don’t mean because of improved security, I just mean the fact it happened, in-and-of-itself. I don’t even just mean in a utilitarian sense, cause it is quite possible to imagine the suffering caused by the actions outweighs the entertainment gained by on-lookers like yours truly. No, I say it would be a positive even if nobody ever heard about it [XL], because he didn’t just do it big, he did it so big that he did it Great. The sheer human ingenuity and audacity is breathtakingly beautiful.

I think there is one other very noteworthy example of a human activity/trait which is quite negative, but which can be taken to such an extreme that it reaches greatness: hubris. A casual confidence or self-approval, and a lazy disregard for the gods, is nothing to be desired. But there are a few spirits who have played a true symphony whose crescendos are forged from the very heights of arrogance and defiance [CXI-CXII]. For Aeschylus it was Prometheus, for Milton it was Lucifer, for Byron it was Manfred, for Blake it was Prometheus once again, for Goethe it was Faust, for Dostoevsky it was Ivan Karamazov, and for Tolkien it was Fëanor. The type of figure is returned to so often because it is so terrifyingly beautiful. Milton perhaps didn’t even mean to glorify Lucifer, but as Blake said, Milton was “of the Devil's party without knowing it”. These figures take the quality of hubris, and refine such extreme quantities of it, that it can only be perceived as greatness.

1. Plato and animism

Objects need spiritual reality to be objects. We’ve established this [XLV]. Plato places this spiritual reality in a world apart. This is not necessarily necessary? Shamanic practices suggest that there is a world of the spirit, but that it isn’t entirely separated from the world which we see. We turn to this because there is something very cold in the act of philosophically separating objects from their own reality, or beautiful things from their beauty [LX].

Fazang’s Golden Lion Essay has a step in the Pyrrhonist Descent which we glossed over: even if we see something, and hear something, and touch something, how do we really know that these three things are connected? The mind constructs a golden lion from the input of our eyes, and from the input of our hands, and from the input of our ears, based on the blind assumption that these things somehow “correspond” to each other.

As we build out of the Nihilist Pit, one step which we recognise is based on faith, i.e on feelings i.e on aesthetic beauty, is to consciously make and accept that amalgamation of the inputs of the senses. Perhaps the inner eye, or the aesthetic sense, is one of the senses which must be amalgamated. Once we have re-accepted the unity of the golden lion, we assume that the smooth “feel” of the lion, the metallic
“smell” of the lion, and the brilliant “image” of the lion, are all simply ways of describing what is ultimately one lion. The thought/the aesthetic sense/the inner eye viewing the lion’s beauty, and the lion’s spiritual coherence as a single object in the category “statue”, could perhaps, then, be similarly no more separate from the lion than what the lion looks like. [CCXLIV, CCV]

Perhaps it is even the case that to speak of an “aesthetic sense” is unnecessary, and that we could simply say that all of the physical senses themselves detect real aesthetic qualities. Why should I have any separation between “I see the lion, and believe the lion is real”, and “I see the beautiful lion, and believe the beautiful lion is real”.

I don’t think Plato was wrong though. Objects are still in categories, and at least in some regard gain their object status through the category [XVIII]. And if there is such a thing as value, especially of the moral kind, the standard and the thing measured must be in part separate [XXI-XXIII].

LI Art vs art

There are constant discussions about what art means. There are also constant discussions about what “good” means, and what is “good”. Sometimes these are described as “arguing over definitions”. But if I don’t know the definition of yutipolocitanimiptryx, how can I argue about what yutipolocitanimiptryx means, or what objects it could be applied to for what reasons? Now if yutipolocitanimiptryx has a fairly precise technical definition, I could simply learn it, and then argue with people about what things are yutipolocitanimiptryx. But with art and goodness, it is usually the very definition itself which we are arguing over. For us to argue about them, though, we must on some level already know what they are. We don’t know what is good, but it is quite noteworthy that we all seem to understand intuitively what ‘good’ is. What’s good is how things “should” be.

Suppose we are materialists, and think that language just sort of evolved in response to stimuli. This would result in words for describing things in the world. It would eventually result in words for describing our feelings, based purely on the faith that other creatures might have similar ones, and thus understand. It would even result in words for non-obvious sets of objects. But shouldn’t it all ultimately be about how the world is? Pleasure is part of how the world is, certainly, so it’s reasonable that we have words for liking things. But that you like something is still a statement about how reality is or could be. Should/ought statements are completely different grammatically, a separate set of modal flavours.

Now hypotheticals are also technically grammatically distinct from plain truth statements, but they are clearly useful for making plans (and thus surviving on a social level). Now there is a sense in which prescriptive statements could be useful for commanding underlings to do things once power differentials developed. But combined with the threat of force, “I want/I like” statements should be enough for that purpose. Now, should/ought statements could be described as useful for more subtle manipulation, but the targets of your manipulation would have to understand and be convinced by your should/ought statement, and I wouldn’t have any interest in developing the capability for being manipulated. Perhaps the capability was developed because subtle control was conducive to survival on the social level, or perhaps because the ability to manipulate and the ability to be manipulated in this way go hand-in-hand. But then it comes back down to power dynamics. We don’t have strong biological class structure in the way bees do, so the conception of what “should be” that wins out would just come back to power...
struggle, and its usefulness as “subtle” manipulation has essentially disappeared.

All of which is something of a tangent to the point, which is that what’s really remarkable is that we understand ought statements at all. If you were to ask what ought statements mean, I would tell you that they tell you what is good or perhaps “objectively preferable”, but as we’ve seen, good’s definition is as circular as any adjective’s, and even if we are perhaps taking for granted the shared experience of “preferring” things, to suggest that there could be a preference apart from a preferer is not at all a natural and obvious thing to do [CCXLVI]. And yet we all understand ought statements, and argue about which ones are true, and that in itself is the strongest indication [XLIV] that at least some of them are, in fact, true.

“No, you’re trying to make yourself sound too important. Just tell me. What should art do?” “It should be. It should just be. That’s all it has to do. Sometimes that’s saying enough.”

-Jreg

LII The three values
Postmodernism tells me that I think within the bounds of my culture, and reminds me that there is no view from nowhere. Fair enough. My cultural tradition in the West going back to the peripatetics points us to the triad of the Good, the True [VI], and the Beautiful, and says they are bound together and united. I accept their deep-interconnectedness as an article of faith because it seems to be sensible (i.e beautiful), but here is my cheesy description of why they are interconnected.

Since we’ve established that everything is about Beauty, it’s clear that if the Good and the True matter it must be because they are beautiful, and beauty is supreme. However, Truth is also clearly supreme: if I say that something is beautiful, but it isn’t true that it is beautiful, then it is not beautiful. If I say that something is good, but it is not true that it is good, then it is not good.

Whether good is supreme is an interesting question (it would be rather unsatisfyingly asymmetrical if it were not). Traditionally within philosophy, combining ethics and aesthetics gives you the field of “Value Theory”. It is concerned with what it means for something to be “valuable” and what things are “valuable”. Clearly we do not mean only in the monetary sense. Rather, we mean in the sense discussed in [LI], (which suggests that it is rather impossible to usefully describe what it “means” to be valuable with words). A modal flavour apart. The “ought” to everything else’s “is”. That which is “objectively desirable or preferable”. The Good. Thus if Beauty and Truth “matter”, in any regard, it must be because they are good. To matter is to be good.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
                   Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
                   Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
                   When old age shall this generation waste,
                   Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."
- John Keats

LIII The Good
We recognise a difference between saying “feeding orphans is good behaviour” and “La Bella Principessa is a good painting” and “these cupcakes are good cupcakes”. We often think of “the Good” (in contrast to the True and Beautiful) as only that first one. But “good” is also the most general word describing that which is “positive” or “desirable” or “valuable”. [XLIV] prompts us to say that, even if there is a narrow idea of the Good, or a “core” to the Good (basic moral law), there is in fact one single transcendent object, “the Good”, covering good even in its broadest sense [LV]. The one word version of those ineffable modal flavours described in [LI]. A short-hand for “valuableness” in the value-theory sense. We can see then see then that holding to the triad does not expose us to critique from Platonism, for we can always say that there is an ultimate unitary concept of “value”, which is the Good.

LIV There are good things in the world
There is one way of thinking about political systems whereby you define goodness as serving the community. The equivalent on the personal level would be an attempt to have “care about others” as your entire morality.

Suppose you serve the community by writing them books. Maybe people enjoy your books. Maybe you are happy with this. However, people also enjoy crack cocaine.

With that in mind, consider the following. You are benefiting the community if reading your books is a good thing. If reading your books is not a “good” activity, then you are causing your fellow community members to engage in a bad activity. Causing others to engage in a bad activity is not, in fact, benefiting your community. Now, under what circumstances could we say that reading your books is a good activity? Only if the books themselves are “good”.

We see from this that imagining only behaviour can be called good is self-defeating. We said in [The Good] that people recognise a difference between “good cupcakes” and “good morals”, but to say that there is moral good in giving people cupcakes necessitates saying that there is moral good in the cupcakes themselves. If words are prior to concepts [XLIV], then perhaps this should be expected.

The taste of Sally Lunn Bread is not philosophically irrelevant. Seeing Ursa Major on a warm summer night is not philosophically irrelevant. I affirm them, and uphold them. We must be world-affirming people, or else we shall be entirely lost. There are good things in this world, many, many good things.

LV Levels
On some level, everything that happens is what God wanted to happen. If he didn’t want it to happen, in the deepest and most ultimate sense, it wouldn’t have.
But can’t you see there must be more than one level?

LVI Ownership
The place you live is yours. It is also your landlord’s. It is also your government’s. It is also God’s. It is also the backyard squirrels’. These do not contradict.

LVII Myriad
If everything is feelings, and thus everything is aesthetics, and ethics is aesthetics [X], a certain aesthetic logic applies to the ethical. If everything good must be beautiful, and everything beautiful must be good [LII], what is true of beauty is true of good in some regard. But what is most true of beauty? That it is myriad. There are vast numbers of different aesthetics, each of which cannot be compared with or described in terms of the others. Numerous incommensurable beauties. And thus numerous incommensurable goods. There is The Good, yes, that great unity, but it is an abstraction. It is real, entirely real, but I see the myriad, and I do not deny the myriad its reality anymore than I will deny anything else I see its reality.

LVIII Nature
Why should we care what is natural? After all, wouldn’t that be on the “Is” side of the Is-Ought barrier? Well, only kind of. It is still a principle of sorts, for you can say that something is out-of-tune with nature, or that something is artifice. And nature is a quite aesthetic idea.

Also though, if things are a particular way by nature, and you fit into things in particular way by nature, it is probably most beneficial to your flourishing as a human if you take nature into consideration.

LIX Tradition
Why should we want to do what is traditional? First of all, because tradition is beautiful, and meaningful. I will fall back on this always, because it true. In this case though I think I can even point just a little bit to part of why it might be beautiful. One thing which often elicits some kind of aesthetic response is great scale. Mountains are sublime, oceans elicit a longing. Tradition is that which has great scale (by some standard or another) chronologically, rather than spatially.

There is also a somewhat down to earth argument for tradition, though. Each of us is only so smart, only has a certain amount of wisdom on our own. Even a generation as a whole only has so much. But tradition is that which has stood the test of many generations. Even if we do not assign godlike wisdom to any particular generation of ancestors, tradition is the accumulated wisdom of a great multitude. And this argument applies no matter how absurd, even unjust, the tradition in question appears to be. Furthermore, there is no reason it should not apply to what is true, and what is good, and what is beautiful [XXX]. Folk art, in musical, visual, and narrative modes, should be accorded respect as being the accumulated wisdom of our ancestors concerning what is beautiful.

Tradition also stores certain archetypes [XXI], is real [LX], and is the soul of ethnicity [connection] which allows you to be what you are [XXXIII].
Some books are undeservedly forgotten; none are undeservedly remembered
-W.H Auden

LX The Real
Proper conservatism involves loving and prioritising the real. In one sense this is simply because a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. Why should we risk good things we have [moral cupcakes] for good things which may never come to pass? That is only risk aversion. But if you love something enough, you will be risk averse toward it. This is not mere risk aversion for one’s own sake, for the real has a greater claim on your loyalty than the unreal. It has become accustomed to being real [liberty]. Destroying something which already exists is not morally equivalent to simply not creating something which was never real to begin with. Hypotheticals do not have rights.

God (or Nature, to speak in other terms) has given us things. Yes, on some level, even the newest and most artificial thing is a gift from God, but when dealing with a being with many “omni-”s, sometimes the most expansive level is not the only one worth thinking about [LV]. In a stricter sense, there are specific old things which are ours by birthright, and to throw them away is to take God’s providence and Nature’s bounty for granted; to insult the giver. When we encounter solid, weighty, real things, and they are good [moral cupcakes], our response, whether or not we have an entirely personal God, ought to be gratitude.

LXI Dignity/Freedom
Human dignity is just what people are used to. Yes, sure, there are situations bad enough that one person in a hundred will feel it to be an indignity even if they are used to it, but that’s a minor point which is over-focused on. The real significant truth is that people are remarkably good at becoming accustomed to things, especially things they are born into. People build their frameworks around the reality they inhabit, and become accustomed to deriving value from actions which they take relative to the status quo. No situation is perfect, but people (subconsciously) put a ton of work into molding themselves to fit the situations they find themselves in. Switching out one imperfect situation for another, but eliminating all that work in the process, and leaving people in a world they don’t understand, is the worst thing you can do to someone. From the perspective of human well-being, change is almost always bad, and stability is almost always good. People derive their idea of what things they need in order to not “lose their dignity” based on the things they have.

Freedom is what people are used to.
>sounds a lot like dignity
Indeed. Of course freedom is a different word, and a more specific way of thinking about dignity. It analogizes things to literal freedom of movement, describing various other things metaphorically as chains. To describe something as a freedom, you describe your situation in terms of someone/thing who is chaining you. People talk about “negative” and “positive” liberty, and that’s a worthwhile framework for many purposes, but any particular freedom can pretty much be stretched to be described as either “freedom from” or “freedom to”. Indeed, most specific aspects of a conception of dignity can, if you want to, be described as “freedoms”. They don’t necessarily always lend themselves to this naturally, but
in the West freedom has become an essential idea, and so we almost always describe our conceptions of
dignity as “freedoms” of various notions and descriptions.

Every civilization has a conception of dignity (which you could describe as their conception of freedom,
if you felt like it). What defines whether you have damaged people’s well being is mostly relative to
those culture-specific ideals of dignity (which are based not just on their lives, but also on the lives of
their ancestors).

**LXII Suffering**
Physical suffering is tied to the physical, and thus to the extent that it is “physical suffering”, should
seemingly be limited in nature by the physical. Spiritual anguish is not.

**LXIII Depression**
Brain chemistry is only so different from one case to the next, and people become accustomed to things.
A wealthy privileged person experiencing spiritual anguish deserves your pity as much as a poor person.

They deserve it more, in fact, because the world does not understand these things, and thus offers the
miserable high-born no pity as a generality. They are thus poor in the thing which they need most. The
poor person knows that the world understands why they are suffering, but the rich person who is suffering
just as much does not have that knowledge. On a personal level, the poor person doesn’t feel as though
they have to feel bad for feeling bad, but the rich person does.

**LXIV On a more personal note**
Imagine a person is in distress because something they consider terrible has happened in the news. For
instance, a Democrat has won an important election. You might be inclined to tell them, or someone who
cares about them “your suffering is less important than the suffering the poor or the blacks would be
feeling in the reverse situation, because you are insulated from real consequences”. If you say that, you
are wrong. The suffering is what deserves sympathy, and the suffering is not necessarily weaker just
because the person is insulated from the “physical” impacts. It is likely stronger, in fact.

But more than that, the people who deserve your pity or sympathy are the people close to you [natural
source of feelings, below]. Yes, if you are as wealthy as I am, then there is certainly some abstract group
of people who are, in a “physical” sense, suffering more than your family. But I don’t know those people,
and I don’t specifically care about them, and to declare that you are sympathetic to the concerns of a
bunch of people you don’t know while not being sympathetic to the concerns of your own loved ones,
means that you are being cold and inhuman.

**LXV Aristocratic dignity**
If you are human you should rebel strongly against any attempt to strip you of dignity. You should react
with righteous fury. What dignity is is relative to what you (and the bloodline which helps define you and
your expectations) are accustomed to. Thus when an aristocrat balks at being treated like a commoner,
they are following the same noble instinct of the new slave who balks at the lash, and deserve the same
sympathy.

*Far away,*
Long ago,
Glowing dim as an ember,
Things my heart
Used to know
Things it yearns to remember
And a song someone sings
Once upon a December

-Anastasia

LXVI Ethnonationalism
People do not live by bread alone. To merely be well taken care of, and industriously occupied, does not satisfy our need for various institutions or identity constructs which allow us to feel as though we are part of something greater than ourselves, something worthwhile, and which give us symbols, rituals, and myths, all of which are quite basic to human flourishing. Life without these things is comparatively meaningless. Those who lack a real connection with one or another of these grand identity markers will scoff at me for saying that, but that is because they don’t know what they’re missing.

One of the most basic and essential ones is nation (or “ethnicity”). Firstly, nations are transcendent. I believe each one exists as a blazing light in the realm of the spirit. It is not coincidental that we are so prone to personify them. The Romans who worshipped their city as a goddess understood the situation well [Michael/Persia]. In more down-to-earth terms, it is not arbitrary what you choose to identify with, because there are certain slots (nation and gender among them) that it is natural for humans to have something marked in, and to care about. The idea of family has an innate power [some of those sections below this one], and ethnicity is extended family. The biological reality of blood lends the ideal of nation a deep power. But biological realities are messier than I would like sometimes. What’s more essential is that ethnicities are large scale in both time and space. They are highly meaningful and powerful identity markers because they accumulate meaning over time. That is how things become meaningful to us: with time. You can be part of the story of a people, live in it “vicariously” (from an individualist standpoint) without guilt. Now, with an ancient ethnicity there obviously comes a treasure trove of significance. But younger ethnicities are valuable as well, because they generally are forced into self-recognition through conflict [Rhodesians never die!]. Through a lot of narrative happening in a short time.

Your nation is the channel through which the river of tradition flows [connection].

What are you if you aren’t loyal? [XI]

Even if we could replace it with something equally meaningful, your nation is already here, and is real [connection]. Getting rid of it would be risky, ungrateful, and wasteful.

Your nation is what you are, and you should be what you are [XXXIII].

Fundamentally though, I believe ethnicity is beautiful.

LXVII Ethnicities again
Ethnic groups are archetypes [XXI-XXII]. They are beautiful ideas, which cannot be quite put into words. To say it differently, each is a distinct aesthetic. A great nation comes with styles of visual and musical art. It comes with certain preoccupations, and patterns of thought. It comes with moral laws, and moral virtues. It comes with inherited government institutions and political principles. It comes with myths and gods. It comes with a homeland, and that homeland’s geography, and flora, and fauna. Each part reflects and embodies the others, and they are put together into something greater than the sum of its parts, and the spirit of the unified whole is embodied in each part. The music means something more because it is from somewhere, and belongs to someone. Even if it isn’t your music, something intangible is added to it by knowing that it is somebody’s music. To separate it from the archetype it adheres to is to neuter it.

Just as The Communist State in the realm of the spirit doesn’t sell Pepsi-Cola, so the Egypt in the realm of the spirit will have pyramids and pharaohs whether the surface of earth has those things or not.

LXVIII Origin of Feelings
So, we only have feelings [connection]. Specific feelings about different things. Where do these come from, naturally [connection to “Nature”]? They are accumulated over the entire course of our life. And thus we can consider which is the most basic and primary. Before we are born, what can we be said first to love? Our first home, and our first source of nourishment, on which we are entirely dependent: the mother. Thus, the primary and basic axiom should surely be, not “(~(x ∨ ~x))” or “all else equal the future shall resemble the past”, but “I love my mother”. Upon birth, the love of mother grows more specific over time, for there is now something other than the mother to contrast her with, and the mother becomes something specific, although perhaps it is more basic and essential to say “she now has a face”. We may not “imprint” the way a goose does, but our basic biological reality is not hormonally apathetic to the institution of motherhood. The mother’s love encompasses all of her children, of course, and so they are bound together, and will develop a love and loyalty toward each other.

Some have suggested that humans are not innately bird-like in their mating habits. This is hard to say, but throughout the world’s cultures fathers being involved in their children’s lives is by far the norm rather than the exception, and those who claim that the exception is more natural and formerly the norm are thus engaging in speculation, and it is worth considering that they have specifically decided to speculate that the truth is quite ugly. Regardless, we can at the least say that love [the erotic] drew the father to the mother in the first place, and will likely continue to do so, and so there is clearly a (strong) force keeping the father near the kids in their early years, pushing them to form a deep bond, and thus bound together, we can describe the love between father and child as also quite basic and fundamental. Within human cognition as a whole, therefore, the most basic and fundamental thing is the immediate family, and the
most basic good is the good of the family. Thus in a hypothetical natural human community, anyone would be willing not only to die for an immediate family member, but also to kill for one [all about love].

**LXIX Not Losers**

Of course, children grow, and have children. What happens then? The logic of the world I live in says “they strike out on their own, and forge their path”, or something along those lines. But we are not dealing with the logic of my world, but with the logic of the natural ideal. So you’ve grown, and have had or are about to have children. This now puts you on the parental end of the most precious and basic love, but there is no reason to believe that this somehow naturally snuffs out the love you felt for your own parents. Indeed, that love came first. So the natural thing to do is to live near your parents if at all possible. Of course the same logic applies to your siblings, so you will likely be close to them your whole life, and so your children will grow up around their cousins and aunts and uncles, and become attached to them. This is natural, and the proper way for a child to flourish, surrounded by many people who love and are loved by them, and who share with them a bond which is deeply meaningful because it is biologically objective [connect to “only physical transcendence”]. We humans do care about what is real, and those who pretend not to are missing out on a special sort of comfort which comes from having Nature as a fail-safe.

**LXX Nation**

Of course, a few generations go by, and this flowering community potentially becomes fairly large in scale. I maintain that it is quite natural that you could share a strong and real bond of affection with at least all of your 2nd cousins, which under natural circumstances could be a fair number of people, but at some point enough generations have gone by that not everyone in this community is going to be emotionally close, or even necessarily know each other. But even with relative strangers you share a recognition that you are family, and that’s something meaningful you share before you’ve even introduced yourselves. Furthermore, if everyone was more or less sticking fairly close to their parents, then down the generations it should naturally occur that those close to you physically are more or less those close to you by blood, and both of these should combine to make them close in your affections. Even with a stranger, you are family to someone who is family to someone who is family to them.

Now, if humans share a common ancestor, then in some sense we are all in such an extended-family community. But of course if you share that bond with everyone, then it means less, because there is nothing to contrast it with, no way of saying it is special. But in reality, eventually some group would split off and settle further away, and with sufficiently vast amounts of time the connection would be forgotten. Eventually the (now) two groups might re-encounter each-other, and this provides something to contrast with, so that your connection with even a relative stranger within your extended-family community seems to have something special and important about it. And even in cases where a connection is not totally forgotten, there will still be varying levels of connection of groups in the fashion of a Russian nesting-doll. Of course your closest affections are with those who directly share your living space, but it is natural that there should exist larger family groupings which command less specific love and affection than your immediate family, but more than humanity as a whole.

This is the origin of the *ethnos*, the nation. It is beautiful and good, an outgrowth, under natural circumstances, of our most basic affections.
LXXI Nation-State

The language of nation suggests the political. What is the political form which would grow for our natural society? A hereditary monarchy. Or rather, something like a hereditary feudal hierarchy, for if the community is formed in taxonomic concentric circles of loyalty based on physical and biological proximity, there could be someone (arguably some couple) in charge at each level. But above the whole ethnic community, there would be a monarch, inheriting his/her headship from the original mother and father from which the community descends.

LXXII Monarchism

One could reasonably ask ‘why must there be one person in charge at all?’ The answer would be that sometimes swift and definitive decisions must be made in sudden situations. The same could probably be said of warfare, even if it isn’t “sudden”. Another reason would be that international negotiations can be more effective when your partner/adversary knows the person they’re negotiating with can actually agree to something, and isn’t just wasting their time on a deal which is dependent on a vote upon returning home.

Of course, nothing about that indicates that the “one person in charge” should reign for life and be chosen by heredity. As for long reigns, we can first turn back to diplomacy, and say that having one person at the helm of an organisation for an extended period allows the organisation to be a faithful and honest partner. With frequent power-shifts, any given leader may not agree with or feel bound by the deals made by his predecessors. Similar issues apply domestically, because constant power shifts leading to constant changes on the ground gives people’s lives an unstable quality, characterised by anxiety [LXI].

Why not elected dictators? First of all, the bonds of blood and affection between family members ensure that the stability effects are more likely to remain respected on scales longer than one human life. Second, though, ruling has high stakes, and is a difficult skill. Even aside from the “practical” skills and moral virtues, there is also the necessary decorum and charisma. Monarchs can be raised from birth to rule, with an education tailored to making them the best rulers they can possibly be. We could perhaps wish for everyone to have a kingly level of education, or perhaps have some large class of potential kings. First there is the possible issue that providing large numbers with a royal-quality education might be difficult to achieve. Another minor issue is that, if we were truly preparing every child for kingship, it would take time away from other things they could be learning and doing, in spite of the fact that most of them won’t be the king (I say minor, because the issue is not that learning is ever a “waste”, but rather simply that perhaps they’re learning could’ve been better prioritised slightly differently). More importantly, though, an ideal royal education would involve learning early on from the expert, which is to say, the previous ruler, and this cannot be scaled up. And for all forms of education, learning is best taken in when the student and teacher understand each other and love each other deeply, and the parent-child relationship is thus the ideal situation for teaching most anything that the parent is able to teach. This is especially the case because a great part of learning to rule well is not “skill”, but learning to understand, accept, and internalise fully that there is an enormous and deathly serious responsibility upon your back, and that sort of dark emotional knowledge is especially dependent on a caring relationship with the teacher for being properly understood. Even if we assume some large class of well-trained youths on the track to rule, most of them never will rule, and thus the sense of royal responsibility couldn’t really have
been taken in by them in the same way it could be by someone who knows that they will rule. And if it
could, that would be worse, because then you would have a large group of people who were raised with a
deep sense that their life was for one purpose, who would then have no opportunity to live out that
purpose. These people would be emotionally and psychologically broken by no fault of their own. They
would also tend to be a danger to national stability if left alive, each believing themselves to be a better fit to
rule than the ruler ultimately selected.

That further raises the issue that there would be competition between the members of the class of
potential rulers, and thus when we were trying to instill a spirit of responsibility, they would instead
naturally be acquiring a spirit of competitiveness between themselves. And because competitions
(especially those which are not clear and objective, as this one probably couldn’t be) are often won by
those who are competitive and ambitious, which in this case translates to power-hungry. This is not just a
problem in this hypothetical meritocracy, but in any system with several potential candidates for
rulership, including presidential democracy. But in democratic or republican systems which use
elections, the problem becomes far, far greater. Not only is there the potential for competitive and power-
hungry people to be rewarded, but the entire population enters a competitive mind-set, because an
election is in fact a competition, and must have winners and losers. Thus, elections are disastrous for
national harmony and unity, causing each person to view entire swathes of the population as their
enemies. This not only leads to civil war, but, more importantly, damages the ethnos. Beyond even that,
though, it requires that people think and argue about politics and morality more than is entirely healthy,
quite possibly making their lives worse, and in fact tending to make them less moral [Lao Tzu].

LXXIII Dictatorship

The most essential thing about monarchy, though, is that the King and the Queen are archetypal. Smart-
ass school children for generations have been asking “there isn’t really any difference between a
monarchy and a dictatorship, is there?” Now if tasked with actually explaining the difference to a truly
curious person, I would perhaps go into the idea that “kingship” is part of the ancien regime, and dictators
are not, but essentially the question will continue to be asked by many more generations of smart-ass
school children because they sadly tend to be the type of people who won’t be satisfied with being told
that there is a spirit of kingship, and that kingship is a transcendent principle which cannot be entirely
satisfactorily put into words, and that the idea of kingship has a very deep and pungent aesthetic all its
own. Monarchy is beautiful [connect to things about “order”].

If we want meaningful ethnicities/nations [connection here] monarchy is highly beneficial. First of all, it
provides a tangible link with the deep past, through a single, specific, traceable thread of both sacred
ritual and objective biology, making all of time since our nation began present before us. Beyond that
aspect, though, we can see that to have bonds within the ethnostate which are harmonious, and even
meaningful, it is necessary that the people love something. You can see from the rest of what I’ve written
in this document that I fully accept that people are able to love abstractions, and give their lives for them,
but the affection which normal people can feel most strongly is toward real flesh and blood people in the
world. The king or queen is the fated incarnation of their nation, the human face of a people, in a way a
politician chosen by votes rarely is (unless they are the first, or about to become a demagogue). If you
wish for people to love the nation, let them love the king.
Another aspect is that the throne belongs to the royal family [LXI] [aristocratic dignity], and taking it would only make sense if you were radically overhauling property structures as a whole [socialism and the ten commandments].

Another is royal blood descended from gods [polytheism].

Another is that, as someone said once, more or less, but I’m not sure who, “presidents and prime ministers are chosen by men, but kings and princes are chosen by the hand of God” [LV].

LXXIV Rights

In a modern society, it is natural to ask “what rights would people in this supposed natural community have?” A slightly more old-school person might ask “what responsibilities and obligations would they have?” This is understandable, but it forgets what we want the natural nation state to grow out of. The language of contract, exchange, and transaction are not the language of family love. The more the ethnos is like a family, the healthier it is. The language of rights or obligations is part of the language of contract. Sure, sometimes brothers and sisters, after seeing their mercantile parents engage in such behaviour, will make “deals” with one another. But everything is growing out of familial love, so consider what the most basic form of “exchange” between mother and child is: grace, essentially. The mother feeds the child without anything expected in return. More relevantly though, consider how a good family functions once the children are a bit older. Perhaps they help on the farm or something, and the parents thank them. The parents certainly feed and house the children, and the children thank them. Gratitude is expressed on both sides. But there is never an established list of what is a “gift” requiring gratitude, and what is an “obligation”. There is no contract which says “if [x] is done unsatisfactorily, [y] will not be performed”. You could certainly decide to explore what the “rights and obligations” in a family are. For instance, the child could argue that the parents brought her into existence through no choice of her own, and thus that they are responsible for the life they have created. The parents could look at the situation from the opposite side and point out that since she owes the parents her very existence, and thus has a moral responsibility to pay them back. People could certainly argue about who’s right, but that would be missing the point, because the point is that if a family is having that discussion at all, it is already pretty broken. The family is not the realm of deontological law, it is the realm of love. Rights ask “what is the maximum I could do in this situation without being punished”. Obligations ask “what is the minimum I could do in this situation without being punished”. It implies demanding the ability to place toes right up to lines. It is the demand to know precise limits. It is a language which is only properly used with people who you don’t particularly love or trust. With people you love, any sort of established code or law, anything “set in stone” should be utterly alien. If you love them, you won’t constantly be stepping to the edges of lines, so the lines don’t have to be drawn. In the moments when undrawn lines are crossed, as will of course happen, they can be dealt with on a case by case basis.

Admittedly, some families in the modern era have adopted “family rules”, “family meetings”, and the language of the corporation more generally, but this is largely because something harmful and unfamiliar has infected those families from the outside.
I like to say I'm more conservative than Goldwater. He just wanted to turn the clock back to when there was no income tax. I want to turn the clock back to when people lived in small villages and took care of each other.

