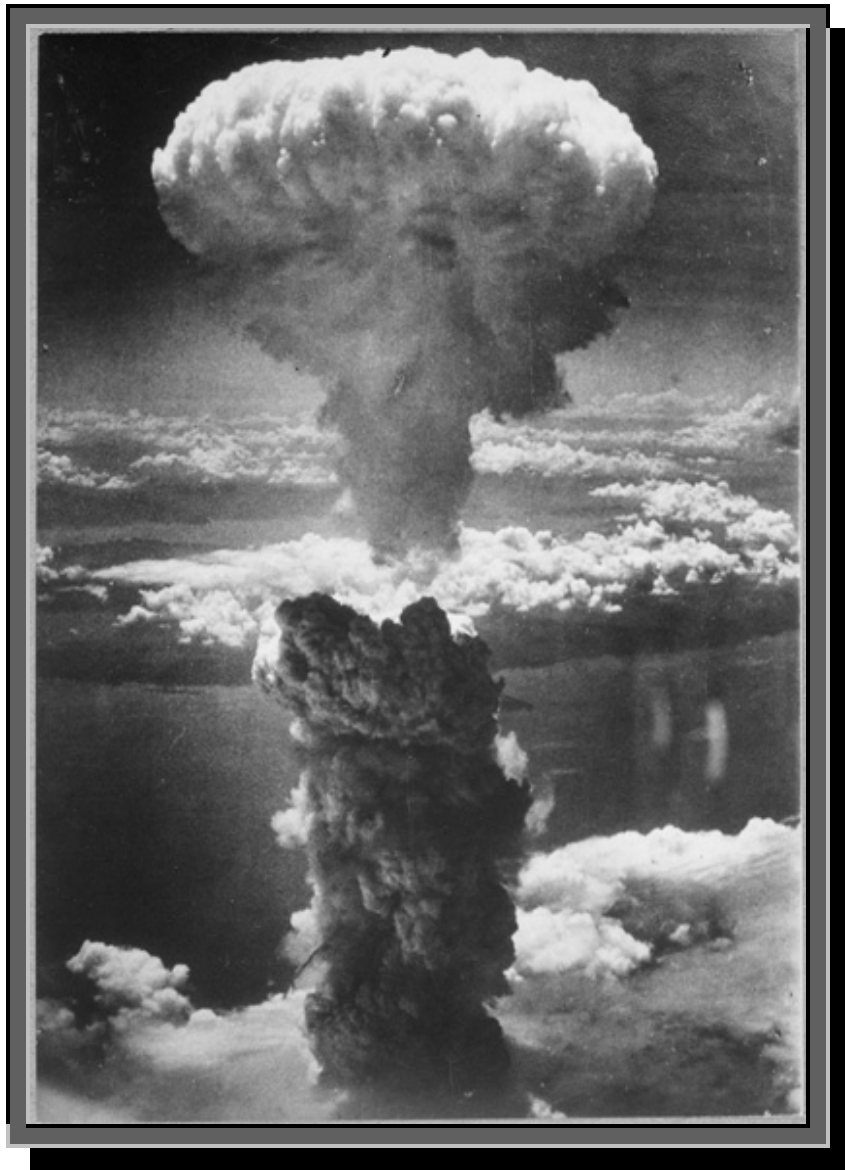


# THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND BEYOND



**Quo Vadis, Philosophia?**

# THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND *BEYOND*

Some 27 centuries ago, Philosophy “launched” a daring voyage on a quest to discover Truth:  
*To find explanations for the cosmos and to seek wisdom for humankind.*

Have we found the **Truth** about **Reality**?

Do we even **Know Ourselves** in a blessed way?

Along the way something happened to the crucial category of **Truth**. There are no secular philosophers even thinking in terms of ‘one true metanarrative.’ How did that happen?

When the **Enlightenment** began to seek certainty *apart from* the Transcendent/Immanent Biblical God...that gave us **Modernism**...which ultimately failed. Although some hang on to its out-moded modes, others recognize its futility and seek meaning elsewhere, *and* on a different basis...if *any* basis! Now it’s **Postmodernism**, which offers nothing to the voyage but doldrums.

