**The world is meaningless and irrational but our mind wants unity. This contradiction between humans and the world is called the “absurd”.**

**Camus** , Albert. The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays. E-book ed., 19**55**. https://postarchive.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/myth-of-sisyphus-and-other-essays-the-albert-camus.pdf.

Now the main thing is done, I hold certain facts from which I cannot separate. What I know, what is certain, what I cannot deny, what I cannot reject—this is what counts. **I can negate everything** of that part of me that lives on vague nostalgias, **except this desire for unity, this longing to solve, this need for clarity and cohesion. I can refute everything in this world surrounding me that offends or enraptures me, except this chaos, this sovereign chance and this divine equivalence which springs from anarchy. I don’t know whether this world has a meaning that transcends it. But I know that I do n**o**t know that meaning and that it** i**s impossible for me just now to know it. What can a meaning outside my condition mean to me? I can understand only in human terms.** What I touch, what resists me—that is what I understand. And **these two certainties—my appetite for the absolute and for unity and the impossibility of reducing this world to a rational and reasonable principle—I also know that I can**no**t reconcile them.** What other truth can I admit without lying, without bringing in a hope I lack and which means nothing within the limits of my condition? **If I were a tree among trees, a cat among animals, this life would have a meaning, or rather this problem would not arise, for I should belong to this world.** I should be this world to which I am now opposed by my whole consciousness and my whole insistence upon familiarity. **This ridiculous reason is what sets me in opposition to all creation.** I cannot cross it out with a stroke of the pen. What I believe to be true I must therefore preserve. What seems to me so obvious, even against me, I must support. And what constitutes the basis of that conflict, of that break between the world and my mind, but the awareness of it? If therefore I want to preserve it, I can through a constant awareness, ever revived, ever alert. **This is what, for the moment, I must remember. At this moment the absurd, so obvious and yet so hard to win, returns to a man’s life and finds its home there. At this moment, too, the mind can leave the arid, dried-up path of lucid effort. That path now emerges in daily life. It encounters the world of the anonymous impersonal pronoun “one,” but henceforth man enters in with his revolt and his lucidity. He has forgotten how to hope. This hell of the present is his Kingdom at last.** All problems recover their sharp edge. Abstract evidence retreats before the poetry of forms and colors. Spiritual conflicts become embodied and return to the abject and magnificent shelter of man’s heart. None of them is settled. But all are transfigured. **Is one going to die, escape by the leap, rebuild a mansion of ideas and forms to one’s own scale? Is one, on the contrary, going to take up the heart-rending and marvelous wager of the absurd?** Let’s make a final effort in this regard and draw all our conclusions. The body, affection, creation, action, human nobility will then resume their places in this mad world. At last man will again find there the wine of the absurd and the bread of indifference on which he feeds his greatness. Let us insist again on the method: **it is a matter of persisting.** At a certain point on his path the absurd man is tempted. History is not lacking in either religions or prophets, even without gods. **He is asked to leap. All he can reply is that he doesn’t fully understand, that it is not obvious.** Indeed, he does not want to do anything but what he fully understands. He is assured that this is the sin of pride, but he does not understand the notion of sin; that perhaps hell is in store, but he has not enough imagination to visualize that strange future; that he is losing immortal life, but that seems to him an idle consideration. An attempt is made to get him to admit his guilt. He feels innocent. To tell the truth, that is all he feels—his irreparable innocence. This is what allows him everything. Hence, what he demands of himself is to live solely with what he knows, to accommodate himself to what is, and to bring in nothing that is not certain. He is told that nothing is. But this at least is a certainty. And it is with this that he is concerned: he wants to find out if it is possible to live without appeal.

**A priori ethics fail, the world is absurd.**

**Camus 2**, Albert. The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays. E-book ed., 1955. https://postarchive.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/myth-of-sisyphus-and-other-essays-the-albert-camus.pdf.

A step lower and strangeness creeps in: perceiving that **the world is “dense,”** sensing to what a degree **a stone is foreign and irreducible to us**, with what intensity nature or a landscape can negate us. At the heart of all beauty lies something inhuman, and these hills, the softness of the sky, the outline of these trees at this very minute lose the illusory meaning with which we had clothed them, henceforth more remote than a lost paradise. **The primitive hostility of the world rises up to face us across millennia, for a second we cease to understand it because for centuries we have understood in it solely the images and designs that we had attributed to it beforehand, because henceforth we lack the power to make use of that artifice. The world evades us because it becomes itself again. That stage scenery masked by habit becomes again what it is. It withdraws at a distance from us.** Just as there are days when under the familial face of a woman, we see as a stranger her we had loved months or years ago, perhaps we shall come even to desire what suddenly leaves us so alone. But the time has not yet come. Just one thing: that **denseness and that strangeness of the world is the absurd.** Men, too, secrete the inhuman. At certain moments of lucidity, the mechanical aspect of their gestures, their meaningless pantomime makes silly everything that surrounds them. A man is talking on the telephone behind a glass partition; you cannot hear him, but you see his incomprehensible dumb show: you wonder why he is alive. This discomfort in the face of man’s own inhumanity, this incalculable tumble before the image of what we are, this “nausea,” as a writer of today calls it, is also the absurd. Likewise the stranger who at certain seconds comes to meet us in a mirror, the familiar and yet alarming brother we encounter in our own photographs is also the absurd. I come at last to death and to the attitude we have toward it. On this point everything has been said and it is only proper to avoid pathos. Yet one will never be sufficiently surprised that everyone lives as if no one “knew.” This is because in reality there is no experience of death. Properly speaking, nothing has been experienced but what has been lived and made conscious. Here, it is barely possible to speak of the experience of others’ deaths. It is a substitute, an illusion, and it never quite convinces us. That melancholy convention cannot be persuasive. The horror comes in reality from the mathematical aspect of the event. If time frightens us, this is because it works out the problem and the solution comes afterward. All the pretty speeches about the soul will have their contrary convincingly proved, at least for a time. From this inert body on which a slap makes no mark the soul has disappeared. This elementary and definitive aspect of the adventure constitutes the absurd feeling. Under the fatal lighting of that destiny, its uselessness becomes evident. **No code of ethics and no effort are justifiable a priori in the face of the cruel mathematics that command our condition.** Let me repeat: all this has been said over and over. I am limiting myself here to making a rapid classification and to pointing out these obvious themes. They run through all literatures and all philosophies. Everyday conversation feeds on them. There is no question of reinventing them. But it is essential to be sure of these facts in order to be able to question oneself subsequently on the primordial question. I am interested let me repeat again—not go much in absurd discoveries as in their consequences. If one is assured of these facts, what is one to conclude, how far is one to go to elude nothing? Is one to die voluntarily or to hope in spite of everything? Beforehand, it is necessary to take the same rapid inventory on the plane of the intelligence.