-Pete Seeger

LXXV What kind of monarchy

Many people would look at me arguing for monarchy, and ask whether I support “constitutional” monarchy or “absolute” monarchy. But in light of [above section], if the natural nation-state grows from the family, and is meant to be a sort of loose family, it can’t possibly be either absolute or constitutional, not really. Written constitutions give rights and obligations. They are based on social contract theory, and are thus something you make with people who are your potential enemies. But “absolute” monarchy is just another form of constitutional monarchy. It explicitly declares what rights are held by what people. It just happens to assign them all to the king. Thus if someone complains about something, the king could say “well I was just doing something I had the right to do”, shutting down any discussion of the feelings which were hurt in the process. This is not how the natural monarchy would function. In the natural monarchy, the king would do quite little, in a way, for he would respect tradition and mostly just ensure that everything remained constant and stable. Even most times when conflict came up, it would be handled at a lower level of the fractal, by parents in households, headmen of clans, chiefs of tribes, lords of counties, or what have you. The person “in charge” at each level might be little more than first-among-equals, and judge of disputes. But there would not be some written code saying that the king can’t do things. If you trust the head of your national family and his love for you so little that you force him to sign a contract, then the natural nation-state is already quite broken.

LXXVI The National Tradition

Monarchy is subsidiary to traditionalism. Well, not the need for off-the-cuff decision making, necessarily, but the aesthetics of kingship, certainly (and indeed, the kingship of each kingdom has a slightly different shade of beauty, for it is both on the one hand a part of the principle of kingship, and on the other hand a part of a specific ethnic principle). This raises a very important point. Some nations have lived through stories that resulted in kingship not being a fundamental part of their transcendent national archetype. I do not necessarily advocate for kingship in places where that is the case. Some nations have an aversion to monarchy as part of their core identity, and are most truly themselves under specific Republican institutions. There is nothing wrong with this, and Republicanism certainly has a great beauty all of its own: a flaming, defiant beauty. Athens, Sparta, Rome, Venice, Florence, and Switzerland, for instance, have archetypes which are irrevocably post-monarchical (well, technically Sparta still had a monarchy, but integrated into the Republican system).

France is an interesting case. So much of France’s documented history was under monarchy, and that can’t just go away. Reason and The State in some regard transfer over as overarching principles both before and after the ‘89. The Matter of France was certainly a serviceable national mythology, and there was certainly something interesting going on in the French baroque and rococo. But ultimately, everything changed with the Revolution, and they didn’t do revolution half-way [connection]. It was such a dramatic juncture that the question of French identity cannot simply ignore it [but old claims don’t
die. The Revolution certainly was in some regards the birth of a nation. France the Republic is truly France.

Don’t throw that logic around willy-nilly, though. France’s fiery rebirth was unique, aesthetic, self-chosen, and a major event in world history. That is what you should expect when a new archetype is born. Something must happen which is narratively significant.

Is Germany its true self as a pluralistic democracy? Well, we were minding our own Sonderweg business being extremely authoritarian, until we had the misfortune of collapsing due to WW1. We found ourselves a mediocre and uninteresting democracy. We got rid of this as quickly as possible, and returned to our natural habits, and then had the continued misfortune of losing WW2, upon which a mediocre and uninteresting democracy was shoved down our throats by American tyranny. The DDR that the Soviets gave us was at least something interesting [connection to bright eyes], but it too was ultimately subsumed under the growing American hegemon’s bland, self-hating, West German puppet state. There was nothing German in what happened to set up the current regime. No German ideology, no German movement. German democracy was achieved by foreigners who hated Germany. If there was rebirth, it was a rebirth in humiliation. There was no change of archetype here. Germany is just currently not fulfilling its archetype. But the Sonderweg will not be kept down forever, and when its assigned days of humiliation are over, and it lifts its bleeding head out of the mud, let the world tremble.

The “German Christians” are a contradiction in terms and would do better to join Hauer’s “German Faith Movement.” These are decent and well-meaning people who honestly admit their Ergriffenheit and try to come to terms with this new and undeniable fact. They go to an enormous amount of trouble to make it look less alarming by dressing it up in a conciliatory historical garb and giving us consoling glimpses of great figures such as Meister Eckhart, who was, also, a German and, also, ergriffen. In this way the awkward question of who the Ergreifer is is circumvented. He was always “God.” But the more Hauer restricts the world-wide sphere of Indo-European culture to the “Nordic” in general and to the Edda in particular, and the more “German” this faith becomes as a manifestation of Ergriffenheit, the more painfully evident it is that the “German” god is the god of the Germans.

-Carl Jung, Essay on Wotan

LXVII Miscegeation

Because of the biological connection within the nation, the nation will have certain physical characteristics. Perhaps beautiful ones. Certainly ones which make them distinctive from other populations. And these are real [connection]. Each race is the possessor of its own variety of physical beauty, and if the race is bred out of existence, their particular beauty will disappear. Beauties which appear naturally are gifts from God and Nature, and so to throw them away is wasteful and ungrateful. Generally I would add “risky”, but there isn’t even any potential new set of unique beauties which we are gambling for in this case. If you have a particular beauty, it is natural to wish to pass it on to your children undiluted. With this in mind, miscegenation should ideally be rare.
Preservation of physical traits is one reason, but another reason is that, if everyone is too mixed, maintaining meaningful ethnic identities is difficult. Insensitive children perhaps won’t care one way or the other, but sensitive children who care about meaningful things will find themselves caught between two frames of reference. There is a tragic beauty to that situation, even a non-tragic beauty in certain cases, but if everyone is mixed beyond disambiguation, the situation loses its interest [exceptions made dull].

One day in the dead of winter, when the snow lay like a linen tablecloth over the world, Jack, the King of Ireland’s son, went out to shoot. He saw a crow, and he shot it, and it fell down on the snow. Jack went up to it, and he thought he never saw anything blacker than that crow, or redder than its blood, nor anything whiter than the snow round about.

He said to himself: "I'll never rest till I get a wife whose hair is as black as that crow, whose cheeks are as red as that blood, and whose skin is as white as that snow."

-Seumas MacManus

LXXVIII Land

As you grow up in your family, people are not the only thing you will grow to love. Another thing you will grow to love is your home. Feeling at home, feeling like there is a place you belong, is necessary for human well being. At the smallest scale, there are the specific places you like to sit when inside, and the specific spots outside where you spend your time. Above that there is the whole of what is under the same roof with you. Above that, there are all the houses owned by extended family which are within walking distance. Above that, there is the whole general region in which you spend more or less your entire life. Above that, is the entire homeland of your people, which is yours in a slightly more abstract sense, but certainly still yours, for “you are your country, and your country is you”. The nation is a family, and a family needs a home. Note that within the national family, there need not be strict borders between things. There is not necessarily a strict line of demarcation between “the spot I like to play in the yard and the spot my sister likes to play in the yard”. If, as should be normal, your aunts house is 500 feet away from your mother’s, in a natural society there would not be some line on the ground in-between saying “this is where mine ends and your begins”. There are just unwritten general tendencies of what is most especially “yours”, which will be sort of more or less respected because of the general affection. The same should be true all the way up to the level of the nation. If solid-pen lines are drawn at any level of the fractal, it damages everything above it in the fractal as well. If at any level, you are able to say “this is definitely and objectively not mine”, then how can the whole nation be yours? And if the whole nation is not yours, that is bad for the ethnus, and thus bad for everyone deriving meaning from it.

“The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, bethought himself of saying This is mine, and found people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society. From how many crimes, wars and murders, from how many horrors and misfortunes
might not any one have saved mankind, by pulling up the stakes, or filling up the ditch, and crying to his fellows, "Beware of listening to this impostor; you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all, and the earth itself to nobody."

-Jean Jaques Rousseau

IXXIX Home
Just as any sort of radical “striking out on your own” is rather unnatural because people ought to love their families, it is also rather unnatural because people ought to love the land which is their home. They also ought to have a certain gratitude to the land for having played a key role in raising them. But not only is home meaningful because you’ve been there your whole life. It becomes far more meaningful when you’ve been there longer than your whole life. Just as ritual and symbol accumulate deep meaning over time as passed down generations, and ethnos accumulates deep meaning over time as passed down through generations, so does a piece of land. There is a special bond to the soil which is gained when you know that where you are is where your family has been for a hundred or a thousand years. Those who either don’t have that, or don’t appreciate it, are missing out on something.

At the personal level, this means that it is terribly bad to split your home into four piles of cash in your will. Do everything in your power to keep it in your family, especially if it has already accumulated generational meaning. That is something which it takes many people to create, and only one person to destroy.

A human life, I think, should be well rooted in some spot of a native land, where it may get the love of tender kinship for the face of the earth, for the labours men go forth to, for the sounds and accents that haunt it, for whatever will give that early home a familiar unmistakable difference amidst the future widening of knowledge: a spot where the definiteness of early memories may be inwrought with affection, and kindly acquaintance with all neighbours, even to the dogs and donkeys, may spread not by sentimental effort and reflection, but as a sweet habit of the blood. At five years old, mortals are not prepared to be citizens of the world, to be stimulated by abstract nouns, to soar above preference into impartiality; and that prejudice in favour of milk with which we blindly begin, is a type of the way body and soul must get nourished at least for a time. The best introduction to astronomy is to think of the nightly heavens as a little lot of stars belonging to one's own homestead.

-George Eliot

LXXX Inheritance
The same can be said of vocation. It is most meaningful when received through heredity. It is also taught best in that context, because parents are the most loving teachers, and the teachers who understand you the best.
Heredity adds meaning to all sorts of things. Even mundane objects. Part of the beauty of tradition, in all forms, is the beauty of heredity. So long as things are inherited, they all reinforce the family, and reinforce each other, and become something bigger and stronger than each aspect would be on its own.

GAEV. And do you know, Luba, how old this case is? A week ago I took out the bottom drawer; I looked and saw figures burnt out in it. That case was made exactly a hundred years ago. What do you think of that? What? We could celebrate its jubilee. It hasn’t a soul of its own, but still, say what you will, it’s a fine bookcase.

PISCHIN [astonished]. A hundred years. … Think of that!

GAEV. Yes … it’s a real thing. [Handling it.] My dear and honoured case! I congratulate you on your existence, which has already for more than a hundred years been directed towards the bright ideals of good and justice; your silent call to productive labour has not grown less in the hundred years [Weeping.] during which you have upheld virtue and faith in a better future to the generations of our race, educating us up to ideals of goodness and to the knowledge of a common consciousness.

-Anton Chekhov

LXXXI Enchantment
All of this is undergirded by an enchanted worldview. To people throughout almost all of history, the land was full of spirits, the ethnos was full of spirits (through the ancestors), and the king was affiliated with spirits through recounted ancestry or symbolic marriage. The city was sometimes worshipped as a spirit. The traditional world relies on a backing of greater-than-material significance.

LXXXII Immigration
Immigration. What is it good for? Nothing. It is in fact very bad. It takes these delicate braids of tradition, soil, and blood, and drops in something which does not belong there. So it’s clearly bad for the society accepting the immigrants. But it’s mostly bad for the immigrants themselves: they’re cut off from the home and the community which provide them with meaning, and dropped into a world of unfamiliar aliens they don’t understand who don’t love them, on soil which is for them nothing but cold and unfeeling dirt, under gods which are not their own.

Now, I love Europa with all my heart, but I don’t love only her. I do in fact think that not engaging in cruel behaviour is good. Therefore I do not advocate murdering all of the racial minorities. Even if you don’t have qualms about that, it would probably backfire on you in the long run, because not liking mass murder is I think actually a reasonably natural sentiment to have. And deporting people who we already welcomed would be breaking our word, which is not good. More than that, though, to the extent that they’ve settled down and started putting down (still shallow) roots, to transplant them again would be a
repeat of the tragedy which was them ending up in Europe and away from their homes in the first place. This is especially the case for those who have been here for generations. And two wrongs don’t make a right. If people want to go home, we should assist them, but our main goal should be to be careful about immigration numbers entering Europe going forward.

For what it’s worth, being an asshole to ethnic minorities for purely ethnic reasons qualifies as a minor cruelty, but also usually a pointless one, so generally don’t do it.

LXXXIII America
“A nation of immigrants”.

LXXXIV “Conservatism”
To be an American traditionalist is kind of a contradiction in terms. My existence is incoherent. If traditionalism were contentless, it would be fine, and if it were entirely contentful, it would be fine, but traditionalism in the strict sense is between those two things. It shifts itself somewhat to its context. But the American context is simply not under the domain of its function; the input is invalid. A traditionalist in the strict sense would wish for something radically different from what America is, and even what America in principle desires to be. But no true traditionalist could ever hate the context they are born into. That is the least traditional thing (which is a tell-tale sign that no matter what I was advocating for, I never had what could be called a conservative mind or temperament).

So I will simply ask America to be true to itself. It has no nation [other forest], its people are severed from their past, and its land is inhabited by someone else’s gods [forest], but damned if it doesn't have one hell of an archetypal principle. There is most assuredly a particular beauty in the American Idea, the American Dream.

This is why the constitution ought to be respected. It is what we have. Being a nationless-State, it is an essential part of what makes us who we are, something rather than nothing. My support for American citizens having absolutely unrestricted access to firearms of all kinds does not stem from a belief that this will make people safer, or a belief that every country should do likewise. It is simply the most American approach, and I want America to be true to herself. What else does she have?

Within American politics, I will often support the “establishment”. If you’re going to destroy America and build something new over part of it, fair enough, I have often desired to do so, but do it openly, and violently, and go all the way with it. Don’t use America’s institutions against themselves, and pretend to be American while doing it.

LXXXV Refugees
Hospitality is a traditional value. If you want to rebuild the West on the ideals found in the Homeric epics or The Poetic Edda, it cannot be inhospitable to the wandering outcast. This can be said all the more strongly if you are also drawing on the Bible.
But then, a massive amount of Europe’s problem in terms of ethno-religious demographics is caused by people who are ostensibly refugees. And I accept that a lot of them are, in fact, refugees, because the Middle East has been a pretty nasty place recently. With this in mind, I would suggest that there is a rightist argument for Neo-Conservative foreign policy.

>um duh, neoconservatism is right wing
You think that because you are uneducated.

Anyway, here is my argument: we don’t want more Arabs in Europe. Arabs, if they are truly refugees (let’s give them the benefit of the doubt) don’t want to be in Europe anyway. The problem is that the Middle East is nasty right now (and this is partly the fault of borders drawn by Europeans with little regard for reality on the ground, and probably compounded by later failed interventions). Thus, the only way to fix the immigration problem is by fixing the Middle East. The only way to fix the Middle East is through war. I advocate re-invasion. If Western powers actually wanted to dedicate the resources, they could win easily, and hand a secure Levant back to its proper rulers. The only reason it hasn’t worked before is because we wouldn’t dedicate enough resources over a long enough period to actually finish the job.

LXXXVI Afghanistan
The withdrawal from Afghanistan was a heinous evil. Do I really hate the Taliban so much? No. There’s nothing that unusual about the society they’ve built, not in the abstract. But to give people a new society, with a new set of freedoms which they previously didn’t have, and let them become accustomed to that [LXI], and even set up an illusion of stability, gives you a moral duty to maintain what you started if you can.

The Afghans didn’t need Republicanism, but to give it and then snatch it away was enormously cruel.

LXXXVII Ecofascism
The traditionalist should be an environmentalist. A strident one. Most essentially of all, nature is beautiful. Even the parts we don’t see much [XL]. It is also Real [connection], and pre-existing, and a gift [connection], and to destroy it would be ungrateful. Like traditions, particular pieces of habitat and particular species of flora and fauna are things which are easy to destroy and practically impossible to bring back, so even if you don’t see great value in one, consider that it is a deathly serious thing to decide for all of your ancestors to the end of time that something is not worth having.

Also, your nation has grown accustomed to having its land [connection].

Your nation’s geology, flora, and fauna are a part of its transcendent national archetype. Even if you don’t believe that sort of thing, the land is your people’s home, and loving home is natural. Plus, nature holds many of your people’s gods. And if even that is too sentimental, consider that your people likely came to be who they are because of their home, with their sensibilities affected in subtle ways. Who’s to say your people will survive as they are if the landscape that shaped them to be that way does not?
Likewise, the environmentalist should be a nationalist. How can you claim to care about what is in a place naturally and then ignore the culture which is there naturally? The two ideologies have precisely the same logic, and some people have simply forgotten this. After all, isn’t the classic critique of environmentalism “you can’t really define wilderness” or “who’s to say this skyscraper isn’t part of nature?” If someone is asking such things, there is no answer which will satisfy them, but it’s crucial to see that the logic which says “you know, this forest used to be an inland sea, so I don’t know what you’re so worked up about” is the same logic which says “the Japanese aren’t really indigenous, after all they replaced some neolithic Jomon people 800 years before Christ”.

LXXXVIII Sensations walking in a forest
The fey are strange. The nymphs are not just your next door neighbors. Nature is powerful and mysterious and magical. This should not be downplayed.

But, but, the fey are my strange forest. Their strange ethereal beauty is beautiful according to my culture’s beauty standards, they are part of my culture’s mythology and sense of self. They are utterly alien, and yet their alienness is within the European frame of reference.

Whenever I walk in the woods, there is something of a struggle in my soul. I will imagine the enchanted world which I’m told my ancestors inhabited, but then I will remember that they didn’t live here. Did the nymphs and faeries cross the ocean with me? Even if a few stowed away, nature as a whole here has continuity with nature as it was before I arrived.

And if nature can simply “present itself in different ways to different people”, then the faeries were a facade, and magic is dead, and that is far far worse.

I was raised in Cascadia, and so of course these forests are my home, and I truly love my home. And yet there is often the gnawing sensation that I am walking through someone else’s gods.

LXXXIX Colonial Curse
With that in mind, it is very hard for an American forest to be American in the way that a German forest can be German. This is perhaps a particular way of looking at something which is an overarching issue. First with the Atlantic crossings, and then definitively with the Revolution, we cut ourselves off utterly from our own roots. I do not deny that new roots started growing, in some places, Appalachia especially, but the Federal state eventually was clearly following an ideology opposed to “nationhood” in the traditional sense (and America is rather too large and varied to be a “nation” anyway), and for better or for worse the American archetype is now fundamentally Liberal (in the broad sense), so those new roots will only go so far. This is the colonial curse.

I’ve sometimes thought about taking it upon myself to rectify this for my ancestors. Move them back to Scotland or Germany by moving myself back before having them. But two wrongs don’t make a right. I would only be doing the thing which got me into this in the first place, which is to say, leaving the place you were raised.
sometimes [Kate] wondered whether America really was the great death-continent, the great No! to the European and Asiatic, and even African Yes! Was it really the great melting-pot, where men from the creative continents were smelted back again, not to a new creation, but down into the homogeneity of death? Was it the great continent of the undoing, and all its peoples the agents of the mystic destruction! Plucking, plucking at the created soul in a man, till at last it plucked out the growing germ, and left him a creature of mechanism and automatic reaction, with only one inspiration, the desire to pluck the quick out of every living spontaneous creature.

-D.H Lawrence

**XC Purity**
You know what’s extremely un-traditional? Purity. Absolutes. Purity, and anything even approaching purity, is ideological, and can only be achieved through deeply untraditional totalitarian methods.

The current situation in which sexual deviancy is celebrated and paraded around and taught to children is not traditional. But “no gay sex is happening at all” is also not how a traditional society works. Abnormal sexuality would be a little rarer, a little less public, a little more taboo in polite company, but plenty of it would still be happening semi-privately, and most people would have better things to do than care about that at all.

The current situation where miscegenation is entirely accepted and officially unnoteworthy, is not traditional. Does this mean there would be no cross-cultural marriage in a traditional society? Not by any means. It would just be a little less common, a little less encouraged, a little less normal.

It has become far too normal to eschew the family structure, and never have children. Ancient bloodlines are being cut short pointlessly. Does this mean that in a traditional society, there are no old maids or old bachelors? No, not necessarily. The norm around getting married and having children would just be stronger in peoples’ consciences than it is.

There is vastly too much immigration in the world. People are untethered from their mother soil. Within cultures, it is atrocious how normal it is to move far away and not to see your family much. Does this mean that a traditional society would attempt to enforce a zero immigration policy, or that nobody would ever strike out on their own? Of course not. It just wouldn’t be so damned normal.

We in modernity have taken in the language of contract, of rights and obligations, so thoroughly, that we find it hard to accept that the ideal state might not be an absolute. We demand clear lines in the sand, and so you have to believe that either nobody should get to do [x], or else it's perfectly fine if everyone is doing [x]. And I just don’t believe that.

**XCI Contrast**
One of the sad things here is that there is in fact something special and admirable about striking out on your own and finding new horizons for yourself. There is something fascinating and enriching about encountering a foreigner, and there is a beauty to the one who travels far and wide. Forbidden love, whether homosexual or cross-cultural, is deeply inspiring and moving, one of the best stories we as humans have come up with. But if those things become normal and blase, they lose a great part of what is special about them.

**XCII Something missing**

The traditionalism defined above is entirely particularist in its morality. You do what’s good for your people, from the smallest scale to the largest. The notes I added above about not genociding people aren’t even really all that native to this line of thought, they have just found themselves dumped here from their more natural homes in other parts of the document to save my ass. They immigrated, as it were.

Particularism is a perfectly reasonable way to live your life most of the time. But pushing on it reveals that it probably isn’t everything. In a far right-wing discussion on the internet, someone sometimes asks the question “when does a claim to a piece of land for a particular ethnicity lose/gain its validity”. This is relevant because being an Idenitarian in Britain and America are very different beasts, when we’ve been in one place since time immemorial and the other only 400ish years. British nationalists can speak of indigeneity, but their Old Stock American allies will feel thrown under the bus by this, because that language is not available to our rhetorical armoury. Anyway, the proper traditionalist answer to “what does it take to have a right to a claimed piece of land” is “who cares, rights aren’t real, all that matters is what’s good for your people”. This has a certain beauty, but is also paradoxically quite untraditionally radical. I do believe particularism, and yet the fact that even in the most strongly particularist of circles that question of claims sometimes comes up, is just a sign post pointing to the fact that there is something deep and innate in the desire for universals. “Your people mind your own business, and we’ll mind ours” is still universalistic; full particularism would have no qualms about minding other people’s business (even if usually this is solved by the desire for peace). Formulations of traditionalism in that shape come to be because fairness is deeply ingrained in us [CII]. Even aside from that, I don’t think the inclination to draw the line somewhere at what other people’s business can amount to is only a modern inclination. Our deepest and most primary inclinations are particularist, but our desire for the universal is part of our nature as well.

**XCIII Dionysian Pendulum**

There was once a time when Reason was not highly prioritised. It was a time of terror and darkness. Most people were capable of living under shadow, but a few passionate and morally upright dreamers noticed what was missing, and brought about an enlightenment. I do not question that at every step of the way, there was a nobility of spirit.

Now there is a time when Reason is quite highly prioritised. It is a time of sterile surgical light. Most people are capable of living under pseudo-Apollo, but a few dreamers will notice what is missing. If there are enough, we will revolt, and create a world of terror and darkness. Logos shall be slain, and Queen Pathos shall be crowned. The night will last a thousand years. But a few dreamers will notice what is missing, and we too shall be slain [forces in directions].
Moral Intuitionism

Given that we’ve already taken the step of believing that our feelings (both those we declare to be of the inner eye, and those we declare to be of the outer eye), likely represent something in reality, what can be said of the feelings which tell us that it would be right or wrong to do certain things? Clearly these do not represent objects in the physical world, because they are trying to tell the world to be different. These moral laws, too, must be objects in the transcendent world. We can only find the moral laws through intuition.

The Second Great Circularity

Suppose we accept that we have correctly intuited a moral law (“don’t kill your mother”, for instance). We’ve gone from only having “is” reality to also having “ought” reality. Because of the barrier between is and ought, intuiting moral laws is the only way to find them.

Suppose this law is real. If it is not real, it is a lie, so we had better hope it is real. It is clearly not a physical object, but an abstract object (a blazing light in the transcendent realm).

If it is real, it “is”. Even if we firmly deny any sort of “physicality”, it must “be” in some regard, or else our statement that it is a true moral law is false. But this is terrifying territory to tread. We know that Divine Command Ethics is a failed (usually non-explicit) attempt to bypass the is-ought barrier. How does God’s existence prove that we “should” do what he says? Unfortunately, if our impersonal moral law is real, it falls on the “is” side of the barrier as well. I could very well say “the objective ontological existence of the abstract object which is a moral law telling me not to kill my mother doesn’t prove that I ‘should’ do what it says.”

So then, just like the Divine Command Ethicist, we would have to posit a moral assumption that says we should, in fact, do what the abstract objects in the world of the spirit require of us. That moral assumption is either real and non-physical, or a lie. If it is real and non-physical, this circle starts over again.

I continue to believe in morality, but morality is bizarrely incoherent.

This too is a great vanity which I have seen under the sun.

Dilemmas

But what if you and I intuit different moral laws? Does this mean one of us is wrong? More importantly, what if I myself intuit more than one thing? This is of course where “moral dilemmas” come from. The classic example is of course living in The Third Reich and lying to save the Jews in your basement [connect to ww2 is our mythology]. You’ve intuited a moral law against dishonesty, and you’ve intuited a moral law against aiding in the deaths of innocents. They have come into conflict. We might decide based on this that one of them was actually false. Or at least less important than the other one. But this is the cowardly route. If you had a feeling, and it felt like a feeling representing something real, and then that happened a second time about something else, those things are both real, and to then go back when you’re in trouble and pretend that “actually I didn’t intuit that that one was really very important”, is simply unacceptable.
XCVII Philosophical Polytheism
Don’t you see? Don’t you see? It’s all the same. It’s all the same thing over and over. Frameworks and archetypes and words and principles and moral laws and aesthetics (plural, not mass), and goods. It’s all the same thing. But no matter what you call it, what’s always the same is that there are many decent ones.

The heavens are not tranquil, the heavens are crowded.

XCVIII Intention
There is a general understanding that there is something different between a person killing someone with a rock, and a rock just rolling onto someone and killing them without human effort. The same thing occurred, the only difference was a difference of intentions in the human mind. This should lead us, as we consider ethics, to understand that it is the intentions behind the actions which we can call ethical or unethical.

XCIX Golden rule
When we consider morality in the contemporary discourse, it is very common to point out how varied it is across the world’s cultures and across the ages. To get to the core of the concept, though, we can consider what is generally held in common. Since the Axial Age, at least, one moral credo which has appeared multiple times independently is some variation on the Golden Rule. “Treat others as you would want to be treated”, or, basically, “try to take other people’s desires into account when making decisions”. This sort of thing seems reasonable. We might be tempted to build an objective morality on it. Keep in mind though that it seems “reasonable” because our idea of “Common Sense” is mostly built around the idea of “fairness” [CII]. And we still can’t “prove” that you should be fair. The concept of fairness already implies that you care about something other than yourself, or rather, that you should do so.

The same applies even to weaker versions of the “an it harm none, do what ye will” variety.

C Aside on deduction
Many clever arguments about deductive morality somewhat in the footsteps of Kant have apparently been made. With that in mind, a few words about deduction. Some skipped over steps in the Pyrrhonist Descent, perhaps. First, to the extent that it is mathematical, it requires axioms, as all mathematics does. Also, if its claim to fame is its pseudo-mathematicality, then it appealing to mathematical proof isn’t vastly different from induction appealing to induction. Furthermore, the logical operators are not physical objects; their meanings and connections have to be assigned and intuitively understood.

More interestingly though, is that if you’re going to do proofs that deal with things below the level of statement-logic, the definitions of words and categories are important. As we said earlier, they are essentially implicit premises. And as we saw [connection], words and categories are on rather flimsy ground apart from appeal to the spiritual.

CI What is knowledge
There’s something here about confidence, as well. How much confidence is required to say we know something? On the one hand, mathematical proofs are iron-tight. This is not sarcasm, I have an extremely high regard for pure mathematics; it has delved into realms of pure Truth which are unimaginable to us mere mortals, and it contains immense abstract beauty. But on the other hand, I’m quite sure that proofs have been written which appeared to be correct only because of simple oversights.

I don’t know anything. I’m pretty sure of this, but I accept that I don’t know it for sure. Perhaps the deconstructive process is simply ontologically lacking in profundity, and my statements about lacking knowledge are not true in any meaningful sense.

I believe the Pyrrhonist Descent is something everyone should understand and take seriously. However, if you try to chase out every loose end of it, I’ll admit there’s a hint of No True Scotsman going on. Not because any of the statements are invalid as such, but because we need to consider what knowledge is. I think it is possible some people other than myself DO know things, if we define knowing in a particular way. Knowledge would seem to be a particular level of confidence. I “believe” up to some point in confidence-strength, and afterwards I “know”. By this definition, all which is necessary for knowledge is an extremely strong trust/faith in some particular epistemological framework. Trust is an emotion, so it’s conceivable that by this definition, at least, many people actually do in fact know things.

CII Fairness
Fairness is another one of the deepest things to be appealed to, rather like honesty [VI]. The core of much of logic is a sense of fairness (between ideas). Thus, even if objective logical moralities were a possibility, it would remain that what had really happened was that their logic had been derived from their morals, rather than visa versa, and they had simply forgotten this.

CIII Utilitarianism
Utilitarianism is a really good candidate for objective morality. Pleasure is “feeling good”, and pain is “feeling bad”, so it’s reasonable to say ‘we don’t even have to “assume” that pleasure is good, because we simply define “good” as “pleasurable”.’ That’s all well and good, as long as you’re only dealing with one being’s pleasure. If you have multiple beings, the assertion that you should maximize pleasure across all of them already implies that you care about the other beings, or rather, that you should care.

CIV Further Utilitarianism
One of the many things which bugs me about utilitarianism is that it pretends there is a clear binary of feelings, with things being either pleasurable or painful, rather than a vast kaleidoscope of largely incommensurable feelings. That said, people build frameworks, and this is just a framework [binary thinking] frameworks. I just find it suspicious (and rather inhuman) that the logic you must use to divide things according to this framework is essentially the economic logic of “Revealed Preference” [ego-sacrifice circularity].

Either way, the argument that pleasure is inherently good seems reasonable to me. There are many anti-utilitarians who would deny the principle, but I affirm it. I just also happen to think that pleasure isn’t the only thing which is inherently good.
**CV Anatman**

Buddhism asks us to descend further down into the pit then Descartes and I naturally end up. I say “if there are feelings, there is a feeler”. Buddhism says “maybe not”. This is a reasonable further step on the descent. If we are still going in the downward direction, then my feeling that there must be a feeler is just a feeling. What it would mean for the feelings themselves to be illusory is impossible to understand, but we’ve clearly been under a lot of illusions so kudos to the Buddhists for not ruling these sorts of things out.

**CVI The Will**

Humans feel they have will. It would be difficult to deny that the sensation of choice is a fairly universal one. If we follow this idea, then we can say that, surrounded by a vast churning mass of feelings brought about by our childhood and heritage, our genetics, our head injuries, and whatever else, at the very centre there is the feeler of the feelings, the real “you”. The soul, the thing choosing between feelings, and choosing courses of action. What the Hindus called the Atman. It is also this core of freedom which is the existentialist conception of the self, and insofar as will is a universal experience, this makes existentialism a profound frame of reference.