It is ‘too soon’ to render an astute assessment of 20<sup>th</sup> century thought and culture, as we still reside *in* this era...albeit in the *Beyond* chapter, “post-everything”! One shudders to imagine what may come next. **Especially if Christians fail to think profoundly and live redemptively!**

This admittedly incomplete summary serves as a *review* of **20<sup>th</sup> c. philosophies** connecting them with **major worldview shifts**. We must also be willing to *critique* ‘Christian’ responses.

If you bear in mind our course-shaping issues throughout the review, you will be meeting the course objectives and going for more: You should want to compose *your own* thoughtful ‘Epilogue’!

🔑 The key things are —

The Character of a Holy God    The Broken Nature of Humanity    The Complexity of the Vast Cosmos  
Spirituality    Selfhood    Transcendence    Existence    Despair vs. Hope    Redemption  
Knowledge    Subjectivity and Objectivity    Language    Relativism  
..... Truth vs. Lies .....

Basic Assumptions about Reality – The Choices are Few

🔑 Philosophies, Religions *and* ‘Ideologies’ Must be Critiqued with Worldview-Level Scrutiny 🔑

Biblical-Hebraic Holism as *the* WV that: Solves Problems, Answers Questions, and holds Truth in Love

## CONTENTS OF *THIS* OVERVIEW:

- I. **Influential Philosophies** of the Twentieth Century — Summaries, Wittgenstein, and **QUIZ**
- II. Postmodernism + New Age = Total Conceptual Relativism and Cosmic Ego-centricity!
- III. **A CHARGE TO CHRISTIAN STUDENTS** — Our Course Objectives *Revisited*

## WORKS ‘IN PROGRESS’:

🌐 “**World-Seen at a Glance**” (Historic Highlights 📅 of the Century)

🌀 Scientific and ‘Spiritual’ 🌀 Interpretations of **Quantum Physics** \*\*

Seminal Publications 📖 and Achievements 🌟 of the Twentieth Century 🖥️

**‘CHRISTIANITY’ IN ✠ REACTION, † RETREAT, AND... †✠ RENEWAL!**

# I. INFLUENTIAL PHILOSOPHIES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

- ✍ As you review the 20<sup>th</sup> century, take particular notice of the philosophies that have contributed the *most* to the **POSTMODERN** mindset.
- ✍ Make notes on the ongoing tension between **Objectivity** and **Subjectivity**, and ponder what Transcendent-Immanent **Theism** offers as a solution that philosophers have roundly ignored!
- ✍ Also, take notice whenever you suspect **secular** flirtation with the **mystical**...as this continues to be a sign 🚩 of our times.

## PRAGMATISM

From the Greek word *pragmata* (acts) **Pragmatism** is a radically empirical method of dealing with questions of 'truth and meaning' whereby the meaning of any doctrine is equivalent to the **practical effects** it has on the person who adopts it! **Belief** in a 'truth' must connect with an **action**.

It began with the work of **Charles Sanders Peirce** (d. 1914) whose primary goals were the clarification of thought and to make ordinary thinking more scientific. Beliefs, he clarified, are psychological habits and 'rules' for actions.

The physician, psychologist and philosopher **William James** (d.1910) applied pragmatism to religious questions. His famous remark about all of our unresolved metaphysical dilemmas ('Is reality all mind or all matter; is it one or many; are we fated or free'...) was:

"There can be no difference anywhere that doesn't make a difference elsewhere."

In Pragmatism, Truth does *not* have **objective** existence which we discover and then conform our ideas to. Rather, truth *happens* to an idea. An idea *becomes* true as it is acted upon successfully. If ideas are only bits of our experience, they are always **subjective**. Gone now is the belief that God's existence is an independent reality.

This is where we get the "*it's true as long as it works for me*" notion of religious truth!

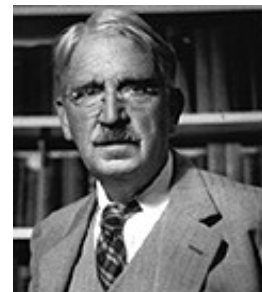
Applying pragmatism to socio-political and moral concerns was the influential humanist **John Dewey** (d.1952.) As a Naturalist, he saw the human mind as a problem-solving product of natural evolution.

This will be a major 'turning point' in Epistemology. Concepts and sense data are **not the objects of knowledge**...they are the **instruments of knowledge!** (Thus — *Instrumentalism*)

As for morals and values, they do *not* have a source in a transcendent realm because they are *also* products of nature which we find in experience. Thus they are always **relative** to the finder!