**Trying to reduce the world to something we understand is impossible and regressive.**

**Camus 3**, Albert. The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays. E-book ed., 1955. https://postarchive.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/myth-of-sisyphus-and-other-essays-the-albert-camus.pdf.

Of whom and of what indeed can I say: “I know that!” This heart within me I can feel, and I judge that it exists. **This world I can touch, and I likewise judge that it exists. There ends all my knowledge, and the rest is construction.** For if I try to seize this self of which I feel sure, **if I try to define and to summarize it, it is nothing but water slipping through my fingers.** I can sketch one by one all the aspects it is able to assume, all those likewise that have been attributed to it, this upbringing, this origin, this ardor or these silences, this nobility or this vileness. But aspects cannot be added up. This very heart which is mine will forever remain indefinable to me. Between the certainty I have of my existence and the content I try to give to that assurance, **the gap will never be filled. Forever I shall be a stranger to myself.** In psychology as in logic, there are truths but no truth. Socrates’”Know thyself” has as much value as the “Be virtuous” of our confessionals. They reveal a nostalgia at the same time as an ignorance. They are sterile exercises on great subjects. They are legitimate only in precisely so far as they are approximate. And here are trees and I know their gnarled surface, water and I feel its taste. These scents of grass and stars at night, certain evenings when the heart relaxes—how shall I negate this world whose power and strength I feel? Yet **all the knowledge on earth will give me nothing to assure me that this world is mine. You describe it to me and you teach me to classify it. You enumerate its laws** and in my thirst for knowledge I admit that they are true. **You take apart its mechanism and my hope increases.** At the final stage **you teach me that this wondrous and multicolored universe can be reduced to the atom and that the atom itself can be reduced to the electron. All this is good and I wait for you to continue. But you tell me of an invisible planetary system in which electrons gravitate around a nucleus.** You explain this world to me with an image**. I realize then that you have been reduced to poetry: I shall never know.** Have I the time to become indignant? You have already changed theories. So that **science that was to teach me everything ends up in a hypothesis, that lucidity founders in metaphor, that uncertainty is resolved in a work of art.** What need had I of so many efforts? The soft lines of these hills and the hand of evening on this troubled heart teach me much more. I have returned to my beginning. **I realize that if through science I can seize phenomena and enumerate them, I cannot, for all that, apprehend the world.** Were I to trace its entire relief with my finger, I should not know any more. And you give me the choice between a description that is sure but that teaches me nothing and hypotheses that claim to teach me but that are not sure. A stranger to myself and to the world, armed solely with a thought that negates itself as soon as it asserts, what is this condition in which I can have peace only by refusing to know and to live, in which the appetite for conquest bumps into walls that defy its assaults? To will is to stir up paradoxes. Everything is ordered in such a way as to bring into being that poisoned peace produced by thoughtlessness, lack of heart, or fatal renunciations. **Hence the intelligence, too, tells me in its way that this world is absurd. Its contrary, blind reason, may well claim that all is clear; I was waiting for proof and longing for it to be right.** But despite so many pretentious centuries and over the heads of so many eloquent and persuasive men, I know that is false. On this plane, at least, there is no happiness if I cannot know. **That universal reason, practical or ethical, that determinism, those categories that explain everything are enough to make a decent man laugh.** They have nothing to do with the mind. They negate its profound truth, which is to be enchained. **In this unintelligible and limited universe, man’s fate henceforth assumes its meaning. A horde of irrationals has sprung up and surrounds him until his ultimate end. In his recovered and now studied lucidity, the feeling of the absurd becomes clear and definite.** I said that the world is absurd, but I was too hasty. **This world in itself is not reasonable, that is all that can be said.** But what is absurd is the confrontation of this irrational and the wild longing for clarity whose call echoes in the human heart. The absurd depends as much on man as on the world. For the moment it is all that links them together. It binds them one to the other as only hatred can weld two creatures together. **This is all I can discern clearly in this measureless universe where my adventure takes place.** Let us pause here. If I hold to be true that absurdity that determines my relationship with life, if I become thoroughly imbued with that sentiment that seizes me in face of the world’s scenes, with that lucidity imposed on me by the pursuit of a science, I must sacrifice everything to these certainties and I must see them squarely to be able to maintain them. Above all, I must adapt my behavior to them and pursue them in all their consequences. I am speaking here of decency. But I want to know beforehand if thought can live in those deserts.

**Truth testing falls victim to the absurdness of the world, it tries to reduce the world in the context of the round which is impossible.**

**Camus 4**, Albert. The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays. E-book ed., 1955. https://postarchive.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/myth-of-sisyphus-and-other-essays-the-albert-camus.pdf.