Positing the will has (at least) two effects. First, things which we would otherwise say are simply the products of feelings, can be seen as decisions of will. Most importantly, this includes the action which is “to believe”. Second, within ethics, will provides something to contrast with the urges. Something to triumph over matter in the name of principle.

The will has a mysterious and paradoxical nature, however. It is a point in the mathematical sense, for it has a clear location (the centre), but zero magnitude. No area. How can it possibly “choose” between things when it lacks feelings to base its judgements on? What can be its goals? Buddhist doctrine of anatman (no-self) thus also has a profundity in terms of the discontinuities in our epistemic existences.

Perhaps if the truth is at the two extremes [connection], then we can say that if belief (which we identified with the emotional/aesthetic responses of feeling “trusting” or “convinced”) can be reconceived as an act of will, then all other feelings could be as well, in which case, because there is under the other framework only feeling, we would say “there is only will”.

**CVII Sixth Sense**

For what it is worth [XXX], I’m not the only one to understand mental/emotional feelings as essentially fitting in the same category as the senses. It occurred to me independently of the Buddhists, but the Buddhists have held the notion for a long time.

**CVIII The Third Great Circularty**

[connect utilitarianism second half]

(in some sense) an action is only moral if it was more than just something I felt like doing. If I felt like
doing it, it brought me pleasure, and thus could be described as essentially following my own base urges. (in some sense) if I didn’t want to take the action on at least some level, I wouldn’t have taken it.

Fortunately there is the will, but the will is itself a paradox [will!].

This too is a great vanity I have seen under the sun.

**CIX Altruism**
Initially, the first generalisation abstracted at a level past the Golden Rule is “care about others.” Is there any morality which requires only caring about yourself? We have set out to think about a phenomenon which is interesting, noteworthy, and important. Something aesthetically interesting. And I think we can clearly say that what makes ethical behaviour interesting and distinct from other behaviours is the very fact that it involves more than just caring about yourself. If it only involved caring about yourself, it wouldn’t be interesting or noteworthy, and more importantly, it wouldn’t be at all distinct from any other behaviour, because acting on self-interest is precisely what we expect from animals. It is our most basic instinct. It can be explained in evolutionary terms.

Some people have emphasised self-interest in their descriptions of moral behaviour. By being “moral” you gain the good graces of those around you. By not murdering you avoided getting executed. Such incentives surely do shape how we act, but they are not especially interesting, and they are not in any way a basis for morality, because even if “moral” behaviour is in our long term self-interest 90% of the time, you will inevitably come across situations where it is clear even to an intelligent observer that they could gain greatly through immoral means, and never get caught. If your morality does not tell people to sometimes act against their own animal interests, it is not worthwhile to describe it as a morality.

**CX Only people?**
I find the d&d alignment chart evocative. Some have used the “law vs chaos” axis to essentially describe personality type, but that doesn’t strike me as particularly interesting. It’s called an “alignment chart”, it seems like the most interesting approaches to it would have both axes be relevant to the moral/philosophical/political alignment of the character being described. I use the good axis to refer essentially to general benevolence, in a “Golden Rule” sense or a Utilitarian sense: how much do you care about doing what’s good for others relative to how much you care about doing what’s good for yourself. I use the law-axis as a catch all for other behavioural obligations: a “lawful” character might be particularly averse to breaking oaths, or particularly averse to sleeping around, or particularly averse to disobeying their commander.

This brings to light that there are a whole host of other behaviours which are not simply “caring about others”, but which clearly are not driven by self-interest either. Not lying, or not lying under special circumstances, is certainly one thing which many cultures have said you should do even if it is against your self-interests. Following the instructions of someone above you in a hierarchy is another. Cultures also fairly universally have some sort of set of rules about who you can have sex with. But these sorts of ideas cannot easily be reduced to “care about other people”. If you have sex with someone taboo, and
nobody finds out, and you enjoy it and the other person does too, nobody is getting hurt. And yet traditional moral systems around the world deal with sex taboos, and around the world you will occasionally find spouses who are absolutely faithful just for the principle of the thing. There is a proverbial association between hurting others and lying, but in many cases this is a sort of question-begging, because the hurt is caused by a pre-existent penchant to be offended by lies. If the truth is never found, much dishonesty, probably most dishonesty, is harmless. More specifically, oath-swearing, a cross-cultural phenomenon, is only about “benefiting others” if you assume that people are only going to swear to do beneficial things, and more importantly, assume that circumstances never change in such a way as to change the beneficialness of the action between an oath’s swearing and its fulfillment. And yet around the world you find peoples where lying or oath-breaking are taboo, and occasionally find people whose word is their bond even when nobody benefits. It even seems to be the most basic moral principle in some regard [connect to “at least I’m honest”]. Likewise, loyalty to superiors is only utilitarian if your superiors are utilitarian, and yet surely there are many instances of people acting against their own interest, and the interest of those around them, in order to obey their master. Even rules which clearly are about caring for others, such as proscriptions of killing, cease to be entirely about caring for other people’s well-being, if they are followed as laws rather than guidelines, for you never know when situations will give surprising results when fed through the utilitarianism-function.

A fool might look at this and say “then these things are not moral”. But most of the world’s moralities deal with them. What’s crucial, though, is that the thing which is interesting and unique about moral behaviour applies to these as much as it does to Golden Rule-following. And that thing which is interesting, is the fact that people are acting against their animal self-interest. Not because they’re insane, or stupid, and don’t realise they’re doing so, but freely.

CXI True Freedom
Kant thought of morality as the state of being truly free. The most basic freedom for a spiritual being is to be free from pure slavish adherence to the desires of the flesh, and there is a dignity in having this freedom. I agree whole-heartedly. To see will triumph over matter is extremely aesthetic. But you see, the interesting and unique thing about moral behaviour is entirely dependent on what is not driving it. Spiritual freedom, moral dignity, and being highly aesthetic, come from not being ruled by individual selfishness. They don’t come from one precise thing that does drive your actions.

Here, then, is my ethics. Take a principle [philosophical polytheism], something potential, and be guided by it rather than your stomach. But you see, we can extrapolate this aesthetic further. It is not just your stomach, it is all the matter in the world which would push you to behave in a certain way. Ethical behaviour, extrapolated from what we found interesting about it in the first place, is the conquest of the material by the ideal. The Triumph of the Will.

CXII Love
Love is the Christian’s high ideal. “God is love”, after all. Some Christian philosophers have therefore built a sort of consequentialist ethics where rather than maximising “pleasure”, love is the ultimate desirable quality.
I don’t know if I did that exactly, but can’t you see that it is all about love, really? Of course all the traditionalism stuff is extrapolated from loving your mother. But on a much more basic level, what does it matter if there are many beauties and so on, if we don’t love them? To some extent they can’t exist for people who don’t love them at all, for it is partly by my love for a particular aesthetic that I recognise it.

This is placed here for a reason. On some level, what’s good in moral behaviour is the love. This is to some extent a love-maximising ethics. Behaviour where you don’t act in your own self-interest means you love something. It’s the love which is good, changing your behaviour/altruism/self-sacrifice is just the strongest possible evidence that you love the thing you claim to love. It is fanatical devotion to something which I am seeking out.

CXIII War
Suppose we wish to be very good. If we wish to be very good, then we must ask ourselves what the most basic selfish fleshly desire is. Of course we would say “to continue living”. Thus, the greatest sacrifice is to sacrifice human life. The ultimate way of showing how much you love your principle, is to die for it. What would you do if you were willing to throw away your life, and even other people’s lives (which after all are also rather fleshly), because you loved your principle so much? You would join an army whose goals were based around or at least aligned with your principle. Combat in war is the highest of ethical behaviours.

CXIV The Will to Power
It is also noteworthy that since “reason” is fundamentally incapable of uniting everyone around the good, if you know what is good, the only way to bring it into being is through force. There is only the will to power.

CXV Logic of the Duel
But what if we want to know whether the principle someone is fighting for is real or not? We get a peculiar result: the strongest indication of the principle’s reality (if we aren’t confident about this in our own intuition) is that others have confidence in its reality. But how could someone possibly put “I am confident in the reality of [x]” in stronger words, than by being willing to die for x. That someone, especially many someones, fought for something, shows that it probably has something to it.

Even if it does not, remember the words of Lincoln, spoken where many had died: “But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate -- we can not consecrate -- we can not hallow -- this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract.” Spilt blood consecrates the spiritual land as much as the physical. Something so extreme as war cannot be entirely meaningless, and so sheds real meaning on the principle, even if it had none to begin, for every shed drop of blood. The mangled corpses of young men become an altar, and ideas rise to apotheosis on its smoke. Perhaps the men rise as its angels. As with all things, life is lost in one place so that life may be had somewhere else [connection to meat, connection to paganism, connection to Christ]

CXVI Greater than the sum of their parts
Archetypes of ideological worldviews, or archetypes of traditional national ways of life, come with parts that sometimes seem ugly. At the very least looking in from the outside, we can say the same about
frameworks. We can also say the same about moral laws, because, to once again use the cliche example, they sometimes tell you to betray the Jews in your basement.

As I have written about before elsewhere, the great beauty of the Spartan system and the Southron system were both reliant on an underclass who didn’t get to experience the full measure of those systems’ gifts. Likewise, while the Communist Regime in the realm of spirit may not sell Pepsi-Cola, it doesn’t necessarily have much aversion to what outsiders would consider show trials and the secret police. And existentialism is wonderful, but it sure does have a way of disintegrating your social bonds.

Nonetheless, be what you are [XXXIII]. There are many goods, because there are many beauties, but each of these goods has parts which, when separated out, appear ugly. But what’s beautiful is the whole, in which all the parts fit together [connect to ethnonationalism connect to aestheticising politics], and even the “ugly” parts have a certain terrible beauty when seen in relation to the whole. If you take parts out, it would be incoherent, hollow, plastic, fake. The fact that it’s flawed is part of what tells you it’s real and genuine. Reality [connection], honesty[VI], the genuine, these are aesthetically powerful. Each principle has its own beauty. If it decides that it has had enough of “becoming what it already is”, then that beauty will die and never be seen again, and that is a tragedy. If you try to eliminate all of the bad, you end up with only the bland.

What are you if you are not loyal [XI]?

**CXVII Marks for effort**

If morality is about intentions [rocks don’t murder people probably], then fairness and universalisation indicate that I can’t just hold up my good intentions as the only valid ones. It’s all a question of whether the one acting thinks they are right, and whether we can distinguish their behaviour from the behaviour they would have if they didn’t care what was right.

**CXVIII Struggle**

So, war is the highest expression of ethics. What kind of war would be the best? The one where you sacrifice the most, which is to say, the one with the worst odds (so long as it can be called a war). A revolution. We could arrive at the same answer by considering what we said ethical behaviour attempts to do: conquer matter to ideal, or to will. A revolution is what happens when you look even at the world in your immediate vicinity and say “this is not satisfactory”, and decide to fix it in the most extreme way possible. Because you love your principle that much. The revolutionary is the paragon.

Only slightly less ideal is the enforcer of some supposed force of order who encounters a situation in which he is not loved, and in which the force of order has little power, and chaos reigns. In a way there’s not much difference between the two ideas. They might have somewhat different aesthetics though.

*Red: The Blood of Angry Men*

*Black: The Dark of Ages Past*

*Red: A World About to Dawn*

*Black: The Night that Ends at Last*
Les Miserables

CXIX Catalonia!
There is a way to maintain purity without betraying your aesthetic, even if your aesthetic has parts which you deem impure [connect to “oh no”]. The way to do it is to lose. To die (but not entirely intentionally of course). You see, while in the state of war, you are focused on fighting. It’s once you win, and start shaping things to your will, that you have to enforce the ugly parts of your agenda that make the beautiful parts work. They often come rather into the foreground, in fact. But you cannot be blamed for what you never had the chance to do! Die in Catalonia! Why live to become Stalin?

You do not even have to work out entirely what you do believe in, and how you would shape the world. You can love several principles that are not entirely coherent with each other, and if you die a martyr, first of all you die the best death possible, and second, you never have to choose between the beautiful things.

Let others rise, to take our place
Until the earth is free!
-Enjolras, Les Misérables

CXX Guillotine
But if your revolution wins, and your principle is something substantial, and you truly love it, and you are intent on conforming matter to ideal, go all the way. The revolution should be revolutionary. France is the example. Enemies of the principle were killed. In a land which had been Christian for over a millennium, Reason was literally worshipped. Isn’t that incredible? And the very structure of time itself was altered, the division of it to conform with reason, and the beginning of it to conform with the Revolution. In 1789, a few men proved irrevocably to all of history that we are not slaves to matter.

As one of my actors put it, “Heads rolled, mutherfucker.”

A Revolution is a simple thing.
-Anastasia

CXXI Fiery Eyes
Don’t you see? Don’t you see? I look at the propaganda posters of totalitarian regimes, and see something I want, something I want desperately. It’s not doctrines I’m looking for. It’s fiery eyes! It’s sparks! It’s something that makes people’s faces look like they’re actually alive! That is what I’m looking for. That is what is important. It doesn’t matter where it comes from.

CXXII Still something missing
I do believe in the Romantic Ethic. Love sanctifies. But there is also the dreadfully irritating universalising tendency [XCII]. We set out to think about ethics, and got to something so far from what we originally meant by that, that I think the natural tendency, even if you followed me here, is to say, “but surely there must also be principles that are better than others. Surely we are being too fair”. There is no
room for that idea anywhere conceptually close to the Romantic Ethic, so it must sit on the opposite side. Perhaps there is the Romantic Ethic, fully aetherial and concerned only with intention, and on the other end of the world, there is some Natural Law, concerned only with the ideal arrangement of the material.

CXXIII The Captain
I read a hypothetical once about a captain who didn’t do the proper safety checks before one of his voyages. Nothing bad happened. However, if something bad had happened, it would have been his fault. He did the same thing whether an accident occurs or not, therefore he has done something horrible. That is the result of an ethics which does not measure only what physically occurs [rocks and morality].

I don’t like it though. If I met that captain, I would want to comfort him, and say “all’s well that ends well, nothing happened.” Thus I want there to be two ethieses: one which is a natural law, concerned only with the physical result, which allows me to sympathise with the captain, and another which is Romantic law, dealing only with intentions, which allows me to sympathise with all who do horrible things but believe they are doing what is right. The only ones I would be very begrudgingly forced to condemn in my heart are those who fall afoul of both [connect to Yanderes and Tsunderes, Brynhilds and Gudruns, Lords Prayer, actor’s philosophy, all things beautiful, “am I Fluttershy?”]

CXXIV Funny how that works
My heart has perhaps acquired the Romantic persuasion, but it did so in America, so of course it arrived at traditionalism somewhere along the way.

CXXV Eros
The mother/child love bond certainly seems to me to have some natural force to it, but the other obvious natural love is that between lovers. Indeed, it is the paradigmatic love, the archetypal love, the flagship love, and we can see this because everyone knows what “being in love” means, and what I meant by “lovers” [metaphors]. True Love is one of the brightest flames in the world of the spirit. Many Christians have taken an extreme Puritanical caution toward Eros, but this is in sharp contrast to the fact that it is erotic love which has always been the image of Christ’s love for the church [below and above]. But Christians are hardly the biggest problem in this regard anymore. Our contemporary moment is allergic to passion and intensity in most all forms. There is now a genre of people, a dominant one on the cultural forefront, who are obsessed with “consent”. They are largely the same sort of people who care about “healthy relationships” (makes me want to vomit). They are essentially robotic, and are methodically reshaping the world in their image. Childhood romance is the purest, and teenage romance the most fiery and full of passion, and so this social tendency is strongly convinced that young love should be considered “unserious”, because to them anything really human must be either unserious or damaging (they are also unnaturally obsessed with age-of-consent). Indeed, love itself, for romantic love is the essential archetype of love, is being defined away by them. If you fall madly in love, they will tell you that it is actually “infatuation”, and try to convince you that real love is something dispassionate and carefully considered. In spite of the words obviously having been made for each other, they are horrified at the thought that romance should ever be romanticised. If you say you are shot with the divine arrow, filled with true magic, experiencing transcendence in your beloved’s form, they will tell you you’re acting like a monkey.
They do not understand that there are things worth getting hurt for. Do not forget that they are cowards.

CXXVI One Flesh
We noted that in our traditional society, the parental bond tends to keep people close to their kin. However, once a child has found their lover, one or the other of them must move away from their family. This can be mitigated if the two families are in fairly close vicinity anyway, which is a strong reason to marry within your tribe [miscegenation section], but that’s only a full solution if both families have an only-child, which is not especially natural. The natural thing is that husband or wife loses, to some slight extent, the closeness they had with their parents. Given how sacred and special a parent’s love is, this is a huge loss. The basic love and the flagship love are in fundamental conflict, one damaging the other as a matter of course, and this is a great tragedy built into our human experience. Perhaps the core and essential tragedy, paradigmatic for the human tragedy as a whole.

One aspect of that tragedy is that it creates a conflict of loyalties. One’s behaviour as a traditionalist is determined by what is good for your own, but if your kin and your lover come into conflict, to keep all of your natural commitments is impossible.

CXXVII Knight in shining armour
Within the Romantic Ethic, one needs a principle to guide one’s actions, something to fight for and place above all else. In thinking about love-stories, I believe I initially had the thought “you can have another person as your principle”. But it’s more than that, really. The lover is the paradigm for the principle. Your principle is a force of attraction toward something you find beautiful, which you love so much as to protect with your life, and which might create a separation between you and you natural community, and create a new set of loyalties which conflict with the old. Of course Marianne is a woman.

There is something archetypal about the knight who goes forth and slays dragons and evildoers, and does so in the name of the princess with whom he is madly in love, but whom he has never touched. The princess is immaterial, and an object in the knight’s future rather than his present. The principle is the ideologue’s princess.

CXXVIII Gavroche
Child soldiers are a good thing. The young have the most fiery love for women whether physical or abstract, the purest idealism. Their eyes are fiery, and their deaths are beautiful. Why should this be wasted?

CXXIX Forbidden love
Within the Romantic Ethic, if we take the lover as the most basic principle (i.e. the most basic thing to contradict with simply protecting your bond with kin), how must we act? What we are measuring is an approximation of love, and we know that romantic love is love if anything is. But how we show it in an ethically relevant way is by acting in a way which requires the triumph of the will over the material world. When is love difficult? When it is forbidden. Love which the world tries to prevent but which nonetheless endures is the love which we can most easily tell has true strength. Romeo and Juliet is the
archetypal love story, and all moral principles other than “do for family” are essentially abstracted versions of romantic love, so *Romeo and Juliet* therefore is a text basic and fundamental to the nature of society, a True Classic. We certainly see the confliction within our heroes’ hearts. It is also appropriate that they are so young, for that is when romance shines the brightest. What’s rather fascinating, though, is that even with this most un-universalisable paradigm of principle, we see the innate desire that one’s principle should be universalised:

**JULIET.**
Come, gentle night, come, loving, black-brow’d night,
Give me my Romeo; and, when he shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine
That all the world will be in love with night
And pay no worship to the garish sun.

[CCXLVI] [XCII, CXXII-CXXIII]

Anyway, whoever made the image below, (and the hordes of people who agree with her (I’m assuming it’s a her)), is not simply a little blind, but the enemy of beauty.

*CXXX Nothing Else Matters*
What is the most beautiful romance?

If my ethics is correct, then the most ethical behaviour comes when the material circumstances present the strongest resistance. Thus, a more taboo relationship requires a stronger love to continue standing defiant.
The most basic sexual taboo is that against incest, so we can start to see that the love stories that burn the brightest might be of that nature. But there are two other considerations. One common forbidden love is homosexuality. This has the beauty of forbidden love, but the reason it’s forbidden is because the sexual act it culminates with goes against natural law. Another common forbidden love is miscegenation. This has the beauty of forbidden love, but the reason it’s forbidden is because it throws away the beauty of specific racial inheritances. Incest does not throw away genetic gifts, and though it is presumably against natural law, if it is between a man and woman the physical action itself is not. But the final consideration is that it is the opposite of miscegenation, and thus the solution to the fundamental tragedy of human existence: the two great loves no longer contradict. When kin is lover, when your principle is a member of your family, the inherent conflict of loyalties which we are born into is eliminated. The two loves flow together into one, and become something even brighter. This is why Cersei and Jaime Lannister are so important to me.

I love Cersei. You can laugh at that if you want, you can sneer, it doesn’t matter. She needs me. And to get back to her, I have to take Riverrun. I’ll send for your baby boy, and I’ll launch him into Riverrun with a catapult, because you don’t matter to me, Lord Edmure. Your son doesn’t matter to me. The people in the castle don’t matter to me. Only Cersei. And if I have to slaughter every Tully who ever lived to get back to her, that’s what I’ll do.

-Ser Jaime Lannister

CXXXI Tipi
An English teacher once attempted to have us go look at furniture. He was somewhat thwarted by the strange furniture present in the Honours Centre, but the point he was trying to make was that chairs need three or four legs to stand on, and thus essay arguments require three main evidences as their body. I think of this document as more of a tipi, or something. Multiple sticks are leaning up against each other, and any two on their own would collapse, but there are enough other sticks applying force to each stick that with enough pixie dust they manage to be some sort of Borromean Rings-like entity.

CXXXII continued
The example of the English teacher, though, shows how even the basis of significant parts of our ideas of epistemology is implicitly in intuitive and all too human analogy. This unfolds into something fascinating once you consider non-literalness in language which is so ingrained we don’t always even notice it (such as the “argument as combat” metaphor). And at the morphological level, we have frankly wild things like “under-standing”.

CXXXIII All-giver
Our basic images, analogies (whether lexical or higher-order but still implicit), and thought patterns in general are brought to us in part by our culture (and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and Viewers Like You. Thank You.). Postmodernism is always reminding us of how deeply our circumstances affect our unexamined assumptions. Our frameworks can hardly be indifferent to those held around us. Many seem to see this sort of thinking as a rebellion against culture, and in some sense it certainly is. Yet…. I like being able to have thoughts. It seems to me that recognising yourself to be bound by culture and to lack a view from nowhere would seem like it should serve to make you love your nation more, for it gifted you your very mind.

CXXXIV Historicism
The vast majority of philosophical discourse, or really intellectual discourse generally, exists in reaction to other things which were recently said (or perhaps said long before, because text allows conversations to be rather spread out in time). Many pieces of thinking can thus only really be appreciated as profound based on the context. The questions and categories used, even if broken and changed, are inherited. Thought comes in “traditions of thought”. Narrative is a basic mode of human understanding, and profundity [connections] is based on what is important to humans [connection].

CXXXV The Fourth Great Circularity
Historicism will look at an idea, and show how it is a product of its history. Objectivity will then tell historicism that it is objectively invalid. Historicism will then tell objectivity how its conclusions are a product of its history.

And so it is with all fields establishing primacy against one another. Each appeals to itself. Perhaps the core example is philosophy and religion.

Religion tells me whether I may engage in philosophy, and where I may allow it to take me, according to the will of God.

But sufficiently different philosophical principles would have resulted in my not believing in God at all.

This too is a great vanity I have seen under the sun.

CXXXVI Music is magic
Visual art of an even slightly representative nature has an obvious secular logic to it. You can say that emotional reactions have accrued to things you have interacted with, and visual art makes use of that. Even abstract expressionism makes use of colours that might get fairly visceral reactions. There is nothing representative about the note f#. Sure, some things in nature presumably make the note, but that is pretty irrelevant to its usage in music, and pure-ish tones in nature are the exception rather than the rule. Of course the beauty of music is about relative relationships between pitches more than the pitches themselves, but there’s nothing in nature that an octave or a fifth by nature “represents”. Music takes physical vibrations, combines them using rules which are entirely abstract and ideal, and powerfully touches the hearts of so-called physical creatures. It takes physical ingredients and brings about physically impossible results. It is sorcery, conjuration. Music is magic.
I’m sure secular theories for this have been built, and will continue to be built, but I don’t think I will ever find a non-spiritual description of music’s power truly entirely convincing. I think sane humans recognise music as containing meaning, and that meaning cannot [XLIV] [art vs art] be a product of a world properly understood as disenchanted.

There’s something else about music though. Not only is it the most obvious form of magic, but it is also the paradigmatic context for the word “harmony” [metaphors]. Much is riding on music, and in music must many things be tied together [correlative thinking].

CXXXVII What you need to hear
This is a weaker claim than saying that there are really multiple truths, but perhaps more palatable, and still worthy of consideration. Perhaps different people need to hear different things. To take the example used by Scott Alexander: there are many selfish people who might benefit from hearing Pete Seeger sing about love and sharing. But there are also a number of people who perhaps will live miserable lives because their upbringing taught them that ever being concerned for their own happiness is selfish, and who have grown to be incapable of standing up for themselves. Hearing Pete Seeger might not help them. On the contrary, reading Atlas Shrugged or The Fountainhead by Ayn Rand might help them. And indeed Rand has changed many people’s lives for the better.

If you tried to test what people need to hear by asking them about themselves, you would get misleading results, because people don’t always know what their problems are. Other methods of determining what people need to hear would require highly elaborate psychological methods. Either way, that would only be relevant in a totalitarian society anyway, and in the second case, a fairly dystopian one. So the best thing to do if you live in a liberal society is simply to keep pumping out literature with philosophies which seem to contradict each other, and hope that they will end up in the hands of the people who need to hear them.

An interesting side-note here is that if I have something to say, it almost certainly isn’t what I need to hear.

CXXXVIII Fear and Awe
When you have a colossal precarious structure which you become used to seeing as a unit, and what leans on what within it is unclear, you will tend not to mess with it. Thus both the essential and the non-essential pieces are preserved. The less imposing and (seemingly) unified the structure as a whole appears, the less safe both the essential and non-essential pieces become. And certainly every time a piece is removed, the more open we are to the possibility of removing pieces.

CXXXIX When the Tao is lost
Deep thinking and intellectual discourse do not on their own land you at morality. But more than that, they in fact have a tendency toward the destructive. Real thinking involves questioning things, and so it is thinking which sends you on the path toward the nihilist pit. Sure, I’ve portrayed myself “ascending” from it, but it’s not something you can entirely unsee, and seeing it doesn’t make your life better. People know right and wrong to begin with. As I said in what I suppose we can call “version 4 of the first
college paper lol”, asking “why” relative to a moral value is essentially asking “why does that matter” or “why should I care”. Someone can give you an answer, but if you were inclined to think it matters you might not have asked in the first place, so you can always keep asking why. ANY set of moral laws or virtues will tend toward atrophy if the people who are supposed to be following them are constantly thinking about whether or not they are valid. It really applies to more than just morality though. Any sort of structure or belief of society suffers from discourse, because all that is holding them all up is the nihilist pit. More damagingly, it is the path toward noise [connection]. If we are not mentally stunted, and we are raised well, we already know how to live, so contrivance and struggle will add nothing toward human flourishing that we don’t have already simply by following nature.

If we had all paid a little more attention to the Tao Te Ching, we would all realise this. It is the truth screaming from almost every page. The work is deeply traditionalist, in a way, with its conservative moral theory, but it is also full to the brim with radical deconstruction of object and adjective, and a recognition of the inadequacy of language. We must recognise that the possibility for and absolute validity of such deconstruction is precisely what makes conservative moral theory a necessity.

Therefore, only when Tao is lost does the doctrine of Virtue arise.
When Virtue is lost, only then does the doctrine of humanity arise.
When humanity is lost, only then does the doctrine of righteousness arise.
When righteousness is lost, only then does the doctrine of propriety arise.
Now, propriety is a superficial expression of loyalty and faithfulness, and beginning of disorder.
Those who are the first to know have the flowers of Tao but are the beginning of ignorance.
-Lao Tzu

**CXL Crux**

We thought about social organisation in sections [LVIII to XCII], and we built something. Then we started to think about ethics in sections [XCIV to CXXX], and built something there. Both sort of more or less flowed out of our basic understanding of feelings and transcendence, and both kind of used mostly the same concepts. In fact, they both said a lot of the same things. But how do they go together? Well, traditionalism concerns itself with what’s around you, asking you to fit into it. It asks what is natural, and real, and calls that good. The Romantic Ethic is concerned with the spirit, and is specifically opposed to what is merely “real” in the physical realm, because if you just go along with that what are you even doing with yourself? What’s defiant is defined as good.

As you can see, these are almost precisely opposite to one another. That is rather problematic. There are several roads forward from here. Absurdism/existentialism, categorization/harmony/balance, synthesis/common enemy, and theology/eschatology. I will take all of them.

**CXLI Mist**
To get the absurdism out of the way:
There are two great principles of action. They tell you to do opposite things. This too is a great vanity I have seen under the sun.

Níl sa saol seo ach ceo,
Is ní bheimid beo,
ach seal beag gearr.

**CXLII I have a dream**
Some have said that a serious ideology must actually know what its ideal world would look like. Now, we’ve pointed to a basic contradiction in what I’ve said so far, but there is a world which represents the whole of it fairly well. And that is the world we see in *Game of Thrones*. Not some particular faction, the world as a whole. And it would cease to be the physical manifestation of what I’ve written so far if anybody won. I mean the world as it is in the middle of the story. A totally fractured world, where violence is the only constant, and most people are simply fighting for their family. Many have some sense of dignity and honour, a few also have some sort of guiding morals in uneasy coexistence with their family loyalty, and a few others, such as Daenerys or the worshipers of the Red God, are dedicating their lives purely and radically to the achievement of ideological principle. Fewer chances to live well than in my world, but more chances to die well. And at the centre of it all, to me, are Cersei and Jaime.

**CXLIII The Three Forces**
Even though the lines between them aren’t actually solid, and this is an extreme simplification for categorisation purposes, we can think of the two trains of thought as having two general archetypes as embodied as political forces. There is The Kingdom, and there is The Revolution, and the world plays out as their interactions. However, there is a third power. As we see in [connection and connection], there is some universalising instinct of humans which is not absolutely satisfied with the logical results of either the traditionalist or the romantic chain of argument. Now, philosophically, the only thing that’s going to hold you at some boring arbitrary middle point is if you have divine prophecy telling you it’s the correct point to stop at [forces and opposed forces]. But the universalising tendency as embodied in the world is The Empire. We all long on some level for all to be judged by the same standard, and to achieve this it is necessary to bring everyone under one power [CCXLVI]. In America people often think of conquerors as greedy or cruel, the adult equivalents of the mean kid in kindergarten. But the better way to think of empire is as the political embodiment of our hopeless wish to have one Good for all. Empire is the opposite of relativism, and conquerors are simply those who dedicate their lives to putting the principle into practice. Is it achieved by force? Certainly. That is how principles are enacted [connection to will to powers]. These descriptions of empire can of course be applied to the modern Neo-Conservative U.N/U.S/NATO empire, but equally to something as cruel and seemingly unprincipled as the empire of Gengis Khan. But in Christendom, THE Empire will always be Rome.

So we have The Kingdom, The Revolution, and The Empire. It occurred to me that I’ve perhaps simply built one of those famous Indo-European tri-function trinities. This doesn’t change the fact that the two principles contradict, and The Empire by its nature has no theory, but the recognition is at least a little comforting. The Kingdom of course is the fertility principle, and thus aligns with The Third Estate. The Revolution is obviously the war principle, and thus aligns with The Second Estate. The Empire is the divine principle, aligned with The First Estate. By its nature, it demands all under heaven.
“Do you believe in anything? Something greater than ourselves I mean. The gods. Destiny. Do you believe there’s a plan for this world? Neither did I. I was a cynic just like you. Then I saw a girl step into a great fire with three stone eggs. When the fire burnt out, I thought I’d find her blackened bones. Instead I saw her, Daenerys, alive and unhurt, holding her baby dragons. Have you ever heard baby dragons singing? It’s hard to be a cynic after that.