Do you wonder *how* we became so "**relativistic**"? Look to these philosophers and you'll see how.

**Pragmatism** has had tremendous impact on American Society. For example, John Dewey was one of the original founders of the **A.C.L.U.** Pragmatism is '**practically**' an American idol. Nothing is transcendent anymore. Later pragmatists even dispensed with trying to account for truth. (See: Richard Rorty)



## THE GREAT ANALYTIC TRADITION AND LINGUISTIC PHILOSOPHIES



As you review “The Analytic Tradition”, re-read that portion of **Palmer’s Chapter 7** alongside **Sire’s Chapter 9**.

Other philosophies have had considerable impact on today’s pervasive cultural relativism (say, **Pragmatism?**) and personal subjectivism (say, **Existentialism?**) But Linguistic Philosophies have dominated in Academia. This ‘Linguistic-Analysis’ approach has prevailed in university philosophy departments everywhere. This is the tradition that gave ‘**POMO**’ its critical impetus and alleged intellectual ‘**power**’!

Fill-in the blanks of these brief reviews to help make sense of the textbook readings:

◆ The ‘Linguistic Turn’ began in Britain with the **REALIST** reaction to Neo-Hegelian **IDEALISM**

Note that we mean Realism in the Lockean sense and *not* the Medieval Platonic sense! **KNOW** what the conflict is in **Realism vs. Idealism**: (A world solidly and objectively here **vs.** a mental world which is ‘somehow made manifest!’)

**George E. Moore** (1873 — 1958)

◆ He was the “Philosopher of \_\_\_\_\_” – as the foundation for certainty about what is Real.

◆ His frequent question was \_\_\_\_\_?

(Which implies that \_\_\_\_\_!)

◆ This launches the **Linguistic/Analytic** TURN in Philosophy, which says that philosophy’s job is only the ‘clarification of ordinary language.’ (Haven’t you suspected that many problems were merely semantic? Haven’t you been frustrated at the plethora of new vocabulary generated over the centuries? Then you can appreciate the contributions of these Ockham’s-razor-sharp wits!)

Now, Philosophy’s task is **NOT** the creation of new language. Nor is it the search for new solutions to all those age-old unsolved metaphysical dilemmas! This is Philosophy’s turning **AWAY** from Metaphysics!

**But this will mean...no more searching for Ultimate Truth!**

By the 20<sup>th</sup> c., The ‘Big Questions’ concerning God or Ultimate Reality were simply discarded. Grandiose Metaphysical Systems and Majestic Theories of Being were eliminated from academic philosophy. They were deemed to be fantastical. Such purely imaginary schemes are so ‘weightless’ that they are incapable of truth **or** falsity. (They aren’t true **OR** false...they’re just *meaningless*!) And for a theory or proposition to be deemed meaningless is even worse than to be deemed false! Meaningless ideas are *completely* vacuous and needn’t be debated in the hallowed halls of academia. Such was the method *and* attitude of this tradition.

**Bertrand Russell** (1872 — 1970)

◆ He was influenced by George Moore to *flee from Hegelianism!* And he was brilliant in Mathematics

◆ Wrote ***Principia Mathematica*** with the great Process Philosopher – Dr. Alfred North Whitehead  
This seminal work links philosophy & logic to science & math, thereby further **demolishing Metaphysics**.  
(Philosophy’s job now should be strictly ‘analytical’ and never speculative or imaginative!!)

◆ Uses “Ockham’s Razor” ✂ Never multiply entities (causes or reasons) beyond necessity. = “Cut away metaphysical chaff!”

◆ Devises a rather technical “Theory of \_\_\_\_\_”

**Notice** the BASIC concepts he considers to be infected with vagueness! (such as...EXISTENCE! 😊)

◆ Russell was famous for being an outspoken political activist. (Anti-war, ☹ anti-nukes)

He is also ‘infamous’ as an outspoken critic of religion. See his anti-credo: *Why I Am Not a Christian*

[20<sup>th</sup> c. Philosophy of Math & Logic did help something you DO use: Computers! (**Computer Science was advanced!**)]