**The mind’s first step is to distinguish what is true from what is false.** However, **as soon as thought reflects on itself, what it first discovers is a contradiction.** Useless to strive to be convincing in this case. Over the centuries no one has furnished a clearer and more elegant demonstration of the business than Aristotle: “The often ridiculed consequence of these opinions is that they destroy themselves. For **by asserting that all is true we assert the truth of the contrary assertion and consequently the falsity of our own thesis** (for the contrary assertion does not admit that it can be true). And **if one says that all is false, that assertion is itself false.** **If we declare that solely the assertion opposed to ours is false or else that solely ours is not false, we are nevertheless forced to admit an infinite number of true or false judgments.** For the one who expresses a true assertion proclaims simultaneously that it is true, and so on ad infinitum.” This vicious circle is but the first of a series in which **the mind that studies itself gets lost in a giddy whirling.** The very simplicity of these paradoxes makes them irreducible. Whatever may be the plays on words and the acrobatics of logic, to understand is, above all, to unify. **The mind’s deepest desire, even in its most elaborate operations, parallels man’s unconscious feeling in the face of his universe: it is an insistence upon familiarity, an appetite for clarity. Understanding the world for a man is reducing it to the human, stamping it with his seal.** The cat’s universe is not the universe of the anthill. The truism “All thought is anthropomorphic” has no other meaning. Likewise, **the mind that aims to understand reality can consider itself satisfied only by reducing it to terms of thought. If man realized that the universe like him can love and suffer, he would be reconciled.** If thought discovered in the shimmering mirrors of phenomena eternal relations capable of summing them up and summing themselves up in a single principle, then would be seen an intellectual joy of which the myth of the blessed would be but a ridiculous imitation. That nostalgia for unity, that appetite for the absolute illustrates the essential impulse of the human drama. But the fact of that nostalgia’s existence does not imply that it is to be immediately satisfied. For if, bridging the gulf that separates desire from conquest, we assert with Parmenides the reality of the One (whatever it may be), **we fall into the ridiculous contradiction of a mind that asserts total unity and proves by its very assertion its own difference and the diversity it claimed to resolve.** This other vicious circle is enough to stifle our hopes.

**Prefer this view of the world.**

**a) 100 years after we die nothing we did matters, if life had a higher meaning that wouldn’t be the case because meaning implies your actions affect something external.**

**b) There are things in the world we can’t explain and other theories use God or “science” fill in the gaps. E.g. Utilitarians say “you couldn’t have known that would be a consequence but calculations are still *pretty good*.”**

**The topic's desire to control disease which is part of the world's inherent chaos will always fail.**

**Kain**, Philip J. "Nietzsche, Eternal Recurrence, and the Horror of Existence." *The Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 20**07**, pp. 49+, scholarcommons.scu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1054&context=phi. Accessed 31 Aug. 2022.

Well, perhaps not. **Even modem environmentalists might resist all this obviousness. They might respond in a rather Nietzschean vein that technology may have caused as many problems as it has solved.** The advocate of the perfectible cosmos, on the other hand, would no doubt counter such Nietzschean pessimism by arguing that even if technology does cause some problems, the solution to those problems can only come from better technology. Honesty requires us to admit, however, that this is merely a hope, not something for which we already have evidence, not something that it is absurd to doubt-not at all something obvious. Further technology may or may not improve things. **The widespread use of antibiotics seems to have done a miraculous job of improving our health and reducing suffering, but we are also discovering that such antibiotics give rise to even more powerful bacteria that are immune to those antibiotics. We have largely eliminated diseases like cholera, smallpox, malaria, and tuberculosis, but we have produced cancer and heart disease.** We can cure syphilis and gonorrhea, but we now have AIDS. Even if we could show that it will be possible to continuously reduce suffering, it is very unlikely that we will ever eliminate it. If that is so, then it remains a real question whether it is not better to face suffering, use it as a discipline, perhaps even increase it, so as to toughen ourselves, rather than let it weaken us, allow it to dominate us, by continually hoping to overcome it. But whatever we think about the possibility of reducing suffering, the question may well become moot. Nietzsche tells a story: "Once upon a time, in some out of the way comer of that universe which is dispersed into numberless twinkling solar systems, there was a star upon which clever beasts invented knowing. That was the most arrogant and mendacious minute of 'world history,' but nevertheless, it was only a minute. After nature had drawn a few breaths, the star cooled and congealed, and the clever beasts had to die" (TL 1, 79). **Whatever progress we might think we are making in reducing suffering, whatever change we think we are bringing about, it may all amount to nothing more than a brief and accidental moment in biological time, whose imminent disappearance will finally confirm the horror and meaninglessness of existence.** The disagreement here is not so much about the quantity of suffering that we can expect to find in the world but, rather, its nature. For proponents of the designed cosmos, suffering is basically accidental. It is not fundamental or central to life. It is not a necessary part of the nature of things. It does not make up the essence of existence. We must develop virtue, and then we can basically expect to fit and be at home in the cosmos. For the proponents of a perfectible cosmos, suffering is neither essential nor unessential. The cosmos is neutral. We must work on it to reduce suffering. We must bring about our own fit. For Nietzsche, even if we can change this or that, even if we can reduce suffering here and there, **what cannot be changed for human beings is that suffering is fundamental and central to life.** The very nature of things, the very essence of existence, means suffering. Moreover, it means meaningless suffering-suffering for no reason at all. That cannot be changed-it can only be concealed. Nietzsche does not reject all forms of change. What he rejects is the sort of change necessary for a perfectible cosmos. **He rejects the notion that science and technology can transform the essence of things-he rejects the notion that human effort can significantly reduce physical suffering. Instead, he only thinks it possible to build up the power necessary to construct meaning in a meaningless world and thus to conceal the horror of existence, which cannot be eliminated.**

**Ascribing some higher meaning to the world robs life of its value and prevents us from appreciating it fully.**

**Camus 5**, Albert. The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays. E-book ed., 1955. https://postarchive.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/myth-of-sisyphus-and-other-essays-the-albert-camus.pdf.