-Ser Jorah Mormont.

CXLIV Imperator
Napoleon was not the restoration. Everyone knows the restoration was when the Bourbons came back. In some sense this is obvious, it’s only the restoration when you bring back what there was before. But the underlying reality is that Napoleon was part of revolution. Empire is best built on universal principle, not particularist tradition. It is most true to form when it is the triumph of The Revolution, rather than merely the expansion of The Kingdom. Did something die when Rome became an empire? Sure. But this does not mean that Caesar was a “King”.

CXLV Balance
Light and darkness, Yin and Yang, Apollo and Dionysius. In Tanizaki’s In Praise of Shadows, a stark contrast is made between the aesthetic design style of traditional Japan and the design style of Western modernity, and though the dichotomy is phrased in literal language of light and darkness throughout, I couldn’t help but make the Apollo connection by the end of reading it. And there is one passage in particular that I think sheds some light (oh dear) on the nature of the Apollonian: “...we Orientals tend to seek our satisfactions in whatever surroundings we happen to find ourselves, to content ourselves with things as they are; and so darkness causes us no discontent, we resign ourselves to the inevitable. If light is scarce then light is scarce; we will immerse ourselves in the darkness and there discover its own particular beauty. But the progressive Westerner is determined always to better his lot. From candle to oil lamp, oil lamp to gaslight, gaslight to electric light -- his quest for a brighter light never ceases, he spares no pains to eradicate even the minutest shadow.” Just as the quest for knowledge is symbolically associated with light, and thus Apollonian [connection], so shining a light is also a symbol of dissatisfaction with what surrounds you. Intentional change is inherently Apollonian. With this in mind, it becomes clear that the traditionalist mindset is simply Dionysian, and the romantic ethic, which is centred around willingness to take action based on one’s dissatisfaction with the world as it is, is Apollonian. If Apollonian and Dionysian must be kept in balance, as was in part Nietzsche’s original premise, then so must the traditional and the radical in our behaviour. And just as Yin and Yang rely on each other, and spring from the unnamed, and from the Tao, so are the traditional and radical ultimately one.

CXLVI Harmony
All thinking must at its core be binary. When faced with the undifferentiated whole of reality both physical and abstract, the most basic action which can be taken is to make a division, and the most basic
division is into two parts. The action can then be repeated. This of course would only result in powers of two of things, but you can get other numbers when you can consider that there is also the middle, relative to which the split is made, which at its base is the observer. As A.C Graham explains in “Yin-Yang and the Nature of Correlative Thinking”, one can come to a sort of understanding of things through implicit analogy by considering their syntagmatic and paradigmatic position relative to other things within such a categorisation scheme. The most basic intellectual action may be to divide in two, but this results also in organising into two. Yin and Yang are two “columns” to place things in; they certainly have etymologies, but in practice what matters is that you can now list “opposites” in an organised way, and correlate them with each other. Graham emphasises that such correlations are always present, and are thus embedded in modern science as well, they just don’t often get appealed to explicitly, and are instead buried under layers of analytical thinking, whereas the grand cosmologies of the Han went to great lengths to make their correlations very clear. The next main layers above Yin and Yang are the fours and fives, with five notes, five elements, four seasons, four directions, five colours, five tastes, five smells, and various others, all placed into five columns (those which are four lack an explicit “centre”). Through the binary of Yin and Yang, the five element correlations, the 8 trigrams and the 64 hexagrams, the entirety of the cosmos is understood to be contained within one grand harmony.

There is starting to be a truism that “giving something a name doesn’t mean you understand it”. This is wrong. It is simply a demand for a particular kind of understanding. The non-diachronic version of the induction principle is that the more ways two things are similar, the more ways they are likely to be similar. Indeed, as Graham points out, the social sciences are still fundamentally correlative in nature.

Yin and Yang as the basic binary seems to have cross-cultural confirmation, for if we look at the binary chains hidden in our own thinking, correlative chains leading to light and dark are the most essential. On some level, presumably the most basic binary to start everything off for a physical creature such as ourselves would be pleasure/pain [utilitarianism], and thus good/bad. For a daytime creature, light/dark is an easy symbolism for this binary. In the middle of any binary is the self. The chain is thus a guide to action, in a way that analytical thinking with no room for the self is not.

There is no understanding without putting things into finite systems. If the basic action for understanding is to split things in two, sometimes with a centre, then for there to be any real Truth about particular things in reality, it is necessary to believe that there is, in fact, some scheme of cosmic divisions fitting everything together. I believe that truth exists, and thus I believe that there must be a celestial numerology, into which all true categorisation schemes and paradigms must fit. It is possible to believe that it is chaotic and unorganised one, with few connections between schemes, but there is no reason to assume that is the case if we believe in an ordered creation made by a God of order, which is certainly the more beautiful idea. If binary thinking is fundamental, it stands to reason there would be a most-fundamental binary.

Do four or five elements (depending on whether we’re in the West or the East) logically have to be near the core of the cosmic numerology? No, not inherently. But with the human as subject in the centre, having the directions surround him near the core of the system seems intuitive. If light/dark and thus day/night are on the fundamental binary, then it is entirely reasonable to imagine that the second simplest naturally differentiated division of time, the seasons, should go on the next level of division up from it.
The East and West do conspicuously agree [XXX] that four physical processes (perhaps with a fifth in the middle) which are conceived of as combinations of wet/dry and hot/cold are of essential importance, and there is philosophical meaning to, say, “earth” as an element beyond simply being dirt, so I’m not inclined to simply throw out the classical elements and the associated four-and-five-fold correlations. There is a strong tradition behind them which should inspire a certain hesitance to our iconoclasm, and more than that, a depth of thinking far greater than I have explored, and which most people who condemn the idea haven’t explored at all.

If traditional Western thinking generated individual texts that could simultaneously be read as talking about the philosophy of the soul, or about physical (al)chemistry, or about the movements of the heavens, or about sexual intercourse, is this because we were insane, or is it because maybe we glimpsed the Forms, or at least saw some patterns? Not causal patterns, but harmonies. If they are harmonies, they are analogous to music, and this all about implicit analogies, so there’s nothing random about the Chinese hoping to find the musical scale within the five elements. If there is order and Truth, there is a universal harmony, and if there is a universal harmony, then there is a music of the spheres.

CXLVII Vibration
We mentioned above that correlative thinking, where the subject is allowed to exist as subject, and binaries are drawn relative to him, is moral in a way scientific thinking is not. On the other hand, the correlations of colour, season, and direction which the Chinese made were meant to represent more or less how the world is. The Hellenistic, Renaissance, and Han cosmologies do not conceive of themselves in terms of being either “is”- or “ought”-based. They proclaim a tendency to what would occur according to natural order [spontaneity], but also recognise that, for instance, the cycle of seasons is more consistent than the cycle of elements. Man displays a tendency to act in accordance with the cosmic harmony as well, but some men are more in-tune with nature than others. As Graham rightly points out, the implicit ‘ought’ is that you ought to be in tune with nature [connects to nature].

It is also noteworthy that this means actions which seem to oppose astrological logic do not in fact “falsify” astrology.

CXLVIII Below and Above
If two correlated things act in a shared manner because of their correlation, correlative thinking does not demand that one be causally or logically prior to the other. There is a spontaneity in play, akin to two entangled subatomic particles.

Whether or not anything having to do with laws of physical movement fit anywhere near the core of the celestial numerology, the above is especially important in terms of things which “move” us (that is to say, from which we derive meaning). In intellectual pursuits, we must remember that two things can be connected without stating that one is the progenitor of the other. Things can reflect each other, like Indra’s Net. When they do so, each builds up the meaning and importance of the other in a virtuous cycle, rather than tearing down.
If we say that the patterns we see in the heavens only reflect our natures on earth, we deny the heavens meaning and importance. If we say that the heavens cause the events on earth, we deny the earth meaning and importance. If we say that they reflect each other, then the heavens gain meaning from the earth, and the earth gains meaning from the heavens.

If a pagan or an agnostic says that Jesus is nothing more than a reflection of various grain deities and so forth, they are saying Jesus is unimportant. If a Christian says those grain deities were simply Types and Shadows of Christ, it has a way of making the grain deities in themselves seem rather unimportant. But there is no reason we cannot say that various stories of the old gods gain meaning because of how they reflect what was to come, while also saying that Christ’s story gains meaning because of how it reflects what came before. We are intellectually obsessed with directionality and placing things in order, but often this is simply impoverishing.

CXLIX Behind Small Mercies
If anyone succeeds in building the empire [connection], I suppose you had better hope that the music they’re hearing is at least somewhat the same as what the spheres are actually playing.

CL Euclid
To simply say that our two conflicting chains of thought [crux] are Light and Darkness and must be kept in balance is decent. But to have an entire universal harmony built up around the Yin and Yang, giving everything a proper time and proper place (and proper colour), is even better. It is certainly far better than anything smacking of “philosophical pragmatism”, for even if it very occasionally used ideas from one or another side of the aesthetic dichotomy (and it rarely does so), it would never do so out of any respect for or even recognition of one side or another as a whole. Both principle and tradition are anathema to pragmatists. Giving each a place within a grand scheme honours and lifts up both as themselves.

All that said, this requires access to the grand scheme. I’m sure it exists, but I’m not confident I know anything about it. More importantly, though, neither my traditionalism nor my romantic ethic is an idea which is in any way amenable to compromise, because both are tied to an understanding that frameworks which compromise are disastrous, and that things should be what they are. Thus, next we turn to their common enemy, and their deliciously evil synthesis.

My task is to explain to you as quickly as possible my essence, that is, what sort of man I am, what I believe in, and what I hope for, is that right? And therefore I declare that I accept God pure and simple. But this, however, needs to be noted: if God exists and if he indeed created the earth, then, as we know perfectly well, he created it in accordance with Euclidean geometry, and he created human reason with a conception of only three dimensions of space. At the same time there were and are even now geometers and philosophers, even some of the most outstanding among them, who doubt that the whole universe, or, even more broadly, the whole of being, was created purely in accordance with Euclidean geometry; they even dare to dream that two parallel lines, which according to Euclid cannot possibly meet on earth, may perhaps meet somewhere in infinity. I,
my dear, have come to the conclusion that if I cannot understand even that, then 
it is not for me to understand about God. I humbly confess that I do not have any 
ability to resolve such questions, I have a Euclidean mind, an earthly mind, and 
therefore it is not for us to resolve things that are not of this world. And I advise 
you never to think about it, Alyosha my friend, and most especially about 
whether God exists or not. All such questions are completely unsuitable to a 
mind created with a concept of only three dimensions.

CLI Sickness
If honesty, i.e, the desire for truth, is one of our most core human values [VI], and if the three great 
transcendental values of Hellenism and traditional Christianity are Good, Truth, and Beauty, then the 
pursuit of Truth should be one of society’s primary aims. One of the first priorities when spending the 
public’s wealth should be funding scientific and humanistic undertakings that have no aim other than to 
understand the world better. Another high priority should be the creation of beautiful art, in all forms, 
including architecture. Artists and intellectuals should be many, and they should live decently 
comfortable existences which are no more prone to financial anxieties than anyone else’s. They should 
also have strong societal respect; sure, they are dependent on engineers and doctors and farmers and so 
forth, but if we didn’t aspire to grand frontiers of truth and beauty, we may as well have stayed in the 
jungle, where we were unquestionably happier and healthier.

In terms of what I think is really important, my politics is as follows: we are a society with 
unprecedented wealth. We should therefore be seeing unprecedented production of artistic beauty. While 
individual ‘pieces’ of art are an important part of this, it is most essential that we should be trying to 
create a beautiful environment for ourselves to live in. Every building should be beautiful, trash cans in 
public parks should be beautiful, our street-lamps should be beautiful, our highways should be beautiful. 
Instead, even our most expensive buildings are hideously and intentionally ugly, our interstates are visual 
monstrosities [I have a project for materials engineers], and nearly all utilitarian objects in our 
environments are crude and unornamented [come back to this?]. This is our greatest failing, the greatest 
disaster in our society. Every other society in history that has gotten wealthy (and none of them were 
close to being as wealthy as we are) put their wealth towards pursuing truth and beauty, but we have 
seemingly forgotten what wealth is for. We’ve got everything backwards. Beauty should be basic. Sure, 
I’d love to feed the poor or end sexual degeneracy or save the whales or defeat terrorism, but compared to 
our architectural crisis, all of what passes for “politics” is frankly ancillary and unimportant. We have a 
deep sickness.

CLII wrong turn?
As I said above, the pursuit of truth should also be highly prized. For instance, one of the most prized of 
social advances should be pure mathematics, finding truth in the abstract realm, detached from any 
engineering-level goal. This sort of pursuit is peak Apollonianism. It is the desire to shine a light into 
dark places. Light is knowledge, knowledge is light. But something here doesn’t add up. We said that 
society has attempted to rid itself of the Dionysian [section]. But we also see that, at least in America, 
none of the dominant ideologies of education are actually based around truth and beauty pursued for their 
own sakes. Furthermore, there is also a tradition of beauty which conforms to Reason: classicism, 
typified by Athens in architecture, Florence in painting, Vienna in music, and perhaps Bourbon France in
literature. Wasn’t the classical/romantic pendulum mostly what Nietzsche was talking about with Apollo and Dionysius in the first place? And yet it is obvious we are not living in a golden age of classical style.

What I have to assume happened is that our pursuit of truth led us down a path to the idea that pursuing truth doesn’t matter much. How did this occur?

**CLIII The Republic**

The political branch of classical Reason is the Republic. In essence, the Republic is a political model based on brotherhood rather than parenthood. Monarchial living requires one to indulge in what the Japanese call *amae*, or passive love. You have to be able to rest like a babe in its mother’s arms, comfortable in the knowledge that your superior will provide for you. The opportunity to *amaeru* our mother (and others) is one of our basic psychological needs, but given that it is literally infantile, it is quite Dionysian. Indeed, a great deal of sexual perversion, which is the hallmark of Dionysianism (or a great deal of *my* sexual perversion, at any rate) is in some way connected to the infantile state, generally of course because it is where everything starts out, but more specifically because it is the state prior to the repression of our urges. Japan, out of all the industrial nations, is the one where Pathos reigns most purely supreme, and Reason, indeed, axial civilisation as a whole, is given the least priority. The German “Sonderweg” pales in comparison to Japan’s homey decadence. It is not a coincidence that they are seemingly the only ones who recognise *amae* as a positive. In the west, moving past it is the defining trait for having ceased to be a baby. Of course, it is possible to have a monarchy without being quite as Dionysian as Japan, but the point that it is perhaps not the best possible candidate to be classicism’s political wing still stands.

To approach from another direction, when trying to follow the Apollonian ideal of clear thinking, and thus assuming only a small number of highly abstract truths and deriving thought from there, one tends to find some idea of equality among men. This pushes you toward a political system of fraternity rather than maternity/paternity. Something Republicanesque could in theory form from the outgrowth of a family, if, once the parents died, the eldest of the children did not have much of any privilege, but the family still maintained community. Equality does have its own aesthetic appeals (including some which might be described as moral). But as with many things, its beauty is best appreciated by actually becoming acquainted with the classical republics [acquaintance], which you will have to do on your own.

**CLIV Yeoman**

To the citizens of the classical republics, the opposite of liberty was dependence. Citizenship and equality were, at least initially, for property owners who could support themselves from their land. However, we must be careful in what is meant by dependence. It was not understood that in order to have liberty we must be rugged individualists, exactly. It was understood that there was always *interdependence* in a proper human community, and the republic existed so that you would be dependent on the group as a whole, rather than on the whims of an individual (liberty was thus your participation in the government, not the government’s lack of intervention). This sense of interdependence was made manifest by the militia service of all citizens; all understood viscerally that their lives depended on the martial virtue of the men in the phalanx standing to their left and their right. War was the field on which virtue was proven, and this was essential, because the republic was conceived of as being predicated on virtue. Fortune throws unpredictable challenges, and through virtue fortune may be subdued.
This leads to a number of value-judgements: first, the banker is a tyrant. In seeking to lend money, you are seeking to make other people dependent upon you on an individual level. Second, the merchant neither serves the republic by making something new, nor rests in classical liberty the way a land owner can. Third, allowing land (the basis of wealth in these societies) to be casually bought and sold as a commodity was disastrous, because it threatened the basic yeoman-farmer status which gave the citizens their economic independence and their political equality.

**CLV Machiavelli**

During the Italian renaissance, there was a resurgence of interest in republicanism. However, throughout much of the peninsula, the landed Italian aristocracy had been replaced with an elite of merchant families. With wealth no longer primarily a function of real estate, the economic underpinnings of republicanism were gone. With the death of aristocracy and the rise of the merchant elite we also see the end of combat as an elite behaviour; Italian warfare was quite often reliant on mercenaries.

The most famous theorist of this era is of course Machiavelli. He understood there to be three political situations one might find oneself in. First, one might live in a situation which is stable and flourishing because it is the correct system, spiritually speaking (which to Machiavelli was a classical republic). Second, the situation might be stable and flourishing because it has a long-standing tradition [LXI]. The third situation is instability. The third situation is akin to the theoretical Hobbesian “state of nature”, insofar as your basic relationship with those around you is one of war. How to succeed in the state of uncertainty was the subject of *Il Principe*, but that does not mean that Machiavelli believed the state of uncertainty to be either desirable or inevitable.

The political philosophers of Florence tried their damnedest to resurrect the Republic, and between 1400 and 1600 many fell deeds of beauty were done in Tuscany. But on a world-historical level, the result was that classical liberty was poisoned by commercialism. These men weren’t stupid, but *Il Principe* is all that is remembered. There is a ‘virtue’ of sorts which is relevant to surviving the state of uncertainty, but it is not the old kind. Rather than subdue fortune, this form of ‘virtue’ is offered opportunities by fortune. It is now approximately a mercantile ideal, and thus fully incompatible with classical liberty. The relationships within the free market are relationships of war, and only a few (the “princes”) will succeed (and even fewer will find it fulfilling). Those who are not “princes” are forced into dependency. But not a comfortable dependency, for the Prince derives his power from his expertise in navigating the state of uncertainty, and thus does not want the state of uncertainty to go away.

Wherever Kapital reigns, we live in *Il Principe*. We cannot entirely live in the type 1 regime, or even become the type 2 regime, because a society with an economy centered around the volatile markets selling debts and equity on a competitive basis is inherently a dynamic system rather than a stable one. Everything comes down to NYSE numbers, which is to say, fortune, and thus a small few who thrive in situations of chaos and ruthlessness will rise to the top, and all others will become their peons. Even those things which are real, such as labour and land, are eaten by fortune, and become “commodities”, which is to say, quantities of fictitious tokens. The real is turned unreal.
There is a danger that all men, and all sublunary things, will now become things of paper, which is worse even than to become things of gold.  

-J.G.A Pocock

CLVI Walmart

If we turn back to our two chains of thought, tradition and principle, we can see that Kapital is not on the side of tradition.  Capitalist competition rewards innovation, so anything traditional and stable will be unable to survive.  Capitalism is a battleground, and so the sentimental bonds which for a traditional society are replaced by deals, which are what you make with the enemy [connection].  Without such bonds, we follow our animal instincts, and thus tradition is destroyed if there is a way which is cheaper and more efficient.

CLVII Machine

At first glance, if the unreal is taking over the real, it might sound like Kapital is an example of principle, a victory for the romantic.  But this is not so either.  The oft repeated logic of capitalism is that it allows things to function properly while everyone acts selfishly.  The whole idea of the romantic ethic was to be ruled by something other than your stomach, but capitalism is a result of giving up on the idea that anyone might ever rise to that level.  The markets in debt and equity are an artifice without an ideal.  Capitalism is an unideology, not because it is natural, but because it is technological.

Technological advancement is motivated primarily by two things:  human greed, and human sloth.  We want more, and we want to do less.  Every new technology allows us new ways to cater to our lowest impulses.  Capitalism is a machine which produces new machines, and it reduces us to machines ourselves.  It is an effective system for generating fictitious tokens, and so not just real things, but also ideal things, can be eaten by the machine.  Our causes, our identities, and our relationships can all be and have to some extent mostly all been commodified.

CLVIII Consume

People are good at becoming accustomed to things [connection].  However, going from a situation which asks something of us to one which doesn’t is much harder than the reverse, because of our base instincts.  The machine-god Kapital simply creates means [connect to rational will].  It is amoral, and asks nothing of us.  Thus, the machine-god Kapital is not simply a status quo, it is a force in a direction, and a force which is effectively impossible to defeat [direction and morality].  The meaningfulness of an idea is at least somewhat related to the world it finds itself in, and Kapital is the dominant force in the present moment.  If you are nihilistic, or, what’s worse, lost in the noise, this does not bother Kapital.  It can make money off of that.  If you are apolitical, Kapital is fine with that.  It doesn’t need your enthusiastic support to continue being the direction of history.  The faster technology and wealth grow, the more powerless and irrelevant the political sphere will be, and it is already largely powerless and irrelevant.  This leads to an interesting result:  if you are political, Kapital is your biggest enemy.  Arguing about ends is all well and good, but while you are bickering, Kapital the endless will be plugging along like the machine it is, with a side effect of its means-improving task being the cementation of humanity into a state in which we are too lazy or selfish to be bothered with any kind of intangible ends at all.  Even friendship, which is something you don’t particularly have to be any kind of cloulduckoolander to appreciate, is being inputted into a machine, and sold as a product.  “Social media: the faster, easier way
to socialize\(^1\) (because our desire for human connection is apparently weaker than our sloth and desire to not go outside)”. The romantic ethic of principle and the natural community of tradition have at this moment one and the same goal, and one and the same enemy. This unites them in spite of their apparent opposition. Whatever upsets the status quo from whatever direction has some sort of value to it.

**CLIX It’s a small world after all**
The traditional way is not the same everywhere. The meaningful way is not the same everywhere. The cheap way, and the efficient way, largely are (and are constantly changing due to technology). Kapital destroys culture in general, but it especially destroys cultural *difference*.

**CLX acid**
Progressive social ideology and laissez-faire economic ideology are more or less the same thing, and they reinforce each other. They are both solvent, destroying traditional bonds, questioning traditional (non-contractual) obligations then replacing them with precision. They both come from the idea that individuals are autonomous. On a more basic level, they come from a particular conception of Reason, which is to say, from starting the pyrrhonist descent and not finishing [connection].

**CLXI Woke Capital**
There is an understanding among some that the minimisation of government is the maximisation of freedom. I would posit that this is not inherently true. Now, within a particular idea of what “free” means, we can say that the relationship between an employer and his employees is entered into “freely”, and could, furthermore, be exited from freely. But people need to eat, and people need healthcare, so saying someone is free to quit if they don’t like their deal is the same as saying that slaves are free to kill themselves if they don’t like being slaves. Which is true, and even worth saying, but only takes you so far. Likewise, twitter trying to stop me from saying nigger, and tumblr removing Buttercup Dew and thus taking down some of the best fascist intellectualism on the internet, is a much more direct infringement on my ability to have my voice heard than anything the government does.

**CLXII Pride**
You can tell from the entirety of this document leading to this point that I don’t find utilitarian arguments for the Laissez-Faire particularly compelling. But the libertarians of so-called Movement Conservatism aren’t really my strongest or most compelling enemy. The most compelling argument for capitalism is that it is inherently a fair system because of its structure, apart from its results.

Consider this image

---

\(^1\) Spelled with a z because Kapital speaks ‘murican
There is a spectrum running from Stalin on one end to, I don’t know, Rothbard, on the other, but it is a spectrum which lives fully in the economic world, and eschews identitarianism. Why should you be proud of your race, it asks, if you didn’t pick it? Your “national heritage” is a bunch of stuff achieved by other people. You should be proud of your work, which is something you did. Push this logic further, and you can say, “being proud of what you’re naturally talented at is silly. What you should be proudest of is what you had to work the hardest at.” Expand from pride to payment, and you have the implicit argument for both Stalinism and capitalism: people deserve things because they did things. People earn food through their toil.

This is stupid. Your “grit” and “determination”, that is, your ability for and tendency toward hard work, are just as much part of your personality as anything else (not to mention that generational wealth is as much a determiner of wealth in capitalist systems as “grit” is). Your personality is determined by genetics, upbringing, and chance, just as much as your race and your talents are.

Does this mean we should be proud of nothing, then? Well, yes, in a certain sense, but you need something to latch onto to avoid a life of misery, and the answer is to stop picking and choosing which cool things about yourself to be proud of. If you are a natural musical genius who did practically no work to achieve this, as I like to think of myself as, you should be proud of that talent even if there was less “labour” put into it, because nothing is our own doing. If you are born as a daughter of Europa, be proud of that, because nothing is our own doing. If you have an awesome car, be proud of that, not primarily because it is an awesome car which belongs to you, and nothing is our own doing. Be proud of it even if you inherited it from your rich dad. Your positive qualities are positive in themselves, not because of “where they came from”. They “came from” a complex chain of causality going back to the creation of the universe. The idea that you can be proud of things, but specifically only your work, is equivalent to the arrogance which comes from descending part way down the nihilist pit but not reaching the bottom [connection]. Be proud of who you are.

With this in mind, the idea of capitalism as ‘fair’ becomes much less intuitive.

**CLXIII property not primary**
Of course abstract-principle arguments for laissez faire can be taken further. Perhaps the system isn’t “fair” in the way plebs think of it as being fair, but has an underlying morality to it nonetheless. This line of argument essentially is the result of giving individual property rights some sort of logical primacy. Some capitalist Christians, for instance, will argue that communism requires theft, and thus violates the ten commandments. This takes a rather simplistic view, however. Theft is logically downstream of property, and property is logically downstream of society. You need a social system to tell you what can be used in what ways by whom, and then we can say that if you use things in ways which, according to the system, you aren’t meant to, you are “stealing” them, relative to the situation you are in. Without some sort of social construction, whether more natural or more revolutionary, theft is meaningless. Under a Stalinist regime, theft would be taking too much of that which wasn’t assigned to you. Some people might find “assign” to be a piece of ominous language, but capitalism is simply a different system for “assigning” things to people. The laissez-faire pretends to be the lack of a regime, but if people are lacking in virtue within a capitalist system, they might steal things from others. Thus, if you have bad people, capitalism requires enforcement, just as much as operating communism with bad people requires enforcement. They’re both regimes, they just have different rules.

CLXIV State of Nature
I think this line of reasoning is mostly destroyed by the above section anyway, but just in case: the most basic reason to insist on the laissez faire is because you believe we have moral duties toward other individuals, but no special moral duties toward larger order groups. Now, if the nation is a literal goddess, we don’t have to worry about this. But more fundamentally, life as autonomous individuals is in no way natural. Now, a libertarian could legitimately say “the fact that coercive state force has always been with us doesn’t mean it should have been.” They could say, perhaps, that the state is merely a collection of individuals, and thus the idea that its moral status should somehow be special is not the most natural assumption. They thus take the most natural assumption, and assume the invalidity of the state. That argument does not appeal to nature explicitly. However, it does suggest that assuming the invalidity of the state is a more natural assumption than assuming the validity of the state. And the thing about that is, the reason it is so obvious to us that that is the more natural assumption, is because of the historical prevalence of “state of nature” theories, which were in fact scientifically and historically baseless, but formed us into the culture we are today nonetheless [connect to Christianity and the state].

CLXV Church and State
Sometime I expressed the view that municipal flags are generally poorly designed. Bellingham is a very lucky place for having a civic symbol which is actually becoming ubiquitous. But the response I received was essentially the suggestion that I was being selfish. After all, if I think some city should spend money to hire a vexillologist to design them a memorable flag, that’s public money that can’t be spent on something that someone else cares about that I don’t care about. Shouldn’t you feel bad, you selfish little commie, for wanting other people’s money spent to satisfy your desires. Now look, I don’t know about the flags one way or the other, but if I suggest that more public money should be spent on, say, tragic theatre [connect to tragedy], everyone will immediately feel I’m an entitled brat.

But this is based on what is surely a bizarre illusion. What could you possibly want a state for, if not to do things that you care about based on your conception of what’s good? You want it to protect people? You want that because you hold the moral view that people being protected is good. If you want the state
to ban murder, then you’re asking the state to follow your personal opinion about murder being bad. You have an idea of the good life that involves not getting murdered, and you want the state to provide that for you. Your government can’t possibly be neutral; by trying to attain a neutrality of values, if only attains an impoverishment of values. Based on what it wants the state to do, Liberal Modernity’s conception of the good life is “not being murdered”, and damned if I don’t want more than that. I agree that not getting murdered is good, but I also think theatre, and pure mathematics, and beautiful streets are good [good things in the world].

CLXVI Mammon
We spent a long time pursuing the project of pure devotion to Apollo, specifically his desire for us to shine a light into the unknown for the joy of doing so. At some point, our audacious pursuit of knowledge led us to the capitalist idea, which led us to the worship of Mammon, who had other priorities, and so our pursuit of truth for its own sake (and certainly of Apollonian physical beauty) started to slowly but inevitably fall out of favour.

Money is the root of all evil: evil is the opposite of good, and good is self-sacrifice. The opposite of which is greed. Money has no good qualities of its own, but simply represents our desire for more. Its existence is the basis of the activities of the merchant, but especially the banker and the speculator, all of whom are attempting to accrue wealth themselves without creating anything. Indeed, money as it exists now is a product of banking. And the glorification of all this, is capitalism.

CLXVII At least it was cost effective
Rational Will, which is to say, the pursuit of means, which is to say, techno-capital, is, as we said, dominant. The pursuit of efficiency on its own will always tell us that our world is too beautiful, and our research too broad, because it is trying to find ways to do things on the cheap, and if you don’t constrain us with either sentiment or force, we’ll start to see beauty and truth as ancillary to our default goal of filling our stomachs to capacity. Adding an Art Nouveau gate to your factory increases the number of fictitious tokens it costs while not significantly impacting how many it might be able to generate.

The whole modern system is a result of descending part way to nihilism and then gaining the arrogance that comes from not understanding that they only went part way [part way descents].

CLXVIII Philistine sentimentalism
I can see people objecting to the idea that capitalism and traditionalism are opposed. A great many people who dislike techno-kapital, and a few who like it very much, look at where silicon valley is going and refer to it as neo-feudalism. This suggests that feudalism, which is to say, how most of Europe naturally operates, is not meaningfully different from capitalism; Feudalism is fundamentally anarcho-capitalism with funny hats.

There is some legitimacy to this point: I can say “we need government support for arts, because relying on rich people will lead to insufficient quantity and quality”, but someone could legitimately respond by saying “art throughout the middle ages and renaissance, which you so seem to love, was funded by rich
people who owned everything, who happen to have called themselves bishops and barons instead of CEOs and venture capitalists”.

Now, to some extent this is simply a misunderstanding of history: an important part of building modern capitalism was the enclosure of the English Commons, which had been commons since time immemorial. Likewise, the fact that the wealthy men of Athens gained a certain sort of glory and prestige from funding festivals and ships does not mean that they were always acting “voluntarily”, in a modern libertarian sense.