## LOGICAL POSITIVISM

- ◇ To remember this term, think of **Logical Positivists** as insisting:  
It is not **logical** to apply linguistic symbols to *Unseen* things!  
I'm only **positive** about what I can see. 👁️👁️
- ◇ Originated with Professor Moritz Schlick's group called the "\_\_\_\_\_ Circle" in the 1920's.
- ◇ Used Russell's *Principia Mathematica* and Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* as favorite tools of logical analysis.
- ◇ Their movement was to repudiate metaphysics and make philosophy more 'scientific.'
- ◇ Out of all our *previous* H of P Eras, they only held respect for \_\_\_\_\_.
- ◇ Leading Logical positivists were: \_\_\_\_\_.\*
- ◇ Notice **Rudolph Carnap's** analysis of the **function of language**:  
[Language has only two jobs: An \_\_\_\_\_ Function and A \_\_\_\_\_ Function.]  
In which category would he put Theological and Ethical writings? \_\_\_\_\_.  
The only sub-discipline left for Philosophy is: \_\_\_\_\_!  
*'The alleged statements in the domain of Metaphysics, when analyzed this way, are deemed to be entirely: \_\_\_\_\_'!* (Page 326 or 327)
- ◇ L.P.'s view was that "the meaning of a proposition is its method of \_\_\_\_\_."  
This led them to search for 'raw verifiable simple indubitable incorrigible foundational' assertions upon which to 'build' all knowledge.  
*Does this remind you of a former era's quest?* (\_\_\_\_\_)
- ◇ It is easy to show how this philosophy **failed!** (☞ Which A. J. Ayer *admitted* many years later!)
  - ☞ Did the L. P.'s ever 'find' an agreeable protocol/confirmation sentence? \_\_\_\_\_!
  - ☞ And even more embarrassingly, Logical Positivism dissolved in self-referential  
The cardinal rule or key principle for the L.P.'s was their take on "\_\_\_\_\_ Fork,"  
*thus*, their insistence that:  
"All statements are Analytic, Synthetic or Nonsense." ☞ (So, *um*, which type is *that* statement?)  
And what philosopher took the "heroic step of claiming that it was nonsense"? The great \_\_\_\_\_!



- \* The positivist responsible for that vivid image of a **ship at sea** was **Otto Neurath** (1882–1945.)  
He was a 'philosopher of science' who authored most of the Vienna Circle's original manifesto.  
In 1921 he wrote:

"We are like sailors who on the open seas must reconstruct their ship but are never able to start anew from the bottom.  
Where a beam is taken away a new one must at once be put there, and for this the rest of the ship is used as support."

He was actually expressing a 'self-contained' coherentist epistemology **in opposition to** foundationalist views that insist knowledge and truth must rest upon firm foundations. He believed that such a "dry-dock" of certainty did not exist, nor was it necessary. (But even if we can partially repair a ship out at sea...could we build one out there?)



# LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

(1889 — 1951)

**“THE PHILOSOPHER’S PHILOSOPHER”**



**The view from his study**

**Whewell’s Court, Trinity College, Cambridge University**

The following pages are dedicated to Wittgenstein and his indelible mark on Twentieth Century Philosophy. Since his philosophy is rather difficult, you may want to skip down to page **14** to complete the shorter reviews, take the Quiz, and finish Parts II and III of this Era 8 Overview. And then return to this special Wittgenstein portion if you have time! (pp. 7–13)

# LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

(1889 — 1951)

“THE PHILOSOPHER’S PHILOSOPHER”

“Getting to know Wittgenstein was one of the most exciting intellectual adventures of my life.” Bertrand Russell

“Bertrand Russell is very quick-witted, but he is superficial and glib.” Ludwig Wittgenstein

Ludwig Wittgenstein, a peerless genius, was the most influential philosopher of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He is the premier luminary of the Linguistic-Analytic Tradition, and inspired not one but two distinct movements:

**‘LOGICAL POSITIVISM’ and The ‘ORDINARY LANGUAGE’ Movement.**

He lived and wrote with such intensity and depth that he overwhelmed his colleagues, revolutionized philosophy, and impacted his century. He still intrigues all kinds of thinkers.

**LW** is ‘instructor’s choice’ for *the Most Fascinating Personage* in our ‘Hall of Fame, 8<sup>th</sup> Era.’ Regrettably, the fascination will be impossible to convey even though he earned his very own section in this Era Review! Reasons for the *M.F.P.* award may become obvious if we inject a small dose of biographical data into the appraisal of his philosophical achievements.