Now I can broach the notion of suicide. It has already been felt what solution might be given. At this point the problem is reversed. **It was previously a question of finding out whether or not life had to have a meaning to be lived. It now becomes clear, on the contrary, that it will be lived all the better if it has no meaning.** Living an experience, a particular fate, is accepting it fully. **Now, no one will live this fate, knowing it to be absurd, unless he does everything to keep before him that absurd brought to light by consciousness.** Negating one of the terms of the opposition on which he lives amounts to escaping it. To abolish conscious revolt is to elude the problem. The theme of permanent revolution is thus carried into individual experience. Living is keeping the absurd alive. Keeping it alive is, above all, contemplating it. Unlike Eurydice, the absurd dies only when we turn away from it. **One of the only coherent philosophical positions is thus revolt. It is a constant confrontation between man and his own obscurity.** It is an insistence upon an impossible transparency. It challenges the world anew every second. Just as danger provided man the unique opportunity of seizing awareness, so metaphysical revolt extends awareness to the whole of experience. It is that constant presence of man in his own eyes. It is not aspiration, for it is devoid of hope. That revolt is the certainly of a crushing fate, without the resignation that ought to accompany it. This is where it is seen to what a degree absurd experience is remote from suicide. It may be thought that suicide follows revolt—but wrongly. For it does not represent the logical outcome of revolt. It is just the contrary by the consent it presupposes. Suicide, like the leap, is acceptance at its extreme. Everything is over and man returns to his essential history. His future, his unique and dreadful future—he sees and rushes toward it. In its way, suicide settles the absurd. It engulfs the absurd in the same death. But I know that in order to keep alive, the absurd cannot be settled. It escapes suicide to the extent that it is simultaneously awareness and rejection of death. It is, at the extreme limit of the condemned man’s last thought, that shoelace that despite everything he sees a few yards away, on the very brink of his dizzying fall. The contrary of suicide, in fact, is the man condemned to death. **That revolt gives life its value.** Spread out over the whole length of a life, it restores its majesty to that life. To a man devoid of blinders, there is no finer sight than that of the intelligence at grips with a reality that transcends it. The sight of human pride is unequaled. No disparagement is of any use. That discipline that the mind imposes on itself, that will conjured up out of nothing, that face-to-face struggle have something exceptional about them. To impoverish that reality whose inhumanity constitutes man’s majesty is tantamount to impoverishing him himself. I understand then why **the doctrines that explain everything to me also debilitate me at the same time. They relieve me of the weight of my own life, and yet I must carry it alone.** At this juncture, I cannot conceive that a skeptical metaphysics can be joined to an ethics of renunciation. Consciousness and revolt, these rejections are the contrary of renunciation. Everything that is indomitable and passionate in a human heart quickens them, on the contrary, with its own life. It is essential to die unrecon-ciled and not of one’s own free will. Suicide is a repudi—ation. The absurd man can only drain everything to the bitter end, and deplete himself. The absurd is his extreme tension, which he maintains constantly by solitary effort, for he knows that in that consciousness and in that day-to-day revolt he gives proof of his only truth, which is defiance. This is a first consequence. If I remain in that prearranged position which consists in drawing all the conclusions (and nothing else) involved in a newly discovered notion, I am faced with a second paradox. In order to remain faithful to that method, I have nothing to do with the problem of metaphysical liberty. Knowing whether or not man is free doesn’t interest me. I can experience only my own freedom. As to it, I can have no general notions, but merely a few clear insights. The problem of “freedom as such” has no meaning, for it is linked in quite a different way with the problem of God. Knowing whether or not man is free involves knowing whether he can have a master. The absurdity peculiar to this problem comes from the fact that the very notion that makes the problem of freedom possible also takes away all its meaning. For in the presence of God there is less a problem of freedom than a problem of evil. You know the alternative: either we are not free and God the all-powerful is responsible for evil. Or we are free and responsible but God is not all powerful. All the scholastic subtleties have neither added anything to nor subtracted anything from the acuteness of this paradox. This is why I cannot act lost in the glorification or the mere definition of a notion which eludes me and loses its meaning as soon as it goes beyond the frame of reference of my individual experience. I cannot understand what kind of freedom would be given me by a higher being. I have lost the sense of hierarchy. The only conception of freedom I can have is that of the prisoner or the individual in the midst of the State. The only one I know is freedom of thought and action. **Now if the absurd cancels all my chances of eternal freedom, it restores and magnifies, on the other hand, my freedom of action. That privation of hope and future means an increase in man’s availability. Before encountering the absurd, the everyday man lives with aims, a concern for the future or for justification** (with regard to whom or what is not the question). He weighs his chances, he counts on “someday,” his retirement or the labor of his sons. **He still thinks that something in his life can be directed. In truth, he acts as if he were free, even if all the facts make a point of contradicting that liberty.** But after the absurd, everything is upset. That idea that “I am,” my way of acting as if everything has a meaning (even if, on occasion, I said that nothing has)—all that is given the lie in vertiginous fashion by the absurdity of a possible death. Thinking of the future, establishing aims for oneself, having preferences—all this presupposes a belief in freedom, even if one occasionally ascertains that one doesn’t feel it. But at that moment I am well aware that that higher liberty, that freedom to be, which alone can serve as basis for a truth, does not exist. Death is there as the only reality. After death the chips are down. I am not even free, either, to perpetuate myself, but a slave, and, above all, a slave without hope of an eternal revolution, without recourse to contempt. And who without revolution and without contempt can remain a slave? What freedom can exist in the fullest sense without assurance of eternity? **But at the same time the absurd man realizes that hitherto he was bound to that postulate of freedom on the illusion of which he was living. In a certain sense, that hampered him. To the extent to which he imagined a purpose to his life, he adapted himself to the demands of a purpose to be achieved and became the slave of his liberty. Thus I could not act otherwise than as the father (or the engineer or the leader of a nation, or the post-office sub-clerk) that I am preparing to be.** I think I can choose to be that rather than something else. I think so unconsciously, to be sure. But at the same time I strengthen my postulate with the beliefs of those around me, with the presumptions of my human environment (others are so sure of being free, and that cheerful mood is so contagious!). **However far one may remain from any presumption, moral or social, one is partly influenced by them and even, for the best among them** (there are good and bad presumptions), **one adapts one’s life to them. Thus the absurd man realizes that he was not really free.** To speak clearly, **to the extent to which I hope, to which I worry about a truth that might be individual to me, about a way of being or creating, to the extent to which I arrange my life and prove thereby that I accept its having a meaning, I create for myself barriers between which I confine my life.