But more fundamentally, the issue is that the “wealthy people” of the middle ages were pretty much also the state. Were they “owning” or were they “ruling”? The real answer is that the two concepts aren’t perfectly distinct [ownership]. There’s nothing inherently wrong with a world where Elon Musk rules over the principality of Tesla. The issue is that capitalism has established the dominance of a morality of contractual rights and duties, where you must know precisely what you are allowed to do so that you can walk as close to the line as possible [that section]. It’s the morality which you use when you are dealing with people you don’t especially love. The difference between a noble estate and a bourgeois corporation is the sense of Noblesse Oblige; it is a sentimental bond passed down by tradition, and sentimental bonds cannot be conceived of as being relevant on the scale of the national economy if you are attempting to create a world of mathematical precision, as modernism is. Yes, a medieval lord probably could treat their peasants somewhat poorly without getting in trouble for it, but what matters is that that doesn’t mean they did so with any frequency, because they didn’t adhere to this modern property-fundamentalism which says you cannot be blamed for not being charitable, and the idea that you cannot be blamed for not giving up your property is the logical core of laissez faire ideology. The reason some look back on feudalism, and forward at techno-capital, and see the same thing, is because they cannot conceive of a spiritual or sentimental bond which has a strength equal to or greater than the strength of state force. But I promise you that such bonds once existed, and the fact that we can’t conceive of them is simply a pathology of the moment in which we live.

Some are scared that if we ended government welfare, the poor would starve. But under traditionalism, the poor are fed by rich people and churches (which are effectively the state, but ignoring that for a second), and that is exactly what we would be going back to if welfare disappeared. Indeed, if one reads Confucian and Taoist political texts, they are superficially similar to Milton Friedman. There is no denying that in a certain sense, we live in a time of “big government”, compared to the rest of history. But that progressive-liberal state was established as a response to the classical-liberal world it found itself governing, and simply eliminating the state would not change the situation which led to the state’s growth in the first place. People get used to their freedoms [LXI] and once you have stopped asking something of people it is extraordinarily difficult to start asking it from them again [section] without the use of violence. So for now at least, state intervention is the best reasonable option.

Wait a minute, the State is violence. Somehow that checks out, actually.

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly
torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his
“natural superiors”, and has left remaining no other nexus
between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous
“cash payment.” It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of
religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine
sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation.

-Karl Marx & Friederich Engels

CLXIX momentum
Suppose you believe you know what is good. What the ideal society would be. Now, this society is some
direction relative to where we are now, but it’s not inherently a direction, it’s inherently a point. It’s some
other direction relative to some other society. But what’s most powerful is a force in a direction. There
are people saying “let’s push this all the way this way”, and the only way to fight back is to say “let’s
push this all the way in the other direction”. But if you know some point in the middle is the ideal point,
with a blend of what others would see as separate forces, your rhetorical position is inherently weak,
because forces are only counteracted by opposing forces.

CLXX Order
Beauty is oppressive, and oppression is beautiful. Why?

Beauty is harmony. Harmony is order. Order is hierarchy. Hierarchy is oppression.

CLXXI attached to a hierarchy
A place in an order becomes part of your dignity, and part of your identity. If equality comes along, and
levels that order, you lose that. And [taking what you have is worse than not giving something new].

When talking about the 19th amendment, for instance, you can say that it gave rights to women without
taking away rights from men, but that is not the whole story. Now, yes, every man’s vote was technically
worth slightly less, so something they had was taken from them in that regard. But not enough for that to
be what’s relevant. What man lost is his unique identity as the “political sex”, and the dignity he drew
from his place in a particular hierarchy. Now, women gained overall, but normal non-radical women
actually lost something as well, which is to say, their identity as the sex which rises above politics and
doesn’t dirty itself with such things.

CLXXII Order and chaos
Midgard can only come to be when fire and ice meet. Beauty requires both order and chaos. In fact,
order and chaos require each other. Consider a work of art, with different colours and shapes. It could be
a repeating pattern on the ceiling, and very much on the “order” side of things. It could be an
impressionist painting, and rather more chaotic. But what is the logical conclusion of chaos? There would
be no shape or pattern at all. Each point/pixel would be a different colour from the one next to it. But if
you zoomed out, that would be a grey or brownish monotony. But if you take order to its logical
conclusion, you would end up with every point/pixel being the same colour. And once everything is the
same colour, there’s no pattern at all, just an amorphous goo. There’s only order in the most trivial of senses. Opposed forces are necessary.

CLXXIII Triumvirate

To walk in the footsteps of Evola and Devi I have to end up at some sort of Hindu analogy at some point. If the above about opposing forces is true, then here is mine. The Aryan trinity are Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Shiva the destroyer. All three roles are necessary. Yes, obviously, destruction must occur for there to be new creation, that is the cycle of life. But don’t forget Vishnu. Someone must love the real [connection] enough to protect it, and keep it around long enough to serve its purpose. The conservative is he who finds himself taking up the banner of Vishnu in this turning of the world. It’s probably good it isn’t everyone, but I like to think somebody has to do it. After all, tearing down is easier [XVI], and why would one want to do something easy? Builders of new things are necessary, for I suppose even some of the very old things which we love were once new. Even destroyers may be necessary, for, loathe as I generally am to admit it, perhaps there were other things before the things we love now. But certainly someone has to defend the real things that exist now, and if you are a loving person you might love those real things enough to take that role. If there aren’t people who simply make it their business to defend what they are accustomed to, how will anything survive long enough to flourish and be beautiful? Shields and Brooks were doing Vishnu’s work, and you’ve gotta respect them for it.

In the end, of course, everything is in flux. Material objects fall into disrepair, customs change, ideas evolve. The one thing that is essential is to preserve a people, its blood and its spirit. The purpose of a statue is to honor a culture and inspire greatness in the living. With all of our monuments coming down, we have to fulfill that role ourselves. We must be living monuments.

While our words are important, the best way to convert people and signal our spirit of opposition to the Enemy is through our bearing and our lifestyle. If you truly count yourself as an heir and a monument to your noblest ancestors, you cannot behave as the man of today does. You must strive to be lean, lithe, incorrupt, and beautiful. You must abjure the addictions and weaknesses encouraged by our society, and present a powerful and unconquerable face to the world. Your mind must be sharp, your senses and emotions under control. You must be godlike in this world of ants. You must not accept their terms. Their values are those of broken, miserable, and nihilistic vandals, and will lead only to destruction. **Fight them dispassionately, without hatred or anger; they are performing their role in this dark age, just as you perform yours, and to hate them gives them power. Don’t waste any more time thinking about them than you must.**

-William de Vere

CLXXIV Accelerate
Technology is like a freedom. When you gain a particular freedom, it tells you “I don’t care whether you do [x] or [y]”. You can thus choose [y], which is less work, or gives you more wealth. Technology says “you don’t have to do [x], because you have a machine to help you”. Also, each new form of equality says “you don’t have to do [x] for/to the people who used to be above you”. They are all the same thing, essentially. And Kapital is that thing as well. All shall be accelerated, disintegrated and consumed.

It is easier to tear down in general[XVI], and people never buy your explanations when you try to rebuild [problems of intellect] [Lao Tzu].

Yes, people become accustomed to things. But there is a direction to history, simply because some changes are easier to swallow than others. “I am asking less of you” is relatively easy to accept. “I am asking more of you” will not be accepted without the use of force and cruelty, and will be perceived as great suffering if successfully imposed. Those whom you have suddenly demanded more of will be looking for any way possible to get rid of your new demands (even if they are old demands which simply disappeared for a while). There is a direction to history inherent in our fallen nature, and it is determined by greed and sloth. You simply cannot fight the technological singularity, or the descent into absolute license, or the descent into absolute social disintegration, without causing people suffering. We can essentially consider the “man against time” which Devi spoke of to be the one willing to use the violent force necessary to move backwards.

….. gender and politics both as a representation of the schizophrenisation of identity made manifest by the acceleration of Kapital. These things that we make fun of now, like transracialism, it’s gonna be made manifest simply by desire. And so, the joke of those who identify as unicorns eventually will manifest when a Tiktoker who identifies as a unicorn has the ability to dye their skin purple, and graft a horn to their head. And there will be a bioconservative reaction, certainly, people will want to keep their flesh, but the flesh is weak, and once this unicorn gets a hundred million followers on Tiktok, their followers will want to become unicorns as well. And that’s how you get unicorns. And what then? What if these unicorns get more views on their social media? What if they make ten times more money than the average person because of their purple skin? What do we do about the unicorn master race? Do you fight against them? It’s not gonna work. By the time you get rid of the unicorns, the werewolves and the vampires have already popped up. The future isn’t coming, it’s already here. You can lean into it, or you can try to step away. But there is no such thing as being in the middle. To stay in the same spot, you have to run.
CLXXV crude threats
If we are all going to live dubiously satisfying lives under Rational Will together, that is tolerable. But in the present moment, it is becoming more and more mainstream on the left to be iliberal. To appeal to the Dionysian, essentially.

With that in mind, here is my message to the racialised left.

Remember this image?

Libertarianism and Marxism live in the same disenchanted, purely economic world. The Black/African Studies Department, wherever such a thing exists, has something in common with white reactionaries, insofar as they both reject that world of “pure reason”. Now, my dear fellows, if you want to live under pseudo-Apollo together, that’s just fine. Both of us will be miserable, but at least it’s fair. But don’t think for a second you’re going to resurrect heritage and sentiment for yourself while leaving us under the blinding surgical lights.

In America, when some ethnicities are proud of their heritage, it’s seen as a libleft sort of thing, and when others are proud of their heritage, it’s authright. There’s no reason they can’t work together against globalization and homogenization. But I dare you to suggest that the minority may have heritage and the majority may not. Some of us were close to snapping as it was [Dionysian pendulum], and as you consider who would win this race war, it would behoove you to note that the nationalisms defined as authright are mostly so defined because they are history’s winners.

Now, in reality, the homogenizing establishment is going to play your side, and any sort of Dionysian reaction on the part of Europeans will fail [it’s better to lose]. But do you really think they aren’t coming for your culture next?

CLXXVI Synthesis
Principle and tradition, Kingdom and Revolution can be joined in practice by their opposition to the Machine. But what if there were a true synthesis?

We awaited its coming from the beginning, living in expectation. That it could possibly exist made no sense, but we waited nonetheless.

The context which existed for so long a time was not amenable to its development. The context which was necessary seemed quite improbable.

**CLXXVII Deo Vindice**

We have to stop and think about what is especially beautiful about the revolutionary, or rather, the ingredients for achieving that particular aesthetic. They face indomitable odds for the sake of something invisible, which is a product/discovery of their own mind.

Now, people have fought on the “wrong side of history” (the conservative side) as long as there has been history which seemed to be going in a direction. The first few times, the liberal/ideological people fighting for principle probably legitimately were the underdogs, and fighting on the conservative side for reality and against principle was probably the side you would choose if you only cared about your own neck. It eventually came to pass that sometimes the situation was reversed, but traditionalists weren’t simply revolutionaries as soon as they became the weaker team. After all, if you haven’t really given things much thought, fighting for the local status quo is just the natural response, even if it sometimes turns out that your survival instinct was wrong in that regard. There is a sort of smug middle-aged rural self-satisfaction which sometimes seeps through when the warrior is just instinctually fighting for something real which they are still grounded in, which is not the same thing as the youthful idealism of the revolutionary who is engaging in the subjugation of matter to spirit. I think that last sentence is a victim of my distaste for a specific group, and ends up sounding like I find all such similar groups distasteful. And so I must say that I have a great respect for the Cavaliers, and the Vendee, and the Confederates. There was beautiful defiance in these places. But it wasn’t quite a revolutionary defiance. People were still fighting for the world they were living in, they just did so against a threat which in at least the two latter cases was of obviously insurmountable strength.

But in 1745, there was a glimmer of something different. Yes, most of the highlanders were in fact simply fighting for their chief, and for their home. But the figure of Bonnie Prince Charlie himself has just a taste, just a whiff, of something new. He had been in France his whole life. The idea “I should be king of England someday” was a pretty abstract one for him, and it was (or at least should’ve been) clear by this point that the Hanoverian regime was well established and entirely out of his league as an opponent. And he landed at Eriskay anyway.

**CLXXVIII Black Sun**

Consider the different theorists of interwar/midcentury reaction. Evola and his traditionalist/perennialist predecessors were looking back fondly to Plato and Aristotle. Carl Schmidt was working within a framework established by Hobbes. Sombart’s thinking was classical sociology. Heidegger traced the bad things of modernity back to Plato and Aristotle. There were clerical fascists in various places wishing for the rebirth of the Church Universal, while Evola thought the church had made us weak. There was the
vaguely psychological spirituality of Jung, and of course there was straight up Germanic Neo-Paganism which didn’t embrace any sort of mediterranean influence. And Strasser was talking about guilds.

There is a branch of scholarship in the liberal academy studying fascism, and it constantly bickers over what exactly fascism is. We don’t have quite the same sort of problem with liberalism or socialism. Certainly there are different varieties of each, but there are main theorists which we could consider, and from which we could form a general characterisation from the emic perspective if we so desired. To do the same for the Third Reich would leave one wondering where to start.

Why?
This will be impossible for most people to see, but:

The Reich was ineffable. It did not have any actual content. It was ideology reduced down to the core idea of ideology. Yes, socialism and liberalism were spiritual archetypes, but you could also lay out with words approximately what they claimed. The Reich was always a dream. A pure image that said a thousand words but couldn’t speak even one. Fiery eyes [connection] singled out as a thing in themselves. When I say this sort of thing it doesn’t make any sense, but one only arrives at it from aesthetically contemplating something most people hate, in a way which most people never would. Yes there is Mein Kampf, yes there is Germany Tomorrow, but Mein Kampf is not to Nazism as Das Kapital is to Marxism. The Marxists killed millions for a book. Germany killed millions for something which we saw only out of the corner of our eye. This is a [personallness of philosophy] moment in the extreme, and I really can’t take you with me, but the Reich was principle, in the romantic sense, rarified and purified to its core of unspeakable light. There was something in the world of spirit, which we couldn’t even begin to help anyone else see, and for a few years we radically remade the world in its name.

And yet, fascism has also been characterised as radical traditionalism.

The sun on the meadow is summery warm,
The stag in the forest runs free;
But gather together to greet the storm,
Tomorrow belongs to me.

-Cabaret

CLXXXIX The Triumph of the Will
The condition in which the real and the ideal may become one, and one man may be both traditionalist and revolutionary, are as follows: his surroundings must be entirely unreal, and untraditional. The ideology, chaos, or technology of the world surrounding him must be so strong that it appears just as unbeatable as or even more unbeatable than Reality does in a traditionalist moment. He must be disconnected from tradition to such an extent that it is a purely abstract idea which he can only arrive at through intellectualism or contemplation.

If some fiery young intellectual happened upon the idea of tradition and of The Real as abstractions in a moment where such things were dead and unsalvagable, and then said “fuck the world, I will make my
abstractions real”, that man would be a Traditionalist Revolutionary. He would have both aesthetics, not both balanced in compromise, but both as absolutes.

WW1 was a dissolving acid spilled over central Europe. The seemingly impossible synthesis of the obviously insurmountable contradiction identified in [crux] became possible in Germany in 1918.

In the Romantic Ethic, defiance = love = good. The Freikorps fought for tradition, while simultaneously taking principle to its extreme. This is the flag of Die Eiserne Brigade of the Freikorps.

“Nevertheless” or “and yet”. Principle, reduced to two words. Surely defiance has never had more fiery eyes than that.

Klingt es auch wie eine Sage, 
Muss es doch die Wahrheit sein: 
Wladiwostok ist gefallen, 
Weiβgardisten ziehen ein.

CLXXX How did this get here?
Don’t you see? Fascism is incest! Killing innocents is like kissing your sister, and aren’t your sisters beautiful?

CLXXXI Wonder which one I did
The great Jewish political theorist Walter Benjamin says that communism politicises aesthetics and fascism aestheticises politics.

CLXXXII Cake
Of course by creating the Revolution Kingdom to synchronise the Real and the Ideal, whatever that secret third “natural law” type thing we thought might exist in [XCII] and [CXXII-CXXIII] was left entirely behind. You can get two of three, but to do it you have to fuck up standard number three really hard.

Apparently when you want to have your cake and eat it too, that costs a few million innocent lives. Stupid fucking universe.

CLXXXIII a roadbump
WW2 is the mythology of the international empire. It is believed by the left and centre, of course, but also by tea-partiers, radical Movement Conservatives, most borderline anarcho-capitalists, and 98% of Trumpists (they just disagree about who in the present is most like Hitler)
Satanic imagery is still vaguely edgy, but it isn’t actually all that taboo or uncommon anymore. Hitler has
taken Satan’s place as our societal incarnation of evil. This is why “Poe’s Law” exists: he is an
archetype, and thus a go-to example.

If the nazis killed as many as is supposed, that was pretty bad. But there are plenty of other murderous
dictatorships. It is possible to speak in polite company of detente with China, even as the Uighers are
slaughtered. Stalin and Mao are vaguely edgy, but not Hitler edgy. Pol Pot puts them all to shame, and
just happens to have been working from a smaller population. If anyone with any sort of power read this
document, then even how I phrased the first sentence of this paragraph could be enough to put me on a
watch-list, because any sort of nuance or skepticism about the WW2 story is unacceptable in a way which
moderation concerning the Cold War simply isn’t.

Why is this the case? Because Germany, Japan, Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Thailand, Finland,
Manchuria, Croatia, Iraq, and the Baltics, from 1918 to 1945, were the last people with the guts to tell
history “no”. It’s obvious they weren’t going to win, but they were the last noteworthy threat to techno-
capital and its liberal world order, and so they are its mythological opponent, its Satan (and an example
had to be made of them). Now, this isn’t quite true. The Comintern was also ‘on the wrong side of
history’ (and I give them much credit for that, and for giving their people a goal in life, and having a
strongly moral vision of society). But as we have noted twice, Marxism and Capitalism at least lived in
the same purely material/economic world, and thus had something of a shared framework. Questioning
what the best sort of disenchantment is is sort of fine, but if you go too far with suggesting that maybe we
should bring back enchantment, you will get firebombed and nuked (and suspended from Twitter, as I
have been more than once).

CLXXXIV How are we gonna get to the end of all this
One thing which I think can be beautiful is narrative. Including fictional narrative. Some people are like
“why do I need to read fiction, it’s not real”, and this makes me tired. Like seriously, this is the fight you
decided to pick today? You decided to fight me on whether reading fiction is good? Lao Tzu was right
[connection], thinking about things was a mistake. Why is this world so stupid.

Fine.

As is typical first you should read Aristotle, who argues that literature allows you to capture Truth about
reality in a more universal and elegant way than merely recounting specific events does. As he says in his
Poetics

“It is, moreover, evident from what has been said, that it is not the function of the poet to relate what has happened, but what may happen—what is possible according to the law of probability or necessity. The poet and the historian differ not by writing in verse or in prose. The work of Herodotus might be put into verse, and it would still be a species of history, with meter no less than without it. The true difference is that one relates what has happened, the other what may happen. Poetry, therefore, is a more philosophical and a higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular. By the universal I mean how a person of a certain type on occasion speak or act, according to the law of probability or necessity; and it is this universality at which poetry aims in the names she attaches to the personages.”

I don’t know if you buy that, but anyway, human artists with sufficient skill can craft beautiful stories, sometimes better than what history gives us. But more fundamentally, there are different aesthetic qualities which can be found in fictional or fictionalised narratives than can be found in newspapers (and even news can’t help but be filtered through human storytelling), and having both gives you a fuller human experience and makes your life more complete. If you cannot appreciate this, perhaps you haven’t given books an honest shot, or maybe you’re broken idk.

CLXXXV tragedy (the books)
I feel tragedy is beautiful, and important. Consider: we recognise that there is an opposition between the tragic and the comic. We recognise an opposition between the funny and the serious. We recognise serious and important as more or less synonyms. Thus, we see the importance of tragedy within the wisdom passed down in our very language [correlative thinking].

Aristotle draws a contrast between comedy and tragedy whereby tragedy deals with characters of a higher nature. Now, we mostly think of tragic elements as elements where something turns out poorly. But these two characterisations are not unrelated. Standing for something is difficult. Being principled (regardless of what the principle is) leaves you with fewer options for surviving and thriving than if you weren’t principled. Being a hero tends to kill you. This is especially the case if we live in the Kali Yuga [connection], and the force of history moves in the direction of evil. Dealing with serious matters in a worthwhile way sometimes means discussing things other than humour. The line of thinking which says “I only want obviously pleasurable feelings in my stories, there’s enough tragedy in the world as it is”, is a slippery slope to having no stories at all, because narrative in general is almost always based on some sort of conflict or struggle.

ALSO, Aristotle recognised that tragedy helps us cope with our negative feelings in a healthy way through its catharsis.

ALSO, I think generally when well-bred people give high literature a chance, they will simply understand how beautiful and important it is on their own.

But crucially, Tragedy and tragic elements are beautiful because they ring true [LII].
CLXXXVI tragedy (the world)
I’ve kind of said this in a few places, but at this point we really need to pick up where we left off about 40 pages ago and say it straight out: we live in a tragic universe. Reality is characterised by tragedy on a fundamental level. Tragedy is true and inescapably true.

CLXXXVII choices
[Continuedish from something something intuition section] The only possible way to discern the true moral law of the universe is by intuiting it. Most people continue to believe in some sort of morality because it is an instinct almost as basic as assuming the reality of the things which we perceive through the physical senses. But just as the outer eye sees many objects, so does the inner eye of intuition. It is generally true that we have an intuitive sense of the validity of various moral “laws”, as well as the validity of a more general principle of altruism, and various other things.

When we find ourselves in a situation where a moral law comes into conflict with altruism, or another moral law, our instinct is to try to figure out what the morally good way to act in the situation is. We want to know the right path. The existence of a right path, though, implies that there is one law or principle which it is acceptable to break in this particular circumstance. But that would imply that one of the transcendent objects which you intuited has somehow temporarily ceased to exist. And that would be silly. Thus, when there is a “moral dilemma”, there is no “right path”. In such a situation you are acting immorally no matter what you do. That moral laws can contradict one another, or contradict altruism, is obvious, and it’s not as though we must dig into incredible minutia to imagine such instances. There are thus certain moments when even if we have angelic intentions we cannot help but fall. Such moments are moments of tragedy.

CLXXXVIII history
Now, people need to take actions. In such moments of moral dilemma, all the answers to “what should you do” are actually wrong, but people still choose. We could perhaps say that people making active choices in such situations are wrong. On the one hand I can agree that actively doing evil is worse than simply not doing something good, but telling people to always take the most passive option in such situations is suspiciously akin to telling them to take the path of least resistance, which is to say, telling them to follow the animal urge of sloth. And following your physical utilitarian urges is something which contrasts with morality rather than aligning with it.

So people will make such choices, and we can’t apply the obvious universal principle because in this case it is both cowardly and lazy, so these choices will differ between individuals. In many contexts, these individuals will find themselves in conflict. They are both doing something wrong, but they are both acting out of goodness rather than selfishness. This is a Sophoclean conflict.

Now, there are occasionally conflicts which do not appear to be of a Sophoclean nature. If you’re trying to kill a family member for insurance money, and you plan on living alone in luxury on a random tropical island afterwards, it seems as though you are simply being ruled by your appetite, and thus the situation is not especially Sophoclean. But the fact is, most people aren’t sociopathic enough to do that sort of thing, and the more important fact is, people who are ruled by physical desires are not the people who make
history. Most notable historical conflicts, therefore, whether violent or rhetorical, are likely of a Sophoclean nature. We live in a Sophoclean world, a stage upon which a tragedy is playing out.

**CLXXXIX The Sophoclean World**

>Okay so maybe once a month I have to pick between lying and hurting somebody’s feelings.

>I don’t think this means life is fundamentally characterised by tragedy

Fair enough. But you see, the problem runs much, much deeper than that. There are two things to remember: First, ethics is aesthetics. Second, there are approximately infinity different qualitatively different and incommensurable flavours of aesthetic beauty. With this in mind, there must be an infinite number of different “goods”, and an infinite number of different standards. At least three times infinity, in fact. For as we saw, certain moral systems with pretensions to standing on Reason are themselves as ideas aesthetically Apollonian. Thus if we take some other sort of beauty, say, the beauty of impressionism, we could start by saying that perhaps there is some moral system which, as an idea, has a similar aesthetic effect to impressionism. But if impressionism indeed has its own beauty, and the three values are bound up in each other [LII] then impressionism’s beauty is one of the Good things in the world [connection]. It’s all just “value”, and if it has value, then it is valuable for you to look at it. Thus for every form of beauty, there is a moral demand that you appreciate that beauty. However, that beauty cannot exist without people making it, and thus the beauty is also a moral demand to create it. Thus for any particular aesthetic quality, you have a duty to follow/believe moral/political ideas which have that aesthetic quality (and there might be more than one, depending on how general you are being), you have a duty to spend as much time as possible appreciating that aesthetic quality, and you also have a duty to spend as much time as possible producing that quality. Each aesthetic makes at least three conflicting demands of you, and there are an infinite number of aesthetics, because you can always get more precise in saying that certain differences are differences in quality of beauty rather than quantity.

Life is not simply a sequence of “choices”. Within any given minute, there is a vast array of options for what actions you will take. This includes your words and thoughts, as well, since truth is good. Thus at every moment, you face the logic of opportunity cost. There are a range of options, and sure, not choosing the option which is morally the very worst possible is…. good, I suppose, but you should be trying to achieve the morally best option that you can. Of course on a practical level, nobody is making the best choice every minute of their lives, but suppose somebody did. The problem is that they would have chosen one particular moral standard. And the last paragraph informs us that there are an infinite number of moral demands upon us. There are an infinite number of things you could decide to do in this moment, and just about everything you could possibly do in this moment is the “best thing” as demanded by some standard of good derived from some particular form of beauty, so whichever thing you do, you are drastically morally failing most of the moral demands upon you, and you are exponentially accumulating a huge debt of moral opportunity cost. Every single moment of our existence is strongly and inescapably Sophoclean.

**CXI Sophoclean History**

To say the same sort of thing a different way:

Each person intufts multiple moral laws. However, you perhaps do not feel bound by the moral strictures imposed by people of far off times or places (or even different subcultures) which you have not yourself intuited. However, recall that in [XXX], it seemed that the presence of a large number of people
affirming something is one of the basic ways of affirming a feeling as true. Now in some regard your current situation is probably so incomprehensible to the ancient Aztecs that they wouldn’t be entirely sure what to tell you your ideal next action is, but we could probably find some way of conforming you to an Aztec moral/societal code. A code which a very large number of people all agreed represented spiritual reality. It seems presumptuous to declare that they were all spiritually blind. If we follow the proper epistemology, then it seems probable that a vast number of moral/societal systems had spiritual reality to them, and you can’t follow them all.

We said [place] that there are archetypes, which is to say, spiritual objects, representing different ideological political systems. Likewise [place], each ethnicity is an archetype, and even if you follow the principle of Tradition generally by following your specific ethnic tradition, this doesn’t mean that the other ethnic archetypes aren’t ontologically real. Politics is a moral field. If you are making governmental decisions, you are obviously making moral decisions, but if you are deciding what to advocate for, or whether to engage in political violence for a political cause, that is of course a (constant) moral decision as well. Morality involves following transcendent principles, but what if the heavens are crowded?

CXCI What Loyalty is good for
When faced with two or more equally wrong paths, how does one arrive at which path to follow? In some sense we could say that there is an act of pure will happening, and since pure will is the stuff morality is made out of [connection], there is something good in forging ahead as a Sophoclean protagonist. However, on (what I hesitate to call) a more practical level, if we ask how people can/should choose which of two or more wrong paths to take, the answer is “by being loyal to something” [XI]. Creon is loyal to the city, Antigone is loyal to her family. Loyalty is the basis of moral action. On the one hand, this further emphasizes how important loyalty is. How else can you even make a choice? On the other hand, loyalty is just another thing which all reasonable people intuit to be good, but which can (and frequently does) contradict other things which all reasonable people intuit to be good, so it’s also just another layer of the problem, making more tragic Sophoclean moments.

CXCII Conflict of Interest
Loyalty also naturally contradicts itself, of course. In the traditional society, purity is not normal [section]. What’s normal for humans is to grow up into multiple overlapping loyalties. Of course in the present there are a vast array of overlapping loyalties: guild or business, hobby or fandom, language, bloodline, culture, State, religion, and various institutions, all of which may be out of alignment with one another, or even contradictory within themselves, if, for instance, you are mixed race. Even in a more traditional society though, where State, culture, race, language, and religion are all aligned and reinforce each other, and the primary bond is simply the family writ large, there’s still always the question of what layer of the family fractal your highest loyalty belongs to. I would be inclined to say the truly traditional answer is that the smallest circle is always the most important, but that doesn’t change the fact that even in a largely well aligned society, if your immediate family disagrees with your extended family, your extended family disagrees with your clan, your clan with your tribe, or your tribe with your nation, there is technically a conflict of loyalties going on. Since loyalty is the basic virtue, and purity is unnatural, conflicts of loyalty are a basic part of our existence, and the more pressing the topic or situation, the more they are magnified. Our world is fundamentally tragic and Sophoclean.
CXCI Sophoclean tradition
If we choose to ignore hobby-based, business-based, and general institution-based loyalty, and then consider a natural society where State, blood, language, cult, and culture are all in alignment, one could perhaps argue that (a) conflicts between macro and micro levels of the family fractal are actually not especially natural. This is actually fairly reasonable, because cohesion is the natural outgrowth of family love. One could also argue (b) that nation-tribe or tribe-family conflict doesn’t present a real conflict of loyalties, because, if the basis of the whole fractal is the love of those close to you, then the nature of Traditionalism tells you where your loyalties truly are (those close to you). This is also a reasonable point. This might make you think that basic tragedy is mostly absent from Traditionalism. But do not be too quick to celebrate. For we must recall that the paradigm of romanticism is present at the very core of Traditionalism [section]. Romantic/erotic love is necessary for the ethnostate to continue itself into the future through biological reproduction. On one level this means the kernel of tragic romantic confliction is present, both in an esoteric sense, and in the sense that you might find yourself torn between two lovers. But it also means that confliction of loyalty, which in morally or politically charged situations implies tragedy, is basic to even the most traditionalist and Dionysian of situations. Reality is Sophoclean.

CXCV childhood
But the tragic nature of reality is much more basic and essential. Finding a mate and having children is a natural part of the life cycle. It is part of growing up. And so it bridges us to the tragedy which is more fundamental than the tragedy of moral confliction. To live a traditional life is to be in tune with the cycles of nature. Externally, the seasons, but within the community, growing up and growing old. Traditionalism must celebrate and affirm the rites of passage. It sees the beauty in a child becoming wiser and stronger to become a man, and then inheriting the land of his fathers. It sees beauty in the father growing old, and passing on what wisdom he’s gained to his children’s children. It’s beautiful, sure. But you know what else is beautiful? Childhood. A child is a deeply wonderful thing, and if childhood is set up properly, then the period of faith, wonder, and confident dependence are a wonderful thing for the child. Most everyone has feelings of missing their youth, and most every parent has feelings of sadness associated with the fleeting time they may spend with their children in each stage of childhood before it ends. Growing up is a tragedy. Now someone could look at me holding this perspective and say that I need to grow up. But the core of traditionalism, and the core of moral sentiment in general, really, is loving something which you find around you. Children are Real, Good things in the world, and if you have a child, you will grow to love that child as a child, and have a sense of loss when they turn into something else, because loss is tragic. The cycle of life in a community, from birth to death, is full of little tragedies, as things end so that others may begin.

CXCV The River
But you see, this expands outside the community, to nature. Things are always dying. The Traditionalist in theory is in tune with the turning of the seasons, but if you really love the Real and Good things which you find about yourself, as is most human to do, you will see the beauty in Summer, then watch Summer die. Or you will see the beauty in Winter, then watch Winter die. And it always does. It keeps dying. It dies over and over and over. I haven’t found a way to stop it yet. How can you possibly fall in love with anything except a moment in time? And once you’ve fallen in love with a moment in time, how can that
possibly end in anything other than heartbreak? Moments’ lives are short. Nature will break your heart over and over inexorably, but to fight nature is precisely the beautiful hopeless hubris of the ideologue, and places at your feet all the tragedies of the Sophoclean and the Romantic, with either probable defeat or pyrrhic victory. You see, the only constant is change. Things rise and fall and rot. Yes, change sometimes comes in cycles, so that new things sometimes look like old things, but what consolation is this if you live in the cycle, and loved the old thing? Change is constant, and every change means something has died and disappeared. If each thing has its own beauty [will we get there?], then every death and disappearance is a destruction of something beautiful, and what can we possibly call that except a tragedy. Change is tragic, and change is practically universal and absolute. Reality is tragic to the core.

CXCVI Twilight
Cycles occur even on the historical scale [Kali Yuga]. Each part of the cycle has its own aesthetic qualities. There is the excitement of the new world dawning. There is the (oft taken for granted by yours truly) glory and majesty of that which appears unshakable, resting in the zenith of the sky. But then, there is the bittersweet beauty of that which is doomed. The tragedy of the sunset. This is the beauty I choose. If I place my mind in 1918, I feel such pain for the Romanovs, yet when I place my mind in 1989, I feel such pain for the Politburo. I feel the pain of 1933 in Cabaret, yet also the pain of 1945 in Downfall. If each thing was loved by someone, then how can you watch that thing die and be happy?

Whoever does not miss the Soviet Union has no heart.

-Vladimir Putin

CXCVII five feet behind
There is a common mockery of the mainstream right in America as being the Democrats’ “shadow”. We follow them, a few feet behind. This is essentially true. 20 years in the future the ACA will be as untouchable as medicare is now. Already on the internet there’s a growing sense (or a satirical posture) that the old rainbow flag is normal, and it's the new rainbow flag which is most ridiculous. But what else are we supposed to do? If every new thing destroys what was previously Real [that section], and disintegrates order [a section], then people who love things that exist have to fight each new innovation. But if you’ve decided that you want to avoid cruelty [Kali Yuga], you can’t go very far backwards: maybe we never should’ve had a 19th amendment [zero-sum game] in the first place, but people have gotten too used to it by now.

This too is a great vanity I have seen under the sun.

CXCVIII The Tragedy of Thinking
If we accept [the three transcendental virtues], then it is surely good to pursue the truth. If honesty is one of the most fundamental of human moral instincts, sometimes hanging around even after altruism [VI], then knowing what we can honestly say, and being honest with ourselves, is vastly important, and thus the pursuit of knowledge is a great good. And so the diligent and principled person looks into many things, and examines things deeply. One approach which is famously beneficial for such purposes is the necessity of having a little bit of skepticism. If one does not have the ability to dissect ideas, one will believe whatever one is told, and it seems intuitive that it’s something of a gamble whether that will result in knowing the truth. So the person who really desires knowledge becomes an expert with the dissection
knife. But the bonds of traditional society are trivially easy to deconstruct (or at least are now, since it’s been done before). All sorts of constructs which provide others with meaning, and seem constant and certain, become contingent and ephemeral, and thus lose their hold on you. You can build your own constructions, but a morality which you implicitly understand yourself to command is nothing like real morality which commands you. You could just change it if you felt like it. As you examine or build, you run into numerous tragedies, both of the general sort I’ve spoken of here, and actual specific tragedies. You run also into the great circularities, contradictions, and unclarities. But the ultimate destination of skeptic dissection, applied properly and consistently, is a descent into the nihilist pit. Knowledge is a thing of horror and despair. And beyond the black pit is the grey static, which is far worse [noise]. On the one hand, I scorn the absurdity of those to blind and stupid to look a foot beyond themselves. Are they satisfied to live as sheep? But I also resent them, for they can live in the happiness and fulfillment that comes from certainty and self-worth, and once I’ve pushed just far enough to understand that frame precedes information, I have gone too far and cannot go back. Even if I could choose to forget, I would not, because I only discovered that truth is horrible, not that truth doesn’t matter. Now, in Mahayana Buddhism, it is understood that there is a non-arbitrary return. When you push far enough into the truth of anatman, you find benevolence. And so the priest is secluded, but returns to the community, and the Bodhisattva attains enlightenment but stays and ministers in Samsara, because Nirvana is in Samsara. “For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it”, is the Christian formulation. That is the trajectory which my epistemologically nihilistic traditionalism in some sense is trying to follow. I suppose perhaps there is a Mahayana return, but I don’t really believe I’ve found it. I didn’t push through the abyss and find paradise, I just lowered myself in for some casual tourism, tried to climb back out the way I came, and couldn’t forget what I saw.

We have a moral duty to seek and understand the truth. But when pursued in good faith, this tends to destroy us, disconnect us (destroying our societies), and drive us to insanity. Reality is Faustian and Oedipal.

Er spricht’s und hat den Schleier aufgedeckt.
»Nun,« fragt ihr, »und was zeigte sich ihm hier?«
Ich weiß es nicht. Besinnungslos und bleich,
So fanden ihn am andern Tag die Priester
Am Fußgestell der Isis ausgestreckt.
Was er allda gesehen und erfahren,
Hat seine Zunge nie bekannt. Auf ewig

War seines Lebens Heiterkeit dahin, Ihn riß ein
tiefer Gram zum frühen Grabe.

-Friedrich Schiller

CXCIX Futility
Recall: My Romantic Ethic is the idea that sacrifice is what matters, not benefit, and that the amount of devotion is more important than its object.
If you have arrived at such a conclusion, you have condemned yourself, according to your own morality. A true ideologue would never have reached such a conclusion, and to achieve the most moral thing, which is to say, a high level of honest fanaticism for a particular principle, I would have to forget the conclusion I made.

My tragedy is that I’m too radical to be a good Conservative, and too conservative to be a good radical. I am also too academic to be a good trade unionist, and too good a trade unionist to be a good academic man; too partisan to be independent, and too independent to be a good party man.

-Eugene Forsey

**CC Commerce**

Evil is greed, money is the root of all evil, and merchant, banker, and speculator make money by having money. Commerce is insidious. In the Republic especially it is incredibly destructive.

But you know what else commerce means? It means the division of labour. It means cultural complexity. No, I don’t mean that there is a point after which you need commerce. Exchange, the core of commerce, is necessary even for barebones pre-modern culture to be much good. If we want to cultivate the myriad beauties, (or discover new ones begging to be unearthed), specialisation is necessary, and that requires division of labour, which requires exchange. Commercialism is the agent of cultural destruction, but also culture’s progenitor. It didn’t morph from one into the other, it is always both.

This too is a great vanity I have seen under the sun.

**CCI Sophoclean geography**

With time, things gain legitimacy and meaning. The Appalachian hillfolk have been where they are for centuries, and that land is now their own. To tear them from it, with force or with cunning, would be tragic. 1789 means something in France. The principles of 1789 call out to the French soul, and just as Irish freedom innately demands freedom from foreign power, French freedom now demands freedom from kings [LXI].

But what does it take for a claim to lose legitimacy? Does losing a war mean you were wrong? If not, how long does it take for injustice to become just?

It doesn’t. Not within a few thousand years, at least. If a Cherokee revolutionary tried to kill the Appalachians or drive them from their land so as to reclaim it for the Cherokee nation, I could not look that man in the eye and stand entirely in judgement against him. The land is his. Just because it was taken a long time ago doesn’t mean his claim “expired”. Likewise, if the Vendee rises again, and tries to bring back the Bourbons, can I tell them that they are “unloyal to France”, simply because they are unloyal to 1789? Not really. The Vendee is simply loyal to something which most others have betrayed.

Valid claims can be born, but valid claims never die, which means they accumulate. And where valid
claims accumulate, valid claims contradict. This implies constant wars where both sides are right, but only one side can win. Geopolitics is Sophoclean.

**CCII Trans-Strasserism**
When “trads” and BAPists argue on right-wing twitter, the BAPists are always accused of being thinly veiled homosexuals. When progressives look at boomer-Conservative preoccupation with attacking queerness they often (essentially) say “lol takes one to know one”, and when progressives look at Social Conservative obsession with masculine camaraderie, they say “hehe wink wink”. Most representatively, there is common idea that the Nazis were “pretty fucking gay”. This is the sort of idea spread around in American “conservative” circles which are “conservative” but still buy into the dominant small-l liberal narrative (and view Nazis as the ultimate evil). If you think about the incredibly sexy and design-conscious uniforms the Nazis wore, as well as their emphasis on the Männerbund, this conclusion is understandable.

On a basic level this is as absurd as it sounds. It’s also kind of true though. To be a romanticist (and thus to be a revolutionary or an ideologue), you clearly need a sensitive and aesthetic sensibility. To be raised in this world but then become authentically traditionalist actually also requires a sensitive and aesthetic sensibility. Certainly fascism is aesthetic and romantic at its core. And if you aren’t just swimming in beauty naturally, the men who are going to actively seek beauty out (a subset of which are those who will become fascists) are those who have slightly effeminate qualities. The truly masculine guys who are tough and dull will just work as hard as they can within capitalism, accept the values handed to them, and never (openly) feel like anything is missing. Chads don’t start revolutions, even those revolutions which have the stated goal of turning us into Chads. Revolutions are started by snot-nosed intellectuals such as myself.

Biologically-male queer identity has to do with either effeminacy, which lends itself to aesthetic thinking, or else has to do with defining yourself around who you’re attracted to, which is to say, having a “romantic” identity, which lends itself to being a romantic. Being romantically attracted to different things than other people emphasises romance as part of who you are, and that is the start of romanticism. It also points you toward the idea that maybe everyone else doesn’t agree with you about where “beauty” is found.

Ernst Röhm is the obvious and well known example of a homosexual element during the original National Socialist moment, but I think he’s emblematic of something bigger. See, Hitler wasn’t literally a homosexual. But he was probably an empath, and certainly not a Chad. He was a stereotypical deeply sensitive art guy, loved animals and nature so much he couldn’t bear to eat meat, and everyone around him knew that he got along extraordinarily well with children. He literally drew cute Disney fan art for Snow White and the Seven Dwarves. If Hitler had been a guy going to highschool in Kansas in the 1970s, he would have been called a faggot almost continually. And frankly, guys who are ‘queer-coded’ are just guys who aren’t quite queer enough to be queer.

The modern make-up of grassroots fascists movements confirms this all to be the case. Even the irl terror-cells that look like groups of Chads are notoriously disproportionately run by homosexual Chads. But more than that, the bread and butter of the online dissident right are weebz into anime. Buttercup
Dew, a highly charismatic bastion of fascist intellectualism in the glory days of Tumblr, was a gay Brony. Trans-Strasserism is a recognised term, and Strasserites all wanting to be girls should be a weirder joke than it actually is. And if you go to the real wide open space of public discourse, r/PoliticalCompassMemes, it is a ubiquitous truism that marking authcentre in your flair patterns strongly with being a Femboy.

In essence, to be attracted to the idea of social order in this day and age, you must be by nature anathema to social order. There is certainly something tragic here.

You wait long enough and it becomes clear that all culture is downstream from reactionary incels.

-Evan Platinum

CCIII Defence of transgenderism (in the abstract)
If there are really transgender people, what would this mean from a Christian standpoint? Well, supposedly that the soul has been misaligned with the body. First of all, do souls even have a gender? Well, it seems as though various deities have gender, in spite of their ability to take different physical shapes. This suggests that spirit can have gender apart from physical characteristics. An oft repeated complaint about the idea that a body could be born with the wrong soul is that this implies God made a mistake. However, this seems to forget that we live in a fallen world. Many sorts of “birth defects” occur. Of course when the resurrection comes, nobody is going to be missing their limbs, but that doesn’t mean that nobody is born without legs in the interim. Of course the Platonic ideal of a human would have a matching soul and body, but as an unfortunate birth defect transgenderism is (in the abstract) plausible.

CCIV Epistemology of Transgenderism in Christianity
Scripture gives different commands to men and women. If such a person as described in the last section were to really exist, which standards would they be judged by? Well, how would one know that they have a soul different from what their body would suggest? This would require some sort of deep spiritual knowledge. A deep mystical intuition, with a certain genius in introspection. On the one hand, such knowledge clearly exists, because mystics do exist. On the other hand, it certainly isn’t something I have. It probably isn’t something widely available. It might sound easy, but the introspection required isn’t simply the psychological introspection needed to say “I feel like a woman”. Rather, it would require the mystical vision to discern whether that feeling was actually the result of the gender of your soul, or simply the result of a delusion or perversion on your part. Some people might feel like they could make this judgement with certainty [what is knowledge?], but I would not presume to.

Moreover, when trying to figure out which set of scriptural instructions to follow (and how to present yourself publicly, and refer to yourself, and ask other people to refer to you), there are two main pieces of evidence: internal intuition, and external biology. The fact is, one of these pieces of evidence is much more obvious, much more unambiguous, and much more indisputable. When discerning how to live, the more cautious and responsible choice would seem to be following the testimony of the clearer piece of evidence. At the very least, you couldn’t be strongly blamed for making that choice (and if you wake up in the New Jerusalem at the eschaton with breasts and a vagina and wearing an adorable dress, well, congratulations). But if you make the opposite choice and trust your intuition, and it turns out your
mystical insight wasn’t as strong as you had believed, and you are actually following a delusion (and
causing a lot of people around you pain and discomfort), it is easier to blame you for that.

**CCV An opposition to transgenderism (in practice)**

[Defence of transgenderism (in the abstract)] gives a Christian a very good reason to act with humility
and respect when dealing with the transgender issue. However, pretending it’s the end of the story would
be ridiculous.

First of all, there is evidence that strongly dysphoric males have female brain structure. On the one hand,
this is evidence that they have a “female mind”. But how does that interplay with the idea that they have
a female soul? It actually muddles the issue. It raises the possibility that the feeling is coming from their
brain structure, rather than the gender of their soul. What if their soul matches their genitalia, and it is
their brain structure which is the birth defect? Granted, that the brain might have a special connection
with the soul is not impossible [CCXVII]

Second of all, how separate are the body and the soul, really? Is the spiritual reality of a thing separate
and removed from a thing, or simply a (correct) way of describing a thing [L]? I don’t think that’s the
strongest objection, but it is worth bringing up.

However, consider that reality is predicated on language [XLIV]. When most people say something of
that sort, they mean that neither are “real”. On the contrary, language AND reality are real. Crimes
against language are crimes against spiritual reality. Language is fundamentally order, and structure
[order]. If there isn’t some order, language loses itself, and when language loses itself, reality loses itself.

When modern gender-ideology activists say that they are “really a woman” or “really a man”, most of
them, or at least those at the ideological vanguard, do not mean that this is “spiritually” true. If they did,
then this would be a great victory for conservatism. The more common refrain is “fuck gender, it’s all
constructs and stupid boxes”. And yes, dividing people with phalii from people with vaginas is a
construct, in a sense. Just like the existence of cats is a “construct”, and the existence of a star is a
construct [XLIII], and the existence of anything other than a soup of fluctuating quantum fields is a
construct, and the existence of truth is a “construct” [possibility of truth beyond spirit]. They appear that
way if you’re at the bottom of the nihilist pit and content to remain there. But cats do exist. To deny the
validity of the human intuition that such a category makes sense is to deny spirit and truth altogether.
That “man” and “woman” are reasonable and obvious categories to divide some things in the world into
is an even deeper, more universal and more culturally central human intuition than the existence of cats.
Transgender ideology as practiced on the forefront of the movement is implicitly attempting to tell us that
we are insane for believing anything in reality can actually be understood in any meaningful way.

Of course it is also a middle finger to social order, to the extent that social order still exists in any
meaningful sense. It is commonly brought up that many traditional cultures have various sorts of gender-
bending dynamics. On the most basic level, this is questionably relevant simply because our society
doesn’t, and it’s our society we’re living in. But the more important point is that the gender-bending
dynamics of past culture were still parts of a social order, rather than a rejection of the idea of order. In
traditional cultures, the basic distinction between male and female was respected (and the differences of
dress/role between them were typically stronger than they are for us), and when there were males playing explicitly female roles, this was recognised as something strange. Not something strange that you “can’t judge because people can do whatever they want”, but typically something strange that had some sort of spiritual significance to its strangeness: “Priests of Cybele cut off their phalli because that’s how it works”. Eurasian eunuchs of course were a practical asset for management in various situations, and thus also had a role in the social order.

Where you have people-with-a-phallus-who-are-taking-up-womanesque-characteristics, this is typically priestly and ritualised. If not ritualised, practical. This is slightly speculative, but I strongly suspect that throughout most of history, in most societally endorsed cases where there is not a specific ritual or practical significance to the person-with-a-phallus-who-is-taking-up-womanesque-characteristics (and the frequency and prominence of such cases is likely exaggerated as it is), there are two options: it is recognised that the person isn’t ultimately “really a woman” (thus preserving the validity of human language) or else, if they are considered a woman, it is recognised that this is a case of REAL spiritual reality being more important than physical reality. The idea that categorising people based primarily on their genitalia is not a basically accurate and reasonable linguistic categorisation is an astonishingly new and radical idea, with philosophically horrifying implications.

CCVI Transgenderism sociologically right now

Look, maybe all that is neither here nor there. As a more immediate issue, transgenderism as it actually exists right now is clearly spreading as a social contagion, and the statistics make this clear.

Gender transitions used to be quite dominantly MtF, and generally take place in adulthood (basically either for gay dudes wanting to take their drag to the logical conclusion, or for people with the same personality tendencies as Hitler and I, but just ten times stronger). People seeking them out was relatively rare. Within the last decade, people seeking out gender-affirming care has increased an insane amount. Of course part of this is simply because it has become more socially acceptable. But people seeking it out are younger on average. And, crucially, the truly enormous increase has been in FtM transitions, which used to be vanishingly rare, and now make up a large majority of cases. The TQ+ part of LGBTQ+ is a subcultural trend spreading by way of adolescent female social dynamics. There is a significant phenomenon of one girl transitioning, and then others in her social circle following suit. It is the equivalent of goths a generation ago or hippies before that, but the difference is that when a hippie grows up, she hasn’t physically mutilated her breasts and lost the ability to bear children.

The prevalence of non-binary identity seems to be a result of this. Again, an overwhelming AFAB term. Transgenderism prior to its recent explosion was mostly men with some sort of deep overwhelming desire to be a woman, and horror at their own physical form. What feeling does “non-binary” identity imply? These girls do not have any sort of deep-seated desire to be a man, equivalent to old-school transgenderism, or else they would call themselves a man rather than an enby. The term doesn’t represent anything other than a refusal to be placed in a box (which, for what it’s worth, I am entirely sympathetic to). For an AFAB person to say “I don’t like frilly dresses, and I experience same-sex attraction, therefore I must not be a woman”, implies that women have to like frilly dresses, and be attracted to men. Which would be all well and good, except that we just recently more or less destroyed that notion as a societal ideal. Is there any difference between a lesbian tomboy wearing pants, and an enby, beyond the
fact that the enby is intent on destroying the order of human language, and is wearing a binder which makes it difficult to breathe? If “woman” is defined biologically, enbys are women. If “woman” is defined by feminine behavioural norms, tomboys are shameful failures. We as a society are trying to have our cake and eat it too.

It could be objected that I seem to be saying the adolescent females cutting off their breasts must be really stupid and gullible. It could further be argued that people do not, in fact, cut off their breasts and chemically sterilise themselves on a whim. I agree, generally speaking. Many people making this choice are doing so out of a sense of deep anguish. But the thing is, we live in a time with rampant depression and mental suffering of all varieties. This is statistically even more prevalent among trans people than among society at large. People taking drastic surgical measures are probably doing so because they feel a deep sense of suffering stemming from the body that they currently have. It is in fact true that, in some sense, the body they have is the source of their suffering. But suffering is a subjective feeling. If you are depressed, you will find things to be depressed about, and once you are depressed about that thing, it becomes the case that it is in fact that thing which is making you depressed. Likewise, once you have found something to feel anxiety about, it becomes the case that it is in fact that thing which is making you anxious. Now, this doesn’t happen totally arbitrarily: there are things which are inherently depressing and anxiety inducing. Likewise, there are women who are naturally masculine, and men who are naturally effeminate. But if you are a man who is both mentally unwell, and naturally effeminate but not overwhelmingly so, the conclusion that your mental anguish is caused by having the wrong body won’t necessarily be at the forefront of your mind unless the possibility that that is the case is constantly being broadcast to you. And the idea that your suffering is caused by your phallus is only a true idea if it is an idea that has occurred to you, because the reality abstracted away from the subjective experience of your suffering is just “you have depression, and need either medication, therapy, or (most likely) to live in a less depressing world”. Sure, the “you might be in the wrong body” message is only going to get latched onto by people with some natural vulnerability towards it, but that doesn’t mean that loudly broadcasting the message didn’t change anything.

CCVII Masculinity

Female gender norms in cosmopolitan areas are in a historically weak and vacuous state. A woman can be whatever she wants, and criticising a woman for being “masculine” because she dressed or acted a certain way would be extremely socially taboo. There is a concerted effort to broadcast the message that “just because [x] doesn’t mean you aren’t just as much of a girl”. The same is not true of masculinity. Or rather, to the extent that the message is being broadcast, it is not really being received and put into practice. If we expand to a historical scale though, we kind of live in a masculine moment of history. Because we emphasise Rational Will over Natural Will, and have (tried to) reject the idea of beauty as a societal value, this is a world where a sensitive effeminate empath does not feel at home. Moreover, it is specifically our society’s conception of what it means to be masculine which has rejected all ideas of beauty, expressivity, and sensitivity. We don’t like people to care about beauty or emotion at all, but we especially don’t like men to care about beauty or emotion, to a degree which is not entirely historically normal. So if you are a sensitive effeminate male empath, not only are you bad in general, you are bad at being a man. If you try to pursue your interests within the bounds of what is acceptable for men, you will be disappointed. It is unsurprising that effeminate men in this context would try to leave behind the
“man” label by going trans, and/or, to circle back to [trans-strasserism], become a fascist, to bring back a world that cares about beauty.

Women wearing drab business-attire is a disappointing recent innovation. What most conservatives don’t consider is that men wearing non-flamboyant clothing is a disappointing innovation which is simply somewhat less recent. This is a documented moment in fashion-history, called The Great (male) Renunciation, and it goes back to the rise of the bourgeoisie, the beliefs of the enlightenment, and the beginnings of capitalism. It is simply our Rational Will obsession with Utilitarianism and “practicality” applied to clothing (and it’s no wonder it’s starting to happen to women too).
How to quit being a wimp and

**DRESS MANLY**

Like the **GOOD OLD DAYS**

- **Lace collar and cuffs**
  *(Henri II de Lorraine, 1563-1624)*

- **Puffed sleeves**
  *(King Gustav II Adolf, 1594-1632)*

- **Medieval suspension method**
  *(14th century)*

- **Thicce legs**
  *(Smells very nice♡)*

- **Silk stockings/hose**
  *(King Charles IX, 1550-1574)*

- **High heels**
  *(King Louis XIV, 1643-1715)*

- **Ballet dance**
  *(Dance masters, Renaissance Italy)*

- **Nail polish**
  *(Ur of Chaldeans, 3200 BCE)*

- **Makeup**
  *(King Louis XVI, 1754-1793)*

- **Lovelock hairstyle**
  *(King Charles I of England, 1600-1649)*

- **Low-necked shirts**
  *(Renaissance Italy)*

- **Stays/corset for men**
  *(Great Britain, 19th century)*

- **Skirt**
  *(King Henry VIII, 1491-1547)*

- **Pink costume**
  *(18th century France)*

- **Astolfo**
  *(Legendary MALE paladin, 9th century)*

  *(also sodomy was legal everywhere before 486 BCE)*

CCVIII large enbys
Apparently men are pretty good at gritting and bearing it, though, because, as noted, our epidemic of transitions is a female phenomenon, and they hardly have an equivalent excuse. There is a vaguely similar phenomenon, though, which is that adopting trans or non-binary identity seems to be especially popular among females who are overweight and unattractive. Why make yourself beautiful when you can take up an identity label which has no defined beauty norms?

**CCIX Fat ideology**

Okay, just to be clear, we don’t need to go out of our way to mock fat people for being fat. Bullying isn’t very nice. But the attempt to make us think that there is no ideal range of body sizes is not a good thing. On the literally obese end of things, this is just a medical fact. Being obese is bad for you. But we shouldn’t even accept the claim that not-quite-dangerous-but-still-fat bodies are just as good to have as normal ones. Those bodies are simply less aesthetic. The claim that one body is as good as another is coming from the same social forces which tell us that one building is as good as another, or one painting is as good as another. Liberalism says “there’s no such thing as real beauty”, so capitalism says “then we might as well build buildings which are cheap and unadorned”. Likewise, Liberalism says “there’s no such thing as real beauty”, and capitalism says “then you might as well eat as much as you want”. It’s worse in that case, though, because you eating more actually makes the food corporations more money. We are becoming a society of ugly people living in ugly places, because beauty is too “subjective”.

First it's “well what if I don’t think that building is ugly?”, then it’s “well what if I don’t think that body is ugly”, then soon “What if I don’t think homosexuality is ugly”, and “what if I don’t think paedophilia is ugly”, and before you know it “what if I don’t think murder ugly?”.

**CCX L/G**

Does the homosexual act involve a sin? Yes. However, it is also a source of beauty [the ending]. Love is highly aesthetic, and different sorts of relationships have different aesthetic feelings associated with them. Sexual relationships have unique feelings, and male/male relationships have unique feelings, but adding the two things together creates aesthetic feelings which are new, and would never have gotten the chance to be felt were homosexuality to not exist.

**CCXI B**

Bisexuality (of attraction if not of action) is the logical conclusion of being an aesthete. Attraction is seeing beauty and loving it. If one is living the aesthetic life, and trying to appreciate all the myriad beauties, then surely one is missing out on a great deal if one doesn’t learn to appreciate both male and female bodies.

**CCXII Secular morality**

>lol your morality is ruled by your disgust response

Um, yeah. Yeah it is. That’s what morality is: a disgust response. I’m disgusted by murder. Okay, look, I bring this up, because some people who consider themselves to have a “rational morality”, and are materialists, support homosexuality but not bestiality and paedophilia. I don’t see the logic. Yeah, sure, animals can’t “consent”. They can’t consent to being killed and eaten either. Being eaten seems rather more egregious to me. And children who can speak absolutely can consent. What, you don’t think their
consent “counts”? Well their brain isn’t going to reach maturity until age 25, and I don’t think many people are suggesting we push the age of consent back that far. Some 14 year olds are smart, and some 45 year olds are really stupid. And for all we know, there’s some alien race two solar systems over that makes all of us look like we have the intelligence of infants. It’s all rather arbitrary, really.

I morally object to fucking children, or animals, or other men, all for the same reason: the action is wrong in itself.

CCXIII Paedophilia

>isn’t this going to irreversibly tarnish your reputation

It’s too late to be worried about that at this point.

Okay, so, let’s split this into two categories: pubescent and pre-pubescent. I believe if it is human and has gone through puberty, being attracted to it is not weird. From a biological standpoint the attraction instinct exists to encourage reproduction, and a 15/16 year old girl is in prime child-bearing years. It would be weird not to find 16 year olds attractive, and most men who claim they don’t are probably lying or in denial.

Now to consider pre-pubescents. As I stated above, I would say actually having sex with one would be a sin (in and of itself). But most places say that technically paedophilia refers to the attraction.

There is supposedly an aesthetic quality of “cuteness”. I have heard it suggested that men generally don’t really understand or appreciate the category properly, but I don’t know whether that’s true. Either way, it often includes babies, and I really don’t find babies very aesthetic at all.

There are many ways an adult woman can be attractive. Many different qualities, many pleasant aesthetic responses I could receive from seeing one, depending on demeanor, shape, and clothing.

Everyone accepts that there exist aesthetic qualities in prepubescent children. Most people, though, would say that children are cute “the way babies are cute, but a bit different”. This does not work for me, though, because I don’t find babies very cute. I still find aesthetic qualities in some prepubescent children though, and since I find adults generally more aesthetic than babies, my description of the aesthetic qualities of children logically has to be something more like “they are aesthetic the way women are aesthetic, but a bit different”. Is that “bit different” the difference between cuteness and attraction? The difference between being normal and being a menace to society? If so, I’m on flimsy ground, because I’d say the differences within the range of the category of “attractive” aesthetics are bigger than the difference between that category and the category of prepubescent “cuteness” [showing how things are the same]. It’s a dichotomy which would be drawn based on social acceptability, not entirely on the actual nature of the aesthetic responses themselves. I think, by the widely distributed definition, this would mean I’m a paedophile. I’m pretty sure the logic I’ve described would apply to a not-insignificant portion of the population, if they considered it honestly [tragedy of knowledge]. I’m just the one unfortunate enough to have actually thought through it.
Someone could suggest that it would be an insignificant portion of the population, by saying that most people think babies are cute (and their appreciation of children is an extension of that). Now, most women think babies are cute, certainly, especially mothers and mothers-to-be. Most fathers think babies are cute, once they’ve had babies, or at any rate think their own babies are cute. However, I’m not necessarily convinced that it is overwhelmingly the case that most young people, especially most young men, find babies especially aesthetically pleasing. Or at least, I suspect I’m not unique in finding a well dressed ten-year-old more aesthetically pleasing than a squirmy baby. That means the age of the child increasing increased the aesthetic quality. If the aesthetic quality increased with age, rather than decreasing, we can logically say that it is at least as reasonable to consider it the beginnings of pubescent beauty as to consider it the remnants of infantile “cuteness”. Of course, it’s its own thing too. Aesthetic qualities are unique and can’t be 100% accurately described as combinations of other aesthetic qualities. But our societal definition of one of our most hated crimes rests on categorising the aesthetic qualities which people experience or don’t experience, so categorise we must, and I would be lying if I said I don’t think children are beautiful.

CCXIV Cheapness

There is an essay which I have been fond of for years called Why You Hate Contemporary Architecture. I still love it. However, it does dedicate a fair amount of energy to mocking buildings which are flashy vanity projects or else strict adherents to some particular “modern” style. But “blobitecture” isn’t really the problem, when it comes down to it. Yes, it is a helpful example, because it makes the point that we still occasionally spend a lot of money on buildings, and easily could spend that on buildings which are actually beautiful. However, they at least are saying something. They are making a statement, expressing an artistic vision and somewhat living up to it. They are dedicated [somewhere in Romantic Ethic section]. Likewise, brutalism isn’t really the problem either. No, it isn’t really beautiful. But it at least has a sense of strength to it. A sense of permanence. It almost feels ancient in a way: it has the firmness and reality of the archaic.