** I do like so many bureaucrats of the mind and heart who only fill me with disgust and whose only vice, I now see clearly, is to take man’s freedom seriously. The absurd enlightens me on this point: there is no future. Henceforth this is the reason for my inner freedom. I shall use two comparisons here. Mystics, to begin with, find freedom in giving themselves. By losing themselves in their god, by accepting his rules, they become secretly free. In spontaneously accepted slavery they recover a deeper independence. But what does that freedom mean? It may be said, above all, that they feel free with regard to themselves, and not so much free as liberated. Likewise, completely turned toward death (taken here as the most obvious absurdity), the absurd man feels released from everything outside that passionate attention crystallizing in him. He enjoys a freedom with regard to common rules. It can be seen at this point that the initial themes of existential philosophy keep their entire value. The return to consciousness, the escape from everyday sleep represent the first steps of absurd freedom. But it is existential preaching that is alluded to, and with it that spiritual leap which basically escapes consciousness. In the same way (this is my second comparison) the slaves of antiquity did not belong to themselves. But they knew that freedom which consists in not feeling responsible.[11] Death, too, has patrician hands which, while crushing, also liberate. **Losing oneself in that bottomless certainty, feeling henceforth sufficiently remote from one’s own life to increase it and take a broad view of it—this involves the principle of a liberation.** Such new independence has a definite time limit, like any freedom of action. It does not write a check on eternity. But it takes the place of the illusions of freedom, which all stopped with death. The divine availability of the condemned man before whom the prison doors open in a certain early dawn, that unbelievable disinterestedness with regard to everything except for the pure flame of life—it is clear that death and the absurd are here the principles of the only reasonable freedom: that which a human heart can experience and live. This is a second consequence. **The absurd man thus catches sight of a burning and frigid, transparent and limited universe in which nothing is possible but everything is given, and beyond which all is collapse and nothingness. He can then decide to accept such a universe and draw from it his strength, his refusal to hope, and the unyielding evidence of a life without consolation.** \*\*\* But what does life mean in such a universe? Nothing else for the moment but indifference to the future and a desire to use up everything that is given. Belief in the meaning of life always implies a scale of values, a choice, our preferences. Belief in the absurd, according to our definitions, teaches the contrary. But this is worth examining. Knowing whether or not one can live without appeal is all that interests me. I do not want to get out of my depth. This aspect of life being given me, can I adapt myself to it? Now, faced with this particular concern, **belief in the absurd is tantamount to substituting the quantity of experiences for the quality.** If I convince myself that this life has no other aspect than that of the absurd, if I feel that its whole equilibrium depends on that perpetual opposition between my conscious revolt and the darkness in which it struggles, if I admit that my freedom has no meaning except in relation to its limited fate, then I must say that what counts is not the best living but the most living. It is not up to me to wonder if this is vulgar or revolting, elegant or deplorable. Once and for all, value judgments are discarded here in favor of factual judgments. I have merely to draw the conclusions from what I can see and to risk nothing that is hypothetical. Supposing that living in this way were not honorable, then true propriety would command me to be dishonorable. The most living; in the broadest sense, that rule means nothing. It calls for definition. It seems to begin with the fact that the notion of quantity has not been sufficiently explored. For it can account for a large share of human experience. A man’s rule of conduct and his scale of values have no meaning except through the quantity and variety of experiences he has been in a position to accumulate. Now, the conditions of modern life impose on the majority of men the same quantity of experiences and consequently the same profound experience. To be sure, there must also be taken into consideration the individual’s spontaneous contribution, the “given” element in him. But I cannot judge of that, and let me repeat that my rule here is to get along with the immediate evidence. I see, then, that the individual character of a common code of ethics lies not so much in the ideal importance of its basic principles as in the norm of an experience that it is possible to measure. To stretch a point somewhat, the Greeks had the code of their leisure just as we have the code of our eight-hour day. But already many men among the most tragic cause us to foresee that a longer experience changes this table of values. They make us imagine that adventurer of the everyday who through mere quantity of experiences would break all records (I am purposely using this sports expression) and would thus win his own code of ethics.[12] Yet let’s avoid romanticism and just ask ourselves what such an attitude may mean to a man with his mind made up to take up his bet and to observe strictly what he takes to be the rules of the game. Breaking all the records is first and foremost being faced with the world as often as possible. How can that be done without contradictions and without playing on words? For on the one hand the absurd teaches that all experiences are unimportant, and on the other it urges toward the greatest quantity of experiences. **How, then, can one fail to do as so many of those men I was speaking of earlier—choose the form of life that brings us the most possible of that human matter, thereby introducing a scale of values that on the other hand one claims to reject?** But again it is the absurd and its contradictory life that teaches us. **For the mistake is thinking that that quantity of experiences depends on the circumstances of our life when it depends solely on us.** Here we have to be over-simple. **To two men living the same number of years, the world always provides the same sum of experiences. It is up to us to be conscious of them. Being aware of one’s life, one’s revolt, one’s freedom, and to the maximum, is living, and to the maximum.** Where lucidity dominates, the scale of values becomes useless. Let’s be even more simple. Let us say that the sole obstacle, the sole deficiency to be made good, is constituted by premature death. Thus it is that no depth, no emotion, no passion, and no sacrifice could render equal in the eyes of the absurd man (even if he wished it so) a conscious life of forty years and a lucidity spread over sixty years.[13] Madness and death are his irreparables. **Man does not choose. The absurd and the extra life it involves therefore do not defend on man’s will, but on its contrary, which is death**.[14] Weighing words carefully, **it is altogether a question of luck. One just has to be able to consent to this.** There will never be any substitute for twenty years of life and experience. By what is an odd inconsistency in such an alert race, the Greeks claimed that those who died young were beloved of the gods. And that is true only if you are willing to believe that entering the ridiculous world of the gods is forever losing the purest of joys, which is feeling, and feeling on this earth. The present and the succession of presents before a constantly conscious soul is the ideal of the absurd man. But the word “ideal” rings false in this connection. It is not even his vocation, but merely the third consequence of his reasoning. **Having started from an anguished awareness of the inhuman, the meditation on the absurd returns at the end of its itinerary to the very heart of the passionate flames of human revolt.[15]**

**Thus, the advocacy is to affirm our meaningless existence despite its uselessness. Instead of thinking there’s some higher, objective meaning that gives life its value, the aff recognizes our life is futile and that makes it *better*. Like Sisyphus, who was forced to endlessly push a rock up a hill, our task is meaningless, but that is our chance to give it value.**

**Camus 6**, Albert. The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays. E-book ed., 1955. https://postarchive.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/myth-of-sisyphus-and-other-essays-the-albert-camus.pdf.

**The gods** had **condemned Sisyphus to ceaselessly rolling a rock to the top of a mountain,** whence the stone would fall back of its own weight. **They had thought** with some reason that **there is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless labor.** If one believes Homer, Sisyphus was the wisest and most prudent of mortals. According to another tradition, however, he was disposed to practice the profession of highwayman. I see no contradiction in this. Opinions differ as to the reasons why he became the futile laborer of the underworld. To begin with, he is accused of a certain levity in regard to the gods. He stole their secrets. AEgina, the daughter of AEsopus, was carried off by Jupiter. The father was shocked by that disappearance and complained to Sisyphus. He, who knew of the abduction, offered to tell about it on condition that AEsopus would give water to the citadel of Corinth. To the celestial thunderbolts he preferred the benediction of water. He was punished for this in the underworld. Homer tells us also that Sisyphus had put Death in chains. Pluto could not endure the sight of his deserted, silent empire. He dispatched the god of war, who liberated Death from the hands of her conqueror. It is said also that Sisyphus, being near to death, rashly wanted to test his wife’s love. He ordered her to cast his unburied body into the middle of the public square. Sisyphus woke up in the underworld. And there, annoyed by an obedience so contrary to human love, he obtained from Pluto permission to return to earth in order to chastise his wife. But when he had seen again the face of this world, enjoyed water and sun, warm stones and the sea, he no longer wanted to go back to the infernal darkness. Recalls, signs of anger, warnings were of no avail. Many years more he lived facing the curve of the gulf, the sparkling sea, and the smiles of earth. A decree of the gods was necessary. Mercury came and seized the impudent man by the collar and, snatching him from his joys, led him forcibly back to the underworld, where his rock was ready for him. You have already grasped that Sisyphus is the absurd hero. He is, as much through his passions as through his torture. His scorn of the gods, his hatred of death, and his passion for life won him that unspeakable penalty in which the whole being is exerted toward accomplishing nothing. This is the price that must be paid for the passions of this earth. Nothing is told us about Sisyphus in the underworld. Myths are made for the imagination to breathe life into them. As for this myth, one sees merely the whole effort of a body straining to raise the huge stone, to roll it and push it up a slope a hundred times over; one sees the face screwed up, the cheek tight against the stone, the shoulder bracing the clay-covered mass, the foot wedging it, the fresh start with arms outstretched, the wholly human security of two earth-clotted hands. **At the very end of his long effort measured by skyless space and time without depth, the purpose is achieved. Then Sisyphus watches the stone rush down in a few moments toward that lower world whence he will have to push it up again toward the summit. He goes back down to the plain. It is during that return, that pause, that Sisyphus interests me. A face that toils so close to stones is already stone itself! I see that man going back down with a heavy yet measured step toward the torment of which he will never know the end.** That hour like a breathing-space which returns as surely as his suffering, that is the hour of consciousness. **At each of those moments when he leaves the heights and gradually sinks toward the lairs of the gods, he is superior to his fate. He is stronger than his rock. If this myth is tragic, that is because its hero is conscious**. Where would his torture be, indeed, if at every step the hope of succeeding upheld him? **The workman of today works every day in his life at the same tasks, and this fate is no less absurd.** But **it is tragic only at the rare moments when it becomes conscious.** Sisyphus, proletarian of the gods, powerless and rebellious, knows the whole extent of his wretched condition: it is what he thinks of during his descent. The lucidity that was to constitute his torture at the same time crowns his victory. There is no fate that cannot be surmounted by scorn. \* \* \* **If the descent is thus sometimes performed in sorrow, it can also take place in joy.** This word is not too much. Again I fancy Sisyphus returning toward his rock, and the sorrow was in the beginning. When the images of earth cling too tightly to memory, when the call of happiness becomes too insistent, it happens that melancholy rises in man’s heart: this is the rock’s victory, this is the rock itself. The boundless grief is too heavy to bear. These are our nights of Gethsemane. But crushing truths perish from being acknowledged. Thus, CEdipus at the outset obeys fate without knowing it. But from the moment he knows, his tragedy begins. Yet at the same moment, blind and desperate, he realizes that the only bond linking him to the world is the cool hand of a girl. Then a tremendous remark rings out: “Despite so many ordeals, my advanced age and the nobility of my soul make me conclude that all is well.” Sophocles’ CEdipus, like Dostoevsky’s Kirilov, thus gives the recipe for the absurd victory. Ancient wisdom confirms modern heroism. One does not discover the absurd without being tempted to write a manual of happiness. “What! by such narrow ways—?” There is but one world, however. Happiness and the absurd are two sons of the same earth. They are inseparable. It would be a mistake to say that happiness necessarily springs from the absurd discovery. **It happens as well that the feeling of the absurd springs from happiness.** “I conclude that all is well,” says CEdipus, and that remark is sacred. It echoes in the wild and limited universe of man. It teaches that all is not, has not been, exhausted. It drives out of this world a god who had come into it with dissatisfaction and a preference for futile sufferings. It makes of fate a human matter, which must be settled among men. **All Sisyphus’ silent joy is contained therein. His fate belongs to him.** His rock is his thing. Likewise, the absurd man, when he contemplates his torment, silences all the idols. In the universe suddenly restored to its silence, the myriad wondering little voices of the earth rise up. Unconscious, secret calls, invitations from all the faces, they are the necessary reverse and price of victory. There is no sun without shadow, and it is es-sential to know the night. **The absurd man says yes and his effort will henceforth be unceasing. If there is a personal fate, there is no higher destiny, or at least there is but one which he concludes is inevitable and despicable.** For the rest, **he knows himself to be the master of his days.** At that subtle moment when man glances backward over his life, Sisyphus returning toward his rock, in that slight pivoting he contemplates that series of unrelated actions which becomes his fate, created by him, combined under his memory’s eye and soon sealed by his death. Thus, convinced of the wholly human origin of all that is human, a blind man eager to see who knows that the night has no end, he is still on the go. The rock is still rolling. **I leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain! One always finds one’s burden again. But Sisyphus teaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises rocks. He too concludes that all is well. This universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile.** Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night-filled mountain, in itself forms a world. **The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man’s heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy.**