No, the real problem is all of the normal everyday design choices that are not “saying” much of anything at all. It is the rows upon rows of plastic-looking apartment buildings. It is the houses which I can only call “unobjectionable” so many times before I start to feel they are objectionable. It is the leased out commercial blocks with half-assed “traditional” facades. It’s business signs plastered onto buildings in such a way as to imply that their presence in the area is noncommittal and temporary, riding the waves of fortune. It’s every little choice which builders don’t even think twice about, because the idea of caring how something looks is now alien to us, and the idea of spending money on it is abhorrent.

I go into businesses, and occasionally I am pleasantly surprised that some amount of effort was put into (beautiful) interior design. But if you look at the ceiling, you see the same hideous ceiling panels you always do. You see ugly utilitarian devices like smoke-detectors plain and out in the open, as though nobody even gives a thought to containing something’s guts within its skin anymore. I wish we could just go back to not having smoke detectors, but at the least couldn’t they come with a nice Victorian metalwork grating that hides them from view or something? There are hardly ever nice ceilings, and it’s like they believe we will never look up. Isn’t that sad somehow, that we’re never supposed to look up? Somebody thought, well, maybe our average sales will go up enough if our customers feel cozy that we
can justify this mural-ish thing, but GOD FORBID we should actually FINISH THE FUCKING JOB! How could we EVEN IMAGINE providing a fully encompassing aesthetic experience?

I can’t tell you how tired I am of existing in the world.

It’s the fucking latch on the side of the door. You barely ever see it, and it’s fucking gorgeous, because there was a time when we thought “why shouldn’t everything be gorgeous?” instead of thinking “why should anything at all be gorgeous?”

You’ll never see a light switch that looks like this in day-to-day life. 95% of the light switches you see in day to day life look pretty much the same, and they look that way out of laziness and cheapness and mass production. That’s the real problem.

**CCXV Suggestion to materials-engineers**

Roads are really ugly. Creating the interstates shifted culture, shifted settlement patterns, cleared land, tore down buildings, and shrunk the world: it was not great. That said, most normal roads don’t look great either.

There are roads that look good, like cobblestone and brick. The problem is, you don’t want cars going 50 over cobblestone, because it wears the cars down (now if we had just never decided we needed to go 50…. But too late for that I suppose [Kali Yuga]). Another way to make roads slightly better looking would be to paint fancy patterns on them. The issue with that is that they get driven on, and the pattern
could start wearing off. Thus, I have an urgent mission for materials engineers: We need a material which can be safely driven on at high speeds, but which is see-through. Then you can make a pretty road, and put the see-through surface on top of it. I guess it would get dirty though. Still might be worth a shot.

CCXVI Non-literal
Metaphorical things leach meaning from literal things. We make comparisons, because the things we are comparing to are meaningful. They are logically prior.

Sometimes you hear the phrase “found family” get used. It is also a genre of narrative. In the abstract, the idea is wholesome. You’ve found people who you care about deeply. However, it is a common theme for queer narratives. This is presumably because when you are participating in social disintegration, you need a surrogate for what you’ve disintegrated. Your own feelings are more important than your actual family, so you make a new “family”. The message at the vanguard of progressivism today is that it doesn’t really matter whether you’re related to someone. Who cares about blood, it’s the people that care about you and accept you that matter. They are your real family.

Don’t you see what’s happening here? They could have just said “family doesn’t matter”. By saying “those people are like family”, they are admitting that “family” means something. If they didn’t understand, on some level, the power of the literal meaning, they wouldn’t be drawing from it with metaphor. Now, words can survive metaphors just fine, but the logical conclusion of their beliefs is the destruction of the family as we know it, the destruction of any idea of meaningfulness in biologically real relations. And once that happens, their new “families” won’t suddenly “replace” real families. The new families are dependent on real families to provide the thing they are a metaphor of! The only power left in the word will be remnants and left-overs of sentimentality. And ultimately, they will take away much of the power and meaning which their found families have in the present, because the power of the literal meaning is what gave power to the metaphor. They are sinking their own ship.

CCXVII Transcendence 3: Consciousness
Within neuroscience, the problem of consciousness is commonly known as “The Hard Problem”: How does conscious experience arise from biological hardware in a scientifically sensible way?

Allow me to explain why it is a ‘hard problem’. It is a ‘hard problem’, because it is absolutely unsolvable. If anyone claims to have made “progress” on it, they haven’t. If they claim to have solved it, they haven’t. If a “solution” becomes widespread, and considered “scientific”, and it shows up in the news that “The Hard Problem has been solved”, it has not been solved. The problem is hard because the way it has been formulated is logically inconsistent.

The Natural Sciences involve falsifiable material explanations for demonstrable material phenomena. Consciousness is not a demonstrable material phenomenon within the scientific epistemology. A computer that passes a Turing Test is not necessarily experiencing consciousness. With that in mind, it is clear that we can posit the existence of a human who claims to have consciousness but is not distinct from
a machine. If everyone stopped having conscious experiences tomorrow, there would be precisely zero scientifically observable difference between then and now.

> what is the evolutionary benefit of claiming to be conscious?
That question exists whether or not we are really conscious. “People claim to be conscious” is the scientifically demonstrable fact.

Am I suggesting that we don’t know whether consciousness doesn’t exist? No, absolutely not. I know, with great certainty, that I am experiencing consciousness. Every individual scientist knows with absolute certainty that they specifically are conscious (and thus that consciousness, in at least one case, exists). Science, though, does not know that I am conscious. Each of us has only one demonstrable example of the phenomenon, and thus it is not replicable. Furthermore, it is not material. Perhaps material things are among its causes, but science deals with energy contained within space-time, and if the easily imaginable hypothetical world where we’re all just Turing approved robots were reality, clearly the state of the universe in terms of matter, energy, time, and space would be identical to where it is now. No matter what piece of matter, energy, time or space you point to, I will not be convinced if you say “this thing is a conscious experience”. I would respond “perhaps that causes a conscious experience, but you cannot say it is a conscious experience; that is a piece of material, which is a fundamentally different thing. I have conscious experiences, and I should know”.

At the bottom of the Pyrrhonist Descent, even the Buddhist attempt to dig the pit deeper, there is one thing, and one thing only, which is certain: the existence of experience. People are accustomed to speaking as though the spiritual or the immaterial only “might” exist, and that you are only on solid ground when talking about the physical. The opposite is objectively true. An experience is not a material thing, and an experience exists. Therefore, something which is not a material thing exists.

If you are conscious, you have plainly and simply disproved materialism. It is that simple.

Does this mean there is a God? No. But it opens a door. A very stubborn opposition to God’s existence comes from people who are convinced of a fully scientific and materialist view of reality. Such a view certainly has its appeals, and an elegance, and once it has been adopted, God’s existence can clearly be rejected out of hand. But you cannot reject the existence of the immaterial; if you do not consider yourself a conscious being, you are delusional, and if you do consider yourself a conscious being, your so-called “materialism” was incoherent all along.

CCXVIII Caveat
That said, there is clearly a correlation between brain activity and experiences. Once you’ve realised the implications of consciousness, you can go back to casually speaking of a spot on a brain scan as your thoughts about pizza or whatever. You can even say “this is what’s making me think about pizza”, and the correlation suggests that to say so is accurate on some not-maximally-expansive level [LV]. But when you say “cause” in this case, have it in the back of your mind that you do not mean “cause” in any sort of “scientific” sense. There is no scientific way to logically describe why a magical (in the most basic sense) thing is correlated with a scientific one.

CCXIX Life and Death
My natural way of thinking is to call the stuff going on in my consciousness my “mind” as opposed to my soul, with the soul being some abstract thing which I don’t have any access to. I do not know if this is a normal impression to grow up having, but it was mine. I’m not sure it has to be true. Conscious experience is immaterial, and the soul is immaterial, why can it not be affiliated with the soul in some way? In some regard it seems like the biggest piece of evidence for the soul.

That would mean though that animals probably also have souls. Some certainly have the correlated brain activity. This could, on the one hand, prompt us to start asking “which animals have the correct brain activity to qualify as possessors of souls, and are thus off-limits for hunting and deserve human rights?” I think this is a rather presumptuous question though; clearly SOMETHING immaterial is going on anyway, and who’s to say that couldn’t keep going on whether or not there’s the same physical correlate? I don’t discount that there might be some sort of “experience” involved in being a nematode.

One natural way to go from here would be vegetarianism. The natural reason for people to turn to vegetarianism is seeing animals being kind of like humans (and experiencing things which, for humans, would be suffering), consider that they wouldn’t eat a human, then arrive at not eating animals. This is a reasonable thing to do. However, watching recent nature documentaries suggests that science is now disabusing us of this option. It sounds silly to speak of “plant behaviour” and “plant communication”, but it’s increasingly clear that plant communication is occurring, and it is simply not obvious to us because it is mostly chemical rather than auditory. And plant behaviour is certainly occurring, but simply at a speed and time scale which is nonobvious to us [scale].

Thus, vegetarianism is noble and well-intentioned, and vegetarians are better people than I am, but in some regard vegetarianism is a mask for the cold fact that some living being must be killed or violated for you to continue living. Somebody’s flesh must be consumed. Life must be lost in one place to be gained elsewhere [connections].

That is a specific case of the general idea that losses and gains tend to come together. It seems intuitive in my book, and perhaps often true in experience, but I have to admit it is mostly an assumption.

**CCXX not murdering people**

I don’t eat people though. Clearly something’s going on with that.

Most essentially, human rights are probably real transcendent principles. Of course, there are a lot of those. “Not murdering innocent humans”, specifically, is part of the natural law which might exist from [XCII] and [CXXII-CXXIII], assuming it exists (but of course in some sense it is just a principle as well). At any rate, I have a pretty strong intuition about murder being bad, so I’ll take it as pretty axiomatic.

Also, though, it makes a certain amount of sense under traditionalist logic that eating plants or perhaps animals would be allowed while eating humans would not be: you owe more to the people closer to you, and I am more closely biologically related to any human than I am to a carrot. What I owe to any human is much less than what I owe to my immediate family, but if you are family only in the sense of being in
the same human species, I still owe it to you based on that not to kill you and eat you for food. I’m not saying I predicate the human right to live on this logic necessarily, but it does fit together well.

CCXXI ‘rational animals’
Some people attempt to find some deeper assumption behind the human right to life, but which aligns with it. First of all, the intuition which I and most people ever to live have is not some deeper assumption, but rather it is simply the baseline assumption. Second, though, the ideas usually proffered as that “deeper assumption” are not an especially good approximation of the baseline assumption. We want to protect “rational life”? Kill me then, I’m fucking stupid. Loads of people never become especially rational. Presumably what is meant is something like consciousness. Loads of animals are conscious, and anything at all reasonably could be conscious, so perhaps some slightly narrower word like “sapient”, or “self-aware”. Of course, as anyone who’s thought about this knows, from a scientific standpoint it is questionable to what degree people in the first few years of life are “conscious” in an adult sense, and most people don’t support murdering two year olds. Some people probably start creating identity-forming memories even later than that, so there might even be a few four year olds we could slaughter if this was our standard. Certainly a great deal mentally handicapped people could be killed by this definition. Maybe you are fine with all this, but there are more significant problems. You see, by a standard of human rights based on your mental state, it becomes perfectly acceptable to kill you if you’ve fainted or have been knocked out. Or are in a coma. Or in a dreamless sleep. Or in a dreamless part of the sleep cycle. Depending on how stringent we are, and whether we are vegetarians, it could also be argued that even while dreaming, or while heavily drunk, or just zoning out, we are morally killable. This all seems like a bad idea. It especially seems like the case because if the “thing” we don’t want to kill is disappearing and reappearing every time we go to bed, then you are not the same person you were yesterday. Yes, there are highly intelligent people who lose sleep over the fact that they might be dying every time they sleep, but from my perspective, understanding human discontinuity is simply part of the nihilist descent, and positing human continuity is a pretty basic step in the ascent back out, one only a little less basic than “positing the outside world” and “positing the unified testimony of the sense”.
Assuming murdering people in their sleep is bad, and assuming we are the same entity each morning we wake up, all this stuff trying to base the human right to stay alive on some quality other than just being a human doesn’t really work.

CCXXII Abortion
The right to life therefore begins when you begin being a human. When is that?

Anyone who finds the idea that you can kill a child right before birth but not right after to be a rational one is incredibly stupid. To choose this as the crucial moment is shockingly arbitrary.

As we just demonstrated in the last section, the idea that some particular level of conscious experience is what grants you your rights is bogus, so any definition of life’s beginning based on that is out of the question.

To suggest we should start protecting life once the fetus is pain-capable implies you can murder adults as long as you give them pain-killers first.
I see some merit in definitions based on heartbeat, because generally speaking this has something to do with how we mark the end of life. However, you also pretty unambiguously stop talking when you are dead, and nobody thinks we should define life based on speech ability.

There is precisely one point which is the least arbitrary for determining when protection of human life should begin: There is an object/entity which we label a human, so the least-arbitrary point is when that object comes into existence. Prior to conception there are two objects (sperm and egg), both clearly identifiable with the respective parents based on genetic code. Then, these two objects fuse into one object, which is now, based on its genetic code, a specific potential adult, just like an 8 year old is, and unlike a sperm, which is a potential ingredient in many different possible embryos which are potential adults. We’re dealing with an object which is changing continually over time, from the moment of its creation to the moment it dies in its seventies or eighties. The only hard-and-fast lines it makes any sense to draw are the start of the process and the end of the process (conception and death). Even if you find some other moment during (or after) the pregnancy to be a compelling “start of life” moment, are you really comfortable saying “this object, which is hardly different today from how it was yesterday, is sacred today, but was yesterday expendable?” Do you have absolutely no doubt in the moment you have chosen? These are things we should be careful with! If you accept a ten percent chance that you are wrong about whether a fetus in a particular moment of pregnancy is a “human”, you should still be morally opposed to the idea of terminating it. It’s not as though we demolish old buildings when there’s a ten percent chance there’s someone inside.

P.S There’s a rather clever argument about how some twins don’t separate into two until like 8 days (at most) after conception, implying that initially the embryo is not a single specific potential adult. You know what? Maybe that’s true. It only pushes the start of life to like 8 days post-conception, so if you want to join us in advocating for abortion bans, and stop helping once we’ve got it down to ten days or so, that’s perfectly fine by me, and I’ll have been grateful for your help.

CCXXIII Real Talk
Okay, pay attention. Everything else in this 100+ page document is just some bullshit I barely believe [conscience], but this is real. This is something of enormous importance, which any rational being capable of free-thought should be able to get through their skull.

Some people say that they are pro-choice whether or not the fetus qualifies as a human. The most clever pro-choice argument, and one which is brought up highly repetitively, is the one where someone knocks you out, and you wake up attached to an advanced life-support machine that is using you to keep a world-famous violinist alive (it will be months before he heals). The argument being that you clearly have no moral duty to be trapped in the hospital room for months, even if unhooking yourself would kill the violinist.

Let’s look at the moral assumptions here, very carefully. First, one might suggest that, actually, yes, you do have a moral duty to remain hooked up to the violinist. Apparently a great many people disagree with that idea, so we move on.
It compares being pregnant to being stuck in a hospital room for nine months. This is absurd, but I suppose it's just a difference of degree.

It assumes a moral equivalency between being biologically dependent as a fetus, which is a natural part of human development which every single one of us necessarily went through, with dependence on a life-support machine, something artificial and recent, which it is hard to imagine we have a fundamental right to. However, I said “any rational being” should be able to follow this argument, so I will eschew the traditionalist critique here.

It assumes a moral equivalence between a total stranger and your own child. I do think there is something worth saying here, which is that our society is highly inconsistent in this regard. You have no special responsibility to your child in the womb, but we do morally and legally condemn parents who are negligent toward their children after they are born. Especially if they actively kill their children. Under this mode of thinking, if you are the biological mother of a five-year-old, and you decide you don’t like her anymore and don’t want to pay for her food, you are morally and legally free to put her up for adoption. And indeed, parents in our world are able to put children up for adoption. Does our assumption of the absolute irrelevance of blood-relationship to morality mean you have zero responsibility toward the child? No. Absolutely not. You have a responsibility not “as the biological mother” but simply “as the person whose custody the child is presently in”, and this responsibility is (a) to ensure the child survives up to the point you hand her over to the adoption agency, and (b) actually take her to the adoption agency rather than just leaving her to fend for herself. This is because children are generally not capable of independent survival. Thus, if you are the current caretaker of a fetus (i.e it lives inside you), you should have the moral duty to care for it until such time as you can turn it over to someone else (which is to say, birth).

People sometimes suggest that a fetus should not be able to “enslave” your body. Damn, okay. If you have a five year old which you have the (at least temporary) responsibility of keeping alive, is she “enslaving your body”? Yeah, pregnancy can be exhausting, painful, and demeaning. You know what else can be exhausting, painful, and demeaning? Working a shitty job so that you can earn money to ensure the survival of your five-year-old. Also, caring for the five-year-old, in general. People have duped themselves into believing there is some enormous difference here, but there is not.

There is one way in which you can be a reasonable and consistent pro-choice person: being an extremely hardcore Randian Objectivist. If you think that it is morally alright to shoot your five-year-old, because they have been violating your autonomy by consuming your labour in the form of income in the form of food, then yeah, it makes sense you would also suggest the same is true of a child pre-birth. But if you aren’t a hardcore Randian Objectivist, then the pro-choice position should be logically absurd. ESPECIALLY if you are anywhere on the economic left or centre. How can you possibility claim one minute in an economic debate that it is entirely morally justified to force people to pay taxes to keep random unemployed folks alive, and then turn around to an abortion debate and say that any imposition on personal autonomy is so absolutely unacceptable that not even an innocent human life is a worthwhile counterbalance? The pro-life position is the truly progressive position, because it expands human rights (the right to life) to previously disenfranchised groups, and it is also the true leftist position, because it
recognizes that maybe libertarian freedom is not the be-all-and-end-all of every secular moral quandary. If we are to give according to our ability and take according to our need, why should we kill a fetus for needing sustenance and not having the ability to provide it? Of course, this is not to say that it isn’t the conservative position as well. This is one of the only issues I can speak about with few qualms, because there’s no “angle” that makes abortion look good, except the Randian one, as noted above, and the rank-and-file of the pro-choice movement are not in fact Randians.

Really I think this section + the two preceding it should be enough to make anyone abandon the pro-choice position, but let me just say one more thing here, by returning to the “hospitalised violinist” idea. We haven’t even touched on what that argument’s fundamental weakness is. It’s fundamental weakness is that it only works if we are assuming you didn’t volunteer to be hooked up to the machine! If we accept that you have no duty to remain plugged into the violinist, and we accept the equivalence of mother and stranger, and accept the equivalence of machine and womb, and even accept that you cannot have any possible moral duty which violates your autonomy placed on you without your consent, then yes, the violin situation is equivalent to an abortion, and abortion is moral, BUT ONLY IF THE PREGNANCY IS A RESULT OF RAPE. It’s always framed as “you wake up to find yourself attached to a life support machine”. If you walked into the hospital said “I like violin music, so I would like to volunteer to be hooked up to a machine to keep this violinist alive”, and you got plugged into the machine, and stayed like that for a couple days, and only THEN did you decide to unplug it and let the violinist die, then you have just murdered someone. Pregnancy is a result of sexual intercourse. An overwhelming majority of pregnancies are the result of voluntary sexual intercourse. If you believe that the normal formulation of the Violinist argument is clever and accurate and there is nothing wrong with it, the only implication for the abortion debate is that there should be an exception for rape-induced pregnancies. I don’t support an exception for rape-induced pregnancies, but if you want to become a pro-life advocate who happens to think there should be an exception for rape-induced pregnancies, then relative to the current status quo we would both be on the same team, so I would be happy.

Okay that was the objectively true section that you needed to pay attention to, now we return to our regularly scheduled content.

**CCXXIV relatively speaking**

If abortion is murder, then how does the moral standing of a modern U.S pro-choice person compare with that of a 1930’s German Nazi? Well, by a natural law or secular morality standard, they are both just killing a lot of people, so they come out about even. By a traditionalist standard, the Nazis were focused on killing people who were of different bloodlines from them, while abortion involves killing your own child, so the modern U.S pro-choice person is worse. By the standards of the Romantic Ethic, the Nazis were killing people en masse as a political act which they perceived as necessary to achieve their utopia [connection], whereas each modern abortion is simply an individual decision meant to benefit the individual person making that decision, so the modern U.S pro-choice person is vastly less moral than a Nazi.

But pro-choice people are my family, and my friends, and my idols and role models, and the status-quo of society at large, and I interact with them amicably with few qualms so long as the topic isn’t brought up.
With this in mind, you can see why I might have a somewhat more laid-back perspective on National Socialists as individual humans than is generally the case.

**CCXXV materialism and truth**

It has been essentially noted previously, but the quandary presented by materialism is not simply a conflict over whether there are any wacky magical shenanigans. The pride of the atheist or skeptic is their refusal to believe that which is not demonstrable, which they consider to be synonymous with the immaterial. But the choice before them is not the simple one they understand it to be. We’ve talked already about whether objects or language can mean anything under materialism, which they seemingly cannot [XLIV]. Perhaps we can say that we are fine with language just being “useful and convenient”. Music is fake, arbitrary, and a lie, but “feels alright”. Fair enough, but what about morality? I do not mean to suggest that you must have something which you label a “deity” in order to believe in morality. After all, divine command does not eliminate Is-Ought [connection]. However, if the question is whether we may be a materialist and believe in morality, the answer is fairly clearly no. Point me to the physical object in the world which is a moral law! It is no object. And if you pointed to an object in the world and said “here it is”, I would ask why an object should control me [paradox of ethics]. A law is not a material thing, and so if you are a true materialist, you cannot believe that morality represents anything true. If you say that you are a materialist and believe in morality, then you are claiming a contradiction.

Perhaps that is a worthwhile price for you. After all, at least you are honest [connection]. Your great pride is that you believe the truth. But where does this leave you? What is Truth? Is truth a material thing? Point to the matter, inhabit the space, measure the energy that you would call “Truth”? It is nowhere. You are a materialist, so how may you believe in truth? Your great pride is that you follow truth, but there cannot be any room for truth in a world of only matter. Does this not make your choice a little starker, oh Skeptic?

**CCXXVI an axiom**

A confession:

Not as a statement about a lack of confliction, or a lack of doubt, but rather, as it were, as an act of will, I consider my Christianity to be the most basic axiomatic statement about myself. Feelings are unpredictable, so who’s to say what will happen in the future, but to the extent that I have anything to do with it, I will, as an act of will, reject any argument or experience presenting a falsification of my faith, no matter how seemingly obvious. I freely admit to being intentionally inconvincible. Somewhere I must draw the line.

> What seems to me white, I will believe black if the hierarchical Church so defines.

-St. Ignatius Loyola

**CCXXVII Why are there things**

We know based on [CCXVII] that we can have confidence in the existence of that which transcends the physical. God/gods/religion have been occasionally brought up above, without justification. Of course,
Some of the reasons to believe in God are of course quite famous, like “Why is there something rather than nothing?” I think it’s a good question though. The chain reaction of material causes forming our reality must have been kickstarted by something that wasn’t part of it, presumably. But in some regard the normal causality-based versions of that argument are a little superficial, for they are vulnerable to the claim that time had no beginning, and that we are perhaps in a great ever-turning cycle. I do not think that eliminates the question “why is there something rather than nothing”. If there was a beginning, it was the creation of time as much as the creation of energy, so the act of creation is necessarily outside of time. Thus if we live in a cycle which has turned and will turn infinite times, if you step outside the (in this case circular) timeline, and look at the whole thing, you could still ask “why is this thing here?” If there is a creator, and he created time, he could have made it so that it stretched to infinity in both directions. Yes, from a scientific standpoint, the argument is “what is the prime mover of scientific causality”, for contrary to what a few claim, there is every scientific reason to believe the universe had a beginning. But whether or not there was a temporal beginning, the wonder of existence is an argument for the divine.

CCXXVIII haunted house
The wonder of consciousness in existence is especially an argument for the divine. Consciousness cannot be a material thing, and we know it exists [CCXVII]. We know at least a certain group of spirits are beating about in this otherwise sensible world, and frankly that fact demands context and explanation.

CCXXIX the judges
Morality is a deep and axiomatic instinct of humanity. Especially, an idea of fairness[]. As we have said, morality necessitates something like God. Something intangible but metaphysically real. As we have also said, it does not necessitate precisely God. It is possible that there is no power behind the law. And yet with human laws there is a notable sensation that the power behind the law is a crucial part of the law. The Moral Argument for God is not a logically tightfisted one, but it is a very important part of the Human God-Instinct. What is the law without the judge?

As a side note, the “what if I believe ‘God’ is just the Categorical Moral Imperative” complaint against the Moral Argument for God is a valid one as far as I can see. But what’s disturbing is that some apologetics-obessed Christians look at the Moral Argument (or any sort of “beauty” or “meaning” based argument) and see a different problem. They like the Cosmological Argument because they are at heart modernists and materialists. They object to the Moral Argument because they think “if we are arguing for God, and thus are not assuming the existence of God a priori, why would we assume there is morality?” If the idea that there is some moral reality does not feel like a pretty fundamental assumption to you, then you have caught a disease.

SPIKE. Still saying our prayers, are we? Still God, is it?
HILARY. Whoever’s up for it. I wish you’d stop saying ‘God’ like that, as if I’m talking about someone who created the world in six days and then had a rest. He’d think I was a complete idiot. But there are things we believe are right or wrong like, say, cruelty, and if this belief is a brain-state, that’s fine by me,
but our brain-state is *about* something, it’s about cruelty, which is right or wrong whether we’re thinking about it or not.

SPIKE. You don’t need God for that.

HILARY (*forcefully*). But you need *something* for it to be true, some kind of overall moral intelligence, otherwise we’re just marking our own homework. That’s what I pray to for Catherine, because somewhere between ape-men and the beginnings of religion, we became aware of an enormous fact we didn’t understand.

-Tom Stoppard

**CCXXX Gnosis**

This is all well and good, but the whole “apologetics” schtick presumes that belief in God is a low-level belief, and that theists and atheists mostly share a perspective on reality, to the point that they can have a meaningful conversation based on their (mostly shared) basic assumptions, about whether there is a God. This is not a good characterisation of the situation at all. Belief or disbelief in the divine is not arrived at causally, it is one of those deep axiomatic feelings which make other debates above them possible.

People believe through faith. Axioms logically cannot be shifted through “logic”, but must be shifted through emotion, so to the extent that people convert for “reasons”, something like the Moral Argument is much more likely to convert a person than something like the cosmological argument, because the Moral Argument is simply a sort of parsing out of one aspect of the feeling of faith. The reality of the physical world for an individual is of course based only on a deep self-grounded conviction in that individual that the physical world is real, and for millions of Christians there is a sensation equally deep, and often substantially deeper, that God exists. Even great apologeticists like William Lane Craig recognise that the main reason to be a Christian is if God has revealed his truth to you as an indisputable private experience.

Now, I do have a…. noteworthy inclination to believe in God. It is perhaps a failing on my part that my own personal experience of the divine does not seem like quite strong enough of a sentiment on its own to be an entirely convincing argument. But then, I also have the gut instinct to call coincidences “glitches in the Matrix”, so how good can my ability not to second-guess my own convictions really be? Each human has only a little wisdom. But remember that our basic instinct for determining whether a feeling is accurate is to go to other people and see if they have it as well [XXX]. If enough people have met someone, and you haven’t, the problem probably isn’t that she doesn't exist, it’s that you just haven’t met her. Thus even if you have no God-sensation whatsoever, you should be given pause by the sheer number of people who are overcome by an absolute axiomatic fervour allowing of no doubt. Your skepticism sounds as lunatic to them as the Buddhist questioning your precious material existence sounds to you. Sure, you may chalk it up to a mass delusion, there’s nothing stopping you, but each piece of Common Sense you push aside as mass delusion is a separate piece of arbitrariness, a separate handhold or foothold, which stood between you and the nihilist pit, falling away.

When you are on the wrong side of history, history is on your side.

**CCXXXI Polytheism**
One objection to a religious person is often “well, why YOUR god?” Sometimes you see approximately the line “You are an atheist for thousands of different deities, why not add one more?” Of course, in a strictly logical sense, this is an absurd objection. Of course someone is right and someone is wrong, about the spiritual world as much as about the physical. You might just as well tell a scientist “you are a science-denier for thousands of (real or potential) scientific hypotheses, so believing in Quantum Mechanics is hypocritical”.

But on the other hand, there is something real at stake here. Certainly if you have an overwhelming enough personal sense that God has touched you, this won’t be concerning, but it is worth noting that an enormous number of non-Christian people have had obvious axiomatic feelings of religious faith in their hearts. Indeed, if our appeal is to the overwhelming testimony of the wisdom of the crowd across the millennia, one would come to the conclusion that “paganism”, broadly defined, is correct, and that there are many gods. If you say “those pagans’ strong and unquestioning faith in the reality of their gods was in fact not the result of their gods touching their hearts, but was rather a mass delusion”, then where does that leave you? Surely it leaves you open to the accusation of being nothing more than a victim of mass delusion. If you say “the pagans were misled by demonic spirits of deceit”, then where does that leave you? I of course reject axiomatically, as it were, the idea that my belief in God was granted to me by a God who is actually evil, so how can I fairly accuse the pagans of the same?

My answer to this problem is, simply, that I do not accuse the pagans of this. My understanding is that their gods were real.

>um Christians believe in one God

I believe in one God. With a capital G. Indeed, God with a capital G refers to the ultimate reality, and so to say that there is more than one doesn’t even really make sense. This in no way contradicts the existence of non-ultimate beings which are divine, mystical, powerful, unaging, and ontologically real, which are sovereign over something, and which can take on forms. Am I not a god compared to an ant? Why should there not be beings which make me appear ant-like? God is ultimately sovereign, but there are all sorts of authorities within the bounds of God’s subordinates: parents, pastors, and the State, for instance.

It could be objected that this goes against Christian scripture. However:

2 Kings 3: 26-27

When the king of Moab saw that the battle was going against him, he took with him 700 swordsmen to break through, opposite the king of Edom, but they could not. Then he took his oldest son who was to reign in his place and offered him for a burnt offering on the wall. And there came great wrath against Israel. And they withdrew from him and returned to their own land.

Daniel 10: 12-14

Then he said to me, “Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes,
came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come.”

Daniel 10:20-21
Then he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. 21 But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince.

Psalm 82:1-2
God has taken his place in the divine council;
    in the midst of the gods he holds judgment:
“How long will you judge unjustly
    and show partiality to the wicked?

Job 2:1
Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord.

Psalm 58:1-2
Do you indeed decree what is right, you gods?
    Do you judge the children of man uprightly?
No, in your hearts you devise wrongs;

Psalm 89:5-8
Let the heavens praise your wonders, O Lord,
    your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones!
For who in the skies can be compared to the Lord?
    Who among the heavenly beings is like the Lord,
a God greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones,
    and awesome above all who are around him?
O Lord God of hosts,

Genesis 6:1-4
When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. Then the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not abide in[a] man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.” The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

Genesis 3:5
For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

**Exodus 23:32**
Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods.

**Exodus 22:28**
Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people.

**Deuteronomy 29:26**
and went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods whom they had not known and whom he had not allotted to them.

**Deuteronomy 32:8-9**
When the Most High apportioned the nations, when he divided humankind, he fixed the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the gods; the LORD's own portion was his people, Jacob his allotted share.

**Exodus 18:11**
Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them.

**Exodus 12:12**
For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.

** Judges 11:24**
Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the LORD our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess.

**Jeremiah 48:7**
For because thou hast trusted in thy works and in thy treasures, thou shalt also be taken: and Chemosh shall go forth into captivity with his priests and his princes together.

In reading these consider (first) that “the sons of the [x]s” is a Hebrew stock phrase. The prophets can be called “the sons of the prophets” for instance. Also consider that “God” in the phrase the “the sons of God” is “Elohim”, which can be plural.

Also, consider that Michael is an Archangel, a being of immense spiritual power and glory. If he is the kind of being being referred to as and translated as “prince” in that context in Daniel, that should seriously colour how you interpret the phrase “prince of Persia”. [ethnicity].
It can be objected that there are other texts which are rendered less natural in their interpretation by this point of view, certainly. But many can be explained as simply saying that the Hebrews specifically are only supposed to worship their one God, or else showing some slightly hyperbolic enthusiasm (‘Elvis isn’t a rockstar, he’s THE rockstar), or else explaining the capital G God concept by showing that the other “gods” are nothing in comparison. Yes, reading texts in this way is a dangerous game, but the fact is us Christians have a holy book which includes Satan making a proposal at a board-room meeting full of gods, so one text or another is going to have to give a bit.

Also consider that even if most of this could be (unconvincingly) chalked up to extended metaphor, the 2 Kings passage shows that sacrificing to Moab’s god is actually efficacious.

>It’s all angels and demons though. Like “the sons of the gods” are mostly angels maybe, and the prince of Persia is a demon.

Yeah but what does that even mean though? Demon is of Greek etymology and initially did not have pejorative connotations. Angel pretty much just means “messenger”. Yes, there are clearly spirits in scripture working at God’s behest, and the language in the Beelzebub conversation suggests that some spirits are subordinate to Satan, but I see no reason to assume out the gate that every non-human spirit (but for some reason not every human spirit) fits a a strict dichotomy of perfectly moral and perfectly immoral beings, none of whom except twoish have any agency. That’s reading the bible through the glasses we’ve been given by Dante. I mean no disrespect to Dante, honestly, he might be onto something, but I don’t think The Divine Comedy has to be the be-all-and-end-all of our understanding of spiritual reality. By ancient definitions, the Archangel Michael just is a god; he qualifies as most of the things that get translated into that English word. The whole “monotheism vs. polytheism” thing is a dubious enlightenment attempt at categorisation, building on a church history that had not emphasised precision in such things.

Ha! You really thought we would stop at “philosophical polytheism”? [connection] It’s all coming together nicely isn’t it?

**CCXXXII The Law is not mocked**

If we accept that there is a capital G God, why should we be Christians specifically? Well, let us abstract a little what it is Christianity says: It says that there is a universal moral law, built into the nature of God. It says that we broke that law, and we need redemption, and that God offers us a way to be redeemed because he loves us.

Morality is a basic human assumption, and the moral aspect of God is surely a part of The God of the Philosophers, needing no special revelation.
The God-instinct suggests that God loves us; we are pretty much rejecting out of hand all idle speculation which says “what if your God is lying to you”, in this document. If he is loving, it is reasonable that he would offer a way for us to be redeemed if we were in need of such a thing.

The only place where the rough-sketch version of Christianity might be seriously challenged is whether or not we need redemption. But I don’t think any of us can reasonably claim perfection. “Why must we be perfect?”, one might say, but I say, “What is a law if it is not absolute? How can it possibly be moral to be a little immoral?”

And so it must be
For so it written
On the doorway to paradise
That those who falter and those who fall
Must pay the price
-Inspector Javert

CCXXXIII Let others wade into the apologetics weeds
Of course, the specifics of Christian doctrine do require appeal to revelation. Faith certainly comes into play here, but we can take comfort in the fact that Christ’s resurrection is just about the most historically verifiable an event in Antiquity can be, and the only reason to reject it as non-historical is if you have rejected the possibility a priori.

CCXXXIV Magic
But then, supernatural events are reported all throughout the historical record. Why should I point to this one and say “This one specifically I do not reject a priori”? What if I don’t reject any of them a priori? What if history is just actually-factually full of strange occurrences? One could then ask “why has nobody been able to demonstrate they have magical powers under scientific observation?” I say, if it was science, it wouldn’t be magic. Of course it’s not going to show up under microscopes. Causality can be somewhat convincingly demonstrated by repetition, but this doesn’t mean causality must be replicable (or intuitive) to have been real. In many stories of magic, it is not a science-esque purely neutral force, so it makes some sense the magic would demand faith rather than sight [faith is good]. Perhaps we live in a less magical age than some other ages, particularly in this place, and perhaps that is because we looked into it all too hard. Maybe magic wants to be hidden, and mysterious. That is the kind of answer given by a fantasy story, but that is simply because fantasy authors are the kind of people who gave this the thought necessary to arrive at a reasonable conclusion.

And it means so much non-literally that it almost has to be real [section].

CCXXXV prayers
Are most of the blessings which God gives me violations of the laws of nature which he established? No. Does this mean they are not blessings from God, but rather are best described only as natural results of the mechanistic universe? No. Because things may be caused at different levels [XX]. If I pray for rain, and it rains, yes the rain is a result of a chain of physical causalities going back to the origin of the universe,
which was clearly prior to when I prayed. But God is outside of time, and the physical conditions at the universe’s beginning are in his hands.

CCXXXVI hindsight
Several Christian doctrines are of a sort that you would not have necessarily thought of without specific revelation, but make sense nonetheless. The trinity allows God to be loving and generous in his very nature, for each person of the trinity loves the others.

Christ’s sacrifice is a reasonable thing as well, for it is a grand example of life needing to be lost in one place so that it can be gained somewhere else.

CCXXXVII The Sophia Perennis
So what about the other missionary-religions? Are their believers simply victims of mass delusion? Well, you have seen further up in this document that I am sympathetic to Taoist philosophical thought. But more than that, the language used by Lao Tzu and by Christ to describe the spiritual path are shockingly similar. Generally speaking, Taoism, Confucianism, Platonism, Stoicism, Zoroastrianism, etc., all sit as philosophical theisms preceding Christ’s coming, and there is hardly more reason to label them unholy than there is to label old testament Judaism unholy.

Buddhism isn’t really in the business of direct contradiction with Christianity, because in some sense it is simply talking about totally different stuff. Well, actually, like with Taoism, much of the basic teaching about the nature of spirituality shares stuff with Christianity, but in terms of the philosophy around that, it’s a unique logical chain of ideas about epistemology, and the nature of suffering, and the escape from suffering, and there’s a lot of wisdom in them. It takes up particular and profound epistemological frames. It’s just doing something totally different from Christianity.

Islam presents a much bigger difficulty, because unlike Buddhism it is working on exactly the same kind of ground as Christianity, and contradicting it. But consider this: I believe Christ was a man and a prophet. As does a Muslim. Now I ALSO believe Christ is God, and the Lord of all creation, but that doesn’t make the “man” thing untrue. I believe God is one. As does a Muslim. Now, I also believe God is three. But in this case especially it doesn’t make it less true that he is one, for the whole trinity thing is claiming that he really is one (......and also three). Islam is not quite a “God of the Philosophers” situation like Platonism, for their is a claimed revelation involved, but their idea of God has pretty strong God of the Philosophers-type vibes, and I’m pretty sure thinking about what God must be in the abstract is a profound and specific epistemological frame. Physics does different things from mathematics, because one has empirical evidence it must respond to while the other is just abstract thought, but they’re closely connected, and saying one is true does not make the other untrue as such. The God of the Philosophers (and thus to some extent Islam) is to the Christian view of God (kind of like) as mathematics is to physics. Of course as I said, the Islamic God is not quite The God the Philosophers, because there is the revelation to Muhammed to deal with. I accept that he might have been a liar. He might have been delusional. But first of all, if he was delusional in believing he had seen a vision, that does not mean his followers who have felt God touch them through Islam are necessarily delusional. I think anyone should have the humility to say that they don’t have perfect knowledge or understanding of God, so God clearly loves and touches people who have imperfect understandings of him. Muslims have a deep love for the
God of Abraham, and I don’t think that that is ever entirely meaningless. And I don’t think I will deign to entirely condemn Muhammed. I wasn’t there. I believe Christianity to be true, but the truth of Islam can more or less be contained within Christianity, and since Quantum Mechanics and T.V repair aren’t explained in the book of Jeremiah, in some regard we already know that God is okay sending messages without the entirety of “the truth” in them. Maybe God wanted two groups of post-messiah followers so that we would have to learn to be kind to each other, I don’t know.

Never again follow false doctrines nor follow foolish courses, but know that the three religions are one. Reverence priests, reverence Taoists too, and cultivate the faculties of man.

-Monkey

CCXXXVIII The Burning in your Bosom
>LOL now do Mormons
If you worship a capital G God who spoke to Abraham, you more-or-less worship the same God as me. But if you look at Mormon theology too closely, there’s some weird stuff going on, including some sort of divine recursion, and it is actually questionable if they are worshipping a capital-G God at all. However, I say they are worshipping the same God as me for the opposite reason the Muslims kind of are: they worship Christ as God, and love him incredibly deeply, and serve him well. There is absolutely something Good in a Muslim’s love for God, but me and a Muslim are not “one in Christ”, while I think me and a Mormon perhaps are.

CCXXXIX They took “soul-scan” too literally
>LOL now do Scientology
Dude even a spineless person like me’s gotta draw the line somewhere. I feel like Scientology is pretty wack.

CCXL God is Big
What is God like? I say God is big enough to be a lot of things. He is a consciousness, and thus in some sense fundamentally the same as you or me or a toad. He is also the totally alien and unspeakably holy being YHWH, whose face would kill you instantly if you were to glance at it, surrounded by Biblically Accurate Angels. He is the absolutely transcendent of Islam, and the absolute sovereignty of Calvin, and maybe even Hegel’s Absolute. He is also The Good, ensuring that we are not simply “grading our own homework”. He is also Love. No, the bible does not say simply that he is “loving”, it (shockingly) says that he is “love”, which is an emotion, and a concept. He is also the divine clockmaker which the deists speak of, establishing the beautiful and serene laws of physical motion. I also think Christianity’s general great horror at any pantheistic- or panentheistic-sounding rhetoric is a little overwrought, for God upholds all things, according to Aquinas, and is everywhere all at once according to Christianity in general, and all things will be united to him, and everywhere we see good or beauty we see him, and that sounds like a different description of a similar thing. I am a Christian. I do in fact believe that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but I think most attempts at describing God are probably not entirely wrong, exactly, because God is such a grand being that no humanly-comprehendable description is complete [two great truths].
Consider that it is *God* who loves. It is God who dwells in unapproachable light who loves. It is God who is so pure that he cannot look upon wickedness, that’s who loves us. It is God who dwells in the majesty and glory of the absolute righteousness and goodness in flaming purity and stainless perfection; it’s God before whom the angels cry day and night “HOLY HOLY HOLY IS THE LORD”. It is God who needs nothing and no one, who is so perfectly complete in himself that he is effected by no actions, by none of his creatures, this is God, who sits in majestic perfection on his eternal heavenly throne and does *whatsoever he pleases*. That God loves sinners.

-Pastor Bert Hitchcock

**CCXLII Will and Theism**

I only understand Arminianism through what I’m assuming is a Calvinist strawman, but it seemed to suggest that there is a sort of bubble of human will which is not totally subject to God’s omnipotence. I think there something to that, on some level, perhaps, but ultimately if God is the ultimate reality I don’t think he’s just absolutely absent from anything, so I think on the most general level God’s sovereignty must be part of the causality of everything which occurs, including acts of human will. I don’t think this means will doesn’t exist though. It’s just a case of there being different layers at which you can describe something’s causes [causality]. Yes you picked up the yo-yo because certain neurons fired. Yes you picked up the yo-yo because you are a spiritual being with free will and control over mere matter. And yes, you picked up the yo-yo because God created you, and had perfect foreknowledge that you would pick up the yo-yo. Some people think that only the first one is true, and some think that only the second is, but my understanding that the third is true doesn’t mean that I think the first two are wrong.

**CCXLII afterlife**

Given the soul’s immaterial existence, we do not need to assume that the body’s death kills the soul.

It is worth noting that “hell” is at least two words in the New Testament, “Hades” and “Gehenna”. “Hades” is obviously just the generic underworld of Greek myth (and Sheol is the arguably even more generic Hebrew version). Gehenna has clear fire associations, but it is clear from scripture that Hades is *going to be* emptied into the Lake of Fire in the end-times, meaning it has not yet been, so the “immediate heaven or hell upon death” idea is mostly a pop-culture one. “Sheol” is a flexible enough concept that it is often just translated “death”, so the varying afterlives of the varying paganisms are not in any regard out of the question as accurateish depictions of what happens to people.

Buddhist reincarnation does pose a problem though. Perhaps this is simply a case where I must say “yes, anatman is a profound epistemological frame, but we live in a world with atman, so reincarnation is only a hypothetical”. Then again, reincarnation is a fairly wide ranging idea spatially and temporally, and I can imagine it being perhaps in the realm of the possible that some part of ourselves is passed on to others. The Egyptians thought the soul was in several parts, you will recall.

On some level though I must still say that I believe in the atman rather than anatman. But then if we are united to Christ…. 
CCXLIII Old Science
[continued from magic hiding itself] Sometimes I want to believe that the world was flat once, and that it
got physically remade to be round because we thought about it too hard, and we could’ve had beauty in
perfection if we hadn’t gotten greedy. But then we got greedy again, and LOOKED at it too hard, and so
to hide the magic it had to show itself not as the ordered beauty of the medieval cosmos, but as the cold
meaningless vacuum of space.

CCXLIV Sun god(s)
If there was an age of the gods, what gender was the sun? The pantheons disagree. Would you just meet
whomever you were expecting to meet? That makes it sound rather not real. In this present moment, is
the sun the physical body of a spirit, like our physical body contains a spirit? Is the sun the body for
numerous spirits from various pantheons of either gender?

CCXLV The Past
So is the bible right about the whole six day creation thing? Within the Christian frame of reference, yes.
Within the scientific frame of reference, unequivocally no. I don’t have an issue with young-earth
creationism, so long as it doesn’t portray itself as scientific (which it so often does).

>Okay but which is right?
The past isn’t real. Or at least it isn’t here with us, anyway. We know what we can see in the present, but
there are perhaps multiple layers of reality to the past (each of which somehow leads to the present). In
fact, Odin isn’t very real if the past doesn’t look kind of like Norse mythology, and I said I think he’s real,
so that’s another layer of reality to the past (as is each other mythos). Maybe it is a layer of reality to the
present as well, but simply invisible to us.

>Okay but if you got in a time machine.
I contend that it would depend what was powering the time-machine. If you travelled in a time-machine
powered by runic magic, you would find the world as described by Norse mythology. If you travelled in
a time-machine built using physics, you would see the world as described by science.

The problem with this is that then it starts to sound like Christianity is nothing special, and I said my most
axiomatic statement is that I am a Christian. If I say you can go back in a physics-powered time machine
and not see the resurrection of Christ, that’s hardly Christianity anymore. So since my axioms work
backwards from most people’s [that section], I simply amend the hypothesis to say that the physics-
powered time machine would show you the resurrection of Christ. But if I do that, it sounds like I’m
putting the physics version of reality on a pedestal as the “really real” one, so to re-equalise the situation,
my conclusion is that any layer of reality travelled to with any style of time machine will be able to show
you death and resurrection of Christ. It is the most real event.

CCXLVI Steppe pastoralists
That last idea is shamefully ridiculous, I suppose. I suppose I must believe there is only one past. But if
there is one past, science and history look like they prove a lot of mythology wrong, for they show us its
origins, and that it changes over time. Is every cognate of Dyeus Pater the same god? If not, did they
separate because the humans worshipping them separated? If so, that is saying human belief has some influence on the divine realm just as the divine realm influences us. This actually seems like the most obvious way of reconciling this, and that is why it is once again the one fantasy authors come up with. The psychic is not divorced totally from the spirit or soul, and so that mass collective belief might have spiritual effects is not inconceivable.

But this was just a patch made after we had realised we could do historicism to our pantheons. The worrying thing is that we can do historicism on capital G God as well, and see that from a historic perspective he arguably develops from a run-of-the-mill Canaanite storm god. To see the beginnings of something is to be disenchanted with it, so this is surely the ultimate victory of atheism. But the problem is that if the Christian God is the Jewish God transformed through history, and the Jewish God is a lowercase g god transformed through history (and every lower-case g god is transformed through history), then the God of the Philosophers, whether clockmaker or pantheistic, is clearly, in historical terms an adjustment of the Christian God. Human rights are secularisations of Christian ideas. “Progress” is a morphed form of Christian eschatology. All of our modernism is, from a historicist perspective, a rebranding of Christendom, and thus, by the same logic, should lose its enchantment because we can see where it came from. And you see, theoretic transcendentalism, that is, thinking about thinking about universals, started roughly simultaneously in India, Greece, Israel, and China, and we can trace historical reasons for that “axial turn”, having to do with urbanisation and volatility across a shared sphere of interaction. And before even that, the first “transcendentalism” was the mythic transcendentalism of the horse-riding pastoralists, who were not so attached to any particular spot of earth as a farmer, and learned instead to worship the sky, which was implicitly the same sky for all. Historically speaking, all philosophy is rebranded sky-worship. Every worldview is historicisable, including historicism. Something must be true, and so something must be true in spite of the ignominious appearances of its birth.

Also, saying Norse myth isn’t true because science says so is kinda like saying science isn’t true because Norse myth says so.

CCXLVII great books
With that in mind: most of the great thinkers of note since Socrates (and indeed, since the horse-riders of the Steppe) have been pushing us closer to the god-machine Kapital, and the collapse of all order. Including Christ. The great faiths greatly devalue all of the traditionally meaningful things in human life. The church has great meaning as a community when faced with intense opposition, but I’m not sure if it is a very effective thing to actually build a social status quo upon. A (truly) pagan majority with a Christian minority is wonderful. An equal split between Christians and “materialists” is a disaster.

CCXLVIII sacred tradition
High-church liturgy is beautiful. Cathedrals are beautiful. Tradition itself is beautiful. Why should worship not be beautiful? Doesn’t God love beauty, and mightn’t God touch us through beauty, which is his gift? Each of the great faiths is a conduit for sacred tradition, and breaking that is reckless. And so my native Calvinism is not especially beloved by myself. This is especially so because it is Calvinism which built capitalism, and engineered the great step forward in disenchantment.
Of course to return to Rome would come with the price of accepting Papal authority epistemologically. There is literally nothing wrong with that in the abstract, except that I am accustomed to having the freedom which is the opposite of that [LXI].

And leaving the church you were born into is what got us in the protestantism mess in the first place. I’m happy I’m not a Baptist, at least.

CCXLIX Problem of evil
As per tradition, “How can a perfectly good, perfectly powerful being allow evil? (gasp)” Well, all things are ultimately caused by God, and I accept on faith that God is good, so the logical conclusion is that, if you took the final tally of all of reality across all of time, we live in the best of all possible worlds. It is better than a world that never had any evil at all because it is a world. It is real. It is full of stories. Don’t you remember that stories need bad things to happen? Perhaps we will not see the end of suffering and conflict until every story has come to pass.

It happens to be the case that the best world over-all is not the world with the least evil (for we know we live in the best world, and we know there is a non-minimal amount of evil), for the very best things are real things, and those have badness in their goodness. Let them be real, then be redeemed, rather than being saccharine and needing no redemption. The story of redemption itself is the most beautiful story, and infinitely more beautiful if it is true, and so there must be evil, there must be suffering. God is the author of a story, but he is The Good Author, and so he will write the best story.

CCL Again with the problem of evil
Why would a good and all-knowing God create people that are destined for an eternity of suffering as punishment for things he knew they would do? I think the best answer is “maybe he didn’t”. Christ “preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah”, so death doesn’t seem to be a cut-off point for accepting Christ and his salvation. Furthermore, it is quite clear from scripture that God desires all to be saved. Now, God also desires (on some level) that we not murder each other, but who’s to say what “level” his desire for all to be saved is at? Perhaps this omnipotent being will get what he wants!! “Every knee shall bow”, after all. Some say “every knee shall bow” because they will be forced to, but if that were how this worked, why did we have free-will and get to sin in the first place? Clearly every knee shall eventually bow willingly.

12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— 13 for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. 14 Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. 16 And the free gift is not like the
result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. 

17 For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

18 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. 19 For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. 20 Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, 21 so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

-St. Paul, Romans 5

CCLI Infinity math
This is how I can look at the Problem of Evil, and say “maybe not so bad”: If, once all is eventually redeemed, as is presumably fated to occur, we have timeless amounts of perfect joy, then what’s a bit of suffering, even a trillion years of hell? If it is in fact necessary for making that eventual joy the most perfected that it can be, and that joy goes on forever, it really takes the edge off this issue.

CCLII Aesthetic reconciliation
[continued from main Sophoclean bit]
If every instant of human existence implies failing to uphold a nigh infinite number of moral duties, that sure sounds like original sin to me. Now, I want it to be clear that I don’t think my private “interpretations” of original sin and the functioning of salvation are more primary than the actual theological ones, I just think they sort of make a certain amount of sense.

There is a conflict between justice and mercy, but their very nature. Mercy is the absence of justice. To be merciful to someone implies that you have not given them the punishment they deserve. Justice therefore implies that you did not show mercy.

What happened on the cross? Justice and mercy were both achieved. God is perfectly good, and perfectly wise, so he found the way to bring the two goods justice and mercy together: by paying the price himself. But does this not bode well? For if in his perfect goodness he desires both of those goods to be reconciled, then surely he will reconcile all the goods. And thus everything beautiful shall be reconciled.

My inclination is to simply say “there’s probably no humanly understandable explanation of how this will occur, but then, surely deductive logic has a beauty to it, so if we want not simply a balance but a reconciliation, then perhaps there is some very detailed and rules-lawyery or else very elegant but unguessable-until-you-see-it logical plan for how all the goods will unite.
And of course, if this is so, of course it would be through the death of Christ. Good things come with bad things. Something must die to bring life [connections]. Even simply the reconciliation of the Romantic and the Traditional cost us an estimated six million Jews [section]. To ensure the ultimate reconciliation of all goods, which is surely the greatest good of all, surely there must be some terrible loss. And indeed, it was the death of an absolute innocent, and not just an absolute innocent, but the very death of God himself.

CCLI The last tragedy to end
There is one good that seems impossible to reconcile: the transcendent greatness of defiance [section]. This is surely the last redemption which must occur. And yet how could it occur at all? The beauty here is the terrible beauty of Satan declaring “Better to rule in hell than serve in heaven”, so doesn’t it disappear as soon as Satan (or some great defiant man, for perhaps there are truly a few of those) humbles himself and accepts Christ? The two things are diametrically opposed. The good was not reconciled if it disappeared. Perhaps if some remain defiant, then some shall never be redeemed. This would be a tragic world-story. But I said that tragedy is beautiful, so maybe the best of all possible world-stories is a tragedy. If so, universal salvation may be false. My expectation, though, is that it will not be so. In my estimation, the great story has a Tolkien-esque eucatastrophe. Of course the great eucatastrophe was the resurrection of Christ, but there will be a little one when we finally see, even as they appear diametrically opposed, the way in which the greatness of Luciferian defiance is still somehow reconciled to the love of God without losing its beauty. And then Jesus and Lucifer shall embrace as brothers.

CCLIV Aesthetic Sophoclean Univesralsism
That all goods shall be reconciled, and all people (and indeed all things, physical or spiritual) shall be redeemed, fits together. For everything has its own beauty, and thus is its own good.

CCLV Acquaintance
Everything has its own beauty. I haven’t seen all of them, but a great many beauties seem to only be seen (so far) by certain people. You grow to appreciate the pathos of something only by becoming deeply acquainted with it. Some beauties are only seen through careful observation. When you spend quality time with something, you start to see what it has going for it.

CCLVI Bringing the beauty out
I like to think that songs and poems aren’t lies. I thus tend to assume that when there is a beautiful song that makes something seem beautiful, it is not merely that the song is tricking me, but that the song is bringing out the beauty in the thing for me to see. And it seems like more songs and poems and novels keep getting written showing the beauty in more and more things, and simply, given that they keep surprising people with where they can find beauty, I see no reason to think they will stop surprising people anytime soon.

CCLVII attachment to Samsara
Surely then we must choose the role of Vishnu [connection]. And surely we must choose the tragic beauty of the sunset [connection].
CCLVIII No Regrets
How can we regret anything? If we regret anything, we are saying we wish we could go back in time and change it. But to go back in time and change something is to destroy the real thing which exists in the present. This applies on the personal level, as well as the historical. I can say “I wish Bonnie Prince Charlie had won”, but would I flip a switch to make it so it happened? No. How can I when the world is full of all the things that exist because he lost, which are real [connection], and have gotten used to existing[dignity], and are presumably all beautiful?

CCLIX Still hard to say anything
[continued from “This was a dangerous idea”]
But don’t you see what’s going to happen? It’s a dangerous idea! How am I going to live and choose and mean anything at all? Everything has an aesthetic, if you think about it and look hard enough. Even bad feelings become part of who you are, and how can you ever wish “I wish I had never felt that”. To have never felt something which you felt is suicide! But don’t you see? Now I can never say anything. Yes yes, all enchanted is different from all unenchanted, but really now, if you say everything, you’ve said nothing. You stand for nothing. You are sitting in noise [noise].

CCLX Still, in fact, hard to say anything.
I want everyone to love me, so I want to love everyone. Maybe?

I will start by saying “this thing and this thing and this thing are ALL FINE, just as long as they aren’t that thing”. And I keep saying ‘oh that’s fine’, until there’s only one thing left that’s not fine, but then I feel sorry for that thing. A unified front against Mammon? What did Mammon ever do to you? He was just some random Middle Eastern god, and you love your gods, don’t you?

Do you know how terrible it is to stand against something?

CCLXI This Document
The mission of this document is to forgive everyone.

CCLXII Two ways
There are two ways to sympathise with someone: Because you know they have it really hard, and you know why they are doing what they are doing (that is the Dionysian way) or else because you know how hard they are striving and how much they believe in what they are doing. There is a war between matter and spirit, and you can either sympathise with someone because of how strong their spirit is, or because of how tough the matter they must contend with is. The opposite of an ideologue is a psychopath. I would not condemn the ideologue, if he is willing to die. The worst thing to be is a psychopath, but if you are medically incapable of moral sentiments, I have to be sorry for you.

CCLXIII -deres
Seeing a tsundere prompts the question, why is this person a tsundere? There is probably a sad reason, and a reason demanding pity.
A yandere, on the other hand, represents the heights of human possibility.

**CCLXIV Acting philosophy**

You know what an actor is supposed to be able to do? Play any character honestly. The existence of Realist acting as a discipline has interesting philosophical implications, and you know what those are? They are that you can sympathise with any human being. You can’t play a character entirely honestly while entirely hating and scorning, so if any sort of character can be and has been played, and played Honestly, then there’s ……something…… in all of us.

**CCLXV Lord’s Prayer**

When Christ taught us to pray, he told us to say “forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us”. I have a sort of divine ordinance for what I wished to do anyway. And how do we forgive all? To understand is to forgive. If you see why (OR ‘for what’) someone had to do something, you are half way to forgiving them already.

**CCLXVI The Element of Kindness**

I didn’t have time to include the extensive commentary on *Friendship is Magic* which would’ve been the stretch-goal for this document, but I’ve planned for a while now how I was going to say this, so I’ll keep it in pony-phrasing anyway:

I initially really liked both Rarity and Applejack. And I would think “The two things go together. I want to be both”. But aren’t they opposites really? You aren’t really both, if you want to be both aren’t you neither?

So maybe I’m just rebellious, but I want to believe that maybe I’m Fluttershy, Fluttershy who made friends with Discord. As soon as something is unpitied, as soon as something is the underdog, I may pity it. Whether it deserves it is irrelevant. Isn’t Fluttershy something good in the world?

**CCLXVII Was I at least quirky?**

I hope this document will be a literary sketch of a character. A living character, but a character, because what other good could it do? It’s not some coherent philosophical text. But I think we love Ivan Karamozov as a character because there’s something tragic or poetic in the thoughts he has even if we disagree with him, and perhaps if you consider me a fictional character I will spark some interest of a similar sort.

>yeah but obviously you think you are some sort of latter-day Wittgenstein

Well yeah, isn’t that what makes the character sad?

**CCLXVIII marginalised narratives**

Rhodians never die! You can see the story of Rhodesia from the Rhodesian side, if you just give it a shot, and it’s just as good of a story. Everyone seems to have a good story, if you give it a try. Often
some people’s stories are ignored, and whose stories are in that category is always changing. And if everyone tells you a narrative is marginalised, how likely is it that it really is?

**CCLXIX Conscience**

I mostly do not believe any of what I have written in this document. What does it mean to believe something? To have it in your head? Well I have the opposite things in my head too. To feel good about them being in your head? What if I have one conscience formed by society at large, and one formed by my specific upbringing, and both of them tell me most of what I’ve said ranges from silly to deplorable? What if my very pessimism ensures that the societal conscience is stronger? What then?

“Can it be that you really hold this conviction about the consequences of the exhaustion of men’s faith in the immortality of their souls?” the elder suddenly asked Ivan Fyodorovich. “Yes, it was my contention. There is no virtue if there is no immortality.” “You are blessed if you believe so, or else most unhappy!” “Why unhappy?” Ivan Fyodorovich smiled. “Because in all likelihood you yourself do not believe either in the immortality of souls or even in what you have written about the Church and the Church question.” “Maybe you’re right ……! But still, I wasn’t quite joking either……,” Ivan Fyodorovich suddenly and strangely confessed -- by the way, with a quick blush. “You weren’t quite joking, that is true. This idea is not yet resolved in your heart and torments it. But a martyr, too, sometimes likes to toy with his despair, also from despair, as it were. For the time being you, too, are toying, out of despair, with your magazine articles and drawing-room discussions, without believing in your own dialectics and smirking at them with your heart aching inside you….. The question is not resolved in you, and there lies your great grief, for it urgently demands resolution . . .” “But can it be resolved in myself? Resolved in a positive way?” Ivan Fyodorovich continued asking strangely, still looking at the elder with a certain inexplicable smile. “Even if it cannot be resolved in a positive way, it will never be resolved in the negative way either -- you yourself know this property of your heart, and therein lies the whole of its torment. But thank the Creator that he has given you a lofty heart, capable of being tormented by such a torment, ‘to set your mind on things that are above, for our true homeland is in heaven’. May God grant that your heart’s decision overtake you still on earth, and may God bless your path!”

-Dostoevsky

**CCLXX literally why can’t we all just get along**

[from philosophers are good]

I just, I just, I feel like a lot of things are pretty good. Like what if *Ulysses* is actually good and learning to read it well is actually good, and you should be proud of the people who do that, but what if learning to read *Ulysses* doesn’t mean you should stop enjoying *Beauty and the Beast* because it’s actually also pretty good. What if you should be proud of your friend who’s trying haute cuisine because there’s actually something to that, but also Hershey’s bars are actually good. Like, what if a lot of things are just good. Would that be so terrible, if a lot of things were good?
CCLXXI The Last One
Stop trying to fill the hole in your heart with words! Stop trying to fill the hole in your heart with words!
Of course self-analysis is also a silly infinite loop.
I’m tired.

Kakegae no nai takaramono
Namae no nai hana wa shizuka ni nemuru yo
-Violet Evergarden