**Extinction is inevitable, we’ve overstayed our welcome.**

**Gee**, Henry. "Humans Are Doomed to Go Extinct." *Scientific American*, 30 Nov.20**21**, www.scientificamerican.com/article/humans-are-doomed-to-go-extinct/#:~:text=The%20most%20insidious%20threat%20to,delayed%20reaction%20to%20habitat%20loss. Accessed 31 Aug. 2022.

**The most insidious threat to humankind is something called “extinction debt.” There comes a time in the progress of any species, even ones that seem to be thriving, when extinction will be inevitable, no matter what they might do to avert it. The cause of extinction is usually a delayed reaction to habitat loss. The species most at risk are those that dominate particular habitat patches** at the expense of others, who tend to migrate elsewhere, and are therefore spread more thinly. Humans occupy more or less the whole planet, and with our sequestration of a large wedge of the productivity of this planetwide habitat patch, we are dominant within it. **H. sapiens might therefore already be a dead species walking. The signs are already there for those willing to see them. When the habitat becomes degraded such that there are fewer resources to go around; when fertility starts to decline; when the birth rate sinks below the death rate; and when genetic resources are limited—the only way is down.** The question is “How fast?” **I suspect that the human population is set not just for shrinkage but collapse—and soon.** To paraphrase Lehrer, **if we are going to write about human extinction, we’d better start writing now.**

**Thus, the role of the ballot is to vote for the best method to give our life value. Prefer:**

**1. Urgency: Pre fiat we will all die soon. Thus it doesn’t matter if we’re a little more educated on policy education or the rounds a little more fair, our only option is to find out how to live these last years to the fullest.**

**2. Value to life is the only actually important philosophical question, everything else is trivial.**

**Camus 7**, Albert. The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays. E-book ed., 1955. https://postarchive.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/myth-of-sisyphus-and-other-essays-the-albert-camus.pdf.

There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy. All the rest— **whether or not the world has three dimensions, whether the mind has nine or twelve categories—comes afterwards. These are games**; one must first answer. And if it is true, as Nietzsche claims, that a philosopher, to deserve our respect, must preach by example, you can appreciate the importance of that reply, for it will precede the definitive act. These are facts the heart can feel; yet they call for careful study before they become clear to the intellect. **If I ask myself how to judge that this question is more urgent than that, I reply that one judges by the actions it entails. I have never seen anyone die for the ontologi-cal argument.Galileo, who held a scientific truth of great importance, abjured it with the greatest ease as soon as it endangered his life.** In a certain sense, he did right.[1] **That truth was not worth the stake. Whether the earth or the sun revolves around the other is a matter of profound indifference.** To tell the truth, **it is a futile question.** On the other hand, I see many people die because they judge that life is not worth living. I see others paradoxically getting killed for the ideas or illusions that give them a reason for living (what is called a reason for living is also an excellent reason for dying). **I therefore conclude that the meaning of life is the most urgent of questions.** How to answer it? On all essential problems (I mean thereby those that run the risk of leading to death or those that intensify the passion of living) there are probably but two methods of thought: the method of La Palisse and the method of Don Quixote. Solely the balance between evidence and lyricism can allow us to achieve simultaneously emotion and lucidity. In a subject at once so humble and so heavy with emotion, the learned and classical dialectic must yield, one can see, to a more modest attitude of mind deriving at one and the same time from common sense and understanding.

**3. Pre fiat impacts come first a) post fiat impacts are solely imaginary and don’t affect our lives, it doesn’t make sense to say things like you devalue life if you lose a disad because that doesn’t *actually* affect any lives. b) justifying post fiat impacts first concedes to pre fiat framing because you’ll give arguments about how that’s beneficial to us in our real lives.**

**4. Value to life is a prerequisite to other values. We can ask why fairness, why education etc. If our lives themselves have no value, those impacts don’t achieve anything.**

**5. Portability: If debate sends us off with more policy education or a slightly fairer game that is a tiny impact that we could probably get somewhere else, but if it teaches us how to live our lives better that affects literally everything we do.**

**6. Debate is chaotic and concepts like fairness and education can’t control it. The truth of philosophical concepts comes secondary to if they are good for us.**

**Koh**, Ben, **and** Rebar **Niemi**. "How Do I Reach These Kids?: An Affirmation of Polyvocal Debate." *NSD Update*, 15 Sept. 20**15**, www.google.com/url?q=http://nsdupdate.com/2015/how-do-i-reach-these-kids-an-affirmation-of-polyvocal-debate-by-ben-koh-rebar-niemi/&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1663948206177927&usg=AOvVaw1ek37S3Ul-kdVZaK4Lv2G-.Accessed 23 Sept. 2022.

For as long as there has been debate, there has been the debate about what debate is. We are not against a discussion of what constitutes debate. In fact we are absolutely for it. We argue that this is a crucial debate within debates. **The question should not be “what is debate?” The proper question is “what can debate do?”** The constitutive feature of debate that we are most abstractly interested in is the precise one that is so often banished by debate pundits – the possibilities of what it can do. We do not yet know what debate can do. **All are welcome to accept the challenge of forcing debate into a linear and instrumental framework, but be warned it will certainly fail.** Debate is a process and a field, not a mechanism. This is the case for polyvocal debate. Our current definition (which is open to redefinition) is that **debate should be thought of as a complex assemblage of voices** (the debaters, the judge, audiences, coaches, the authors quoted, and so on), and that **it is wrong to limit the possible voices or the possible enunciations of those voices. Debate is always about multiple voices – multiple ways of sensing/expressing.** Even non-sense and non-expression have their own voices. This is not a paradigm. It is a hypothesis about the system of relations that co-creates debate. The power and potential of polyvocal debate is not located in some far-off future. It is right here right now, and it is also capable of contact with the outsides of one perspective on time and space. To paraphrase June Tyson – Don’t you know? It’s after the end of the world.Within the system of relations composed by polyvocal debate, **we always have the ability to ask “should we believe in something in the first place?” as well as “if we believe it, what are its normative implications?”** These questions, in whatever form they take, are some of the most primal elements of debate. **Restricting the scope of debate to only some of these questions is a serious loss.** More absurd is the justification for restriction based on the value of being able to ask and engage with these questions in the first place. **It is wrong to assume that chaos and doubt are bad.** It is even worse to argue for a progressive fallacy that chaos and doubt can be removed from debate without debate ceasing to be debate at all. **Debate is not soccer, or chess, or playing the trumpet.** Perhaps it can do similar things to those activities, but if so it is because it does not feature the limits that define soccer or chess or playing the trumpet. It is apparently very easy to make assumptions about what education is. Most often this is accomplished without citing a single theorist on the subject of education OR a robust understanding of what education could be outside of “commonsensical” assumptions (which are less common and relatable that they initially seem). As we often like to tell our students – read the literature. We call the kind of education that is often assumed “banking-style education” after Paulo Friere. This is the notion that education is about accumulating knowledge. 100 facts are better than 99 facts. **People devalue education because they think of it only in these calculated terms.** To the banking conception, the end game of education would not be an increase in self-respect, a commitment to social justice, or a development of communication and empathetic powers. It would be the resume statement of “things I’ve learned.” We must not buy into this conception of education.**In debate, the collaborative way voices intertwine builds a world of speech and frames it.** No debate performance can be perfectly reproduced. The judge’s interpretation and voice are then added. **The desire for absolutely objective or procedurally exact judging is a desire for an impossibility.** We should not be afraid of the judge’s voice. We recognize it as one among many. Some judges speak loudly and have particular desires. We do not begrudge them this. What is important is that they acknowledge that theirs is only one voice among the many and one way of sensing among all sense and nonsense. **It is not a question of excluding the chaos or even controlling it, but understanding the value in hearing the clash of multiple voices.** For nowhere else in school are we given the vibrant opportunity to be as real in the academic space as is in debate; where we are able to read multiple arguments from multiple views from multiple bases. We must encourage debate to be an outlet for the chaotic and doubtful elements of our beliefs for it’s an opportunity to bridge debate’s separation from the real world into our own world. **Our lives aren’t always smooth unwavering stories. They are often a chaos that is hard to grasp outside the lens of community.** Polyvocal debate is inclusive and encouraging of this chaos, of the hard questions and life changing moments of realization. A form of debate that acts as if it can omit doubt is not a true form of debate at all. This isn’t just an argument for “unique educational value” in the banking-sense. Debate should not be thought of as an esoteric extracurricular designed to spice up the resume. **Paradigms of debate that stop at the moment of rational justification treat the issue of what world we create for ourselves as an unnecessary step, but this conversation is what must happen in our lives and further what must happen in debate.** Polyvocal debate allows for this discussion. **We should not just ask “is deontology true” but further “is it good for me to believe in deontology” or util or contractarianism, etc.** Rationality cannot be trusted to judge itself, but abandoning logic altogether isn’t necessary just yet. It is too easy to take up one side or the other (only truth matters or only the good matters). Debate is harder. **The tenets of logic and justification can create questionable conclusions, and a truly valuable form of debate must allow us to criticize and reevaluate these conclusions to live our lives to the fullest. We must be able to ask if beliefs empower or disempower our lives.** We always have the power to ask should we believe it or is it correct, and exercising this capacity is the practice of debate. There are two ways in which we can understand and consider what we ought to believe – what is rationally justifiable, and what is good for us to believe for ourselves. **In our lives we cannot just ask “what do I think is true.” We must always end up asking “is it good for me to believe in what I believe?”** This is how we must act in our own lives outside of just the debate space. **When we are faced with a difficult situation be it in our personal lives, work, etc., we are inevitably going to be confronted with moments of seemingly undeniable hopelessness; where despite our best efforts and our thinking, we cannot justify or rationally see a way to be happy or push ourselves through to the other side.** Is it good for me to believe that no matter what I will do, that I will get a bad grade in this class? Is it good for me to believe that I will fail in my work? Is it good for me to believe in hopelessness? Our answer is no. Our answer is that debate helps you learn new questions as well as new answers. Again and again we’ve heard the articles and arguments that collapse everything to the old questions: **education versus fairness, the rules versus innovation and expansion, correct ways of being versus incorrect ones. Bizarrely there are some who like to play with the same questions forever, perpetually flipping bits between one and zero, never writing new code. We are tired of these questions.** Perhaps they would be enlivened by new voices. Polyvocality is the necessary and explosive generation of new questions. The practice of debate is an educational activity because it is generative and interrogative of voices. Use it for what it’s used for.