*That way*, we can appreciate him as a real human being, not just a difficult philosopher!



**Family and Personality:** *Ludwig Josef Johann Wittgenstein* Born **April 26, 1889** in Vienna, Austria

**LW** was raised in a highly cultured family, the youngest of 8 children. His strict father was an iron & steel magnate who left him a huge fortune — which he gave away, preferring to live simply and modestly.

His mother and siblings were all quite gifted, intellectually *and* musically. There were 7 grand pianos in their home, and Brahms, Mahler, and Pablo Casals were frequent guests! However, emotional problems plagued the family.

Three of his four brothers committed suicide, and Ludwig lived in unrelenting turmoil and even a fear of insanity. He had a melancholy personality *not unlike* the tortuously introspective Soren Kierkegaard, whom he considered to be a ‘saint’ as well as the 19<sup>th</sup> century’s greatest philosopher!

His brother Paul was a concert pianist who continued to perform even *after* losing an arm in WWI.

(World-famous composers **Ravel** and **Prokofiev** wrote ‘left-hand’ concerti especially for him!)

**LW** often spent long sojourns in seclusion, preferring solitude over socializing. He once visited the USA but did not like our ‘culture’! (Except for the mind-clearing diversion of cowboy movies!) He preferred Ireland & Norway for his solitary sabbaticals.

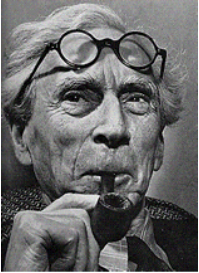
He was three quarters Jewish. By the time the Nazis annexed Austria in 1938, he had moved to England where he spent the bulk of his academic career. He eventually became a British citizen. He was baptized and buried as a Roman Catholic, but ‘left the church behind’ in his life’s journey, although he always had a deep spiritual hunger.



“In the modern age, people must learn to live without the consolation of churches.” Letter to Drury

## Educating the Genius:

**LW** was privately tutored until age 14, loved machinery, and excelled in Physics and Math. A bizarre fact: At age 15, he attended the same school, and at the same time, as Adolph Hitler! (The Linz Realschule, 1904-1905) He went to University of Manchester to study Aeronautical Engineering, and patented a jet-propeller design! Studying engineering, **LW** became more intrigued by the philosophical foundations of mathematics. He'd ponder: 'What makes an equation *necessarily true*?' (See, isn't philosophy profound when you think about it!?) He sought out Gottlob Frege, philosopher of mathematics, who wisely suggested he go study under Bertrand Russell, who was working on **Principia Mathematica** demonstrating that the basis for Math is in Logic, as both proceed by way of necessary inference. (But **LW** would want to know-what is the basis for valid inference?!) So, in 1912, Wittgenstein went to Cambridge to study with the great Bertrand Russell...who later related this:



"At the end of his first term he came to me and asked: 'Will you please tell me whether or not I am a complete idiot?'  
I replied, 'My dear fellow, I don't know, why are you asking me?'  
He said, 'Because if I am an idiot, I shall become an aeronaut; but if not, I shall become a philosopher.'  
I told him to write me something during the vacation on some philosophical subject and then I would tell him whether he was a complete idiot or not. At the beginning of the next term he brought me the assignment. \* After reading only one sentence, I said to him: 'No, you must not become an aeronaut.'"

"Philosophers and Idiots," *Listener* 52, Feb. 10, 1955

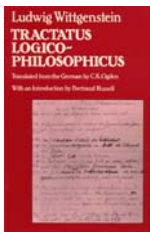
\* That assignment is not extant, unfortunately, for wouldn't we love to see what *that* thesis sentence was!!!

## War and Writing: "I've written a book called **Logisch-Philosophische-Abhandlung**."

"Nobody will understand it although I believe it's all as clear as crystal." (Letter to Bertrand Russell, 1919.)

During WWI (1914-18) **LW** returned to Austria to volunteer as a gunner for the army. He was decorated for bravery more than once! He always carried notebooks with him in his rucksack. (See how important notebooks can be?) Even as a P.O.W., he kept jotting his ideas about logic and language. From prison, via the Red Cross, he sent a manuscript to Russell. After considerable trouble, Russell helped have these rigorous, hard-wrought ideas published in 1921. (**LW** had already tried unsuccessfully to find a willing publisher in Europe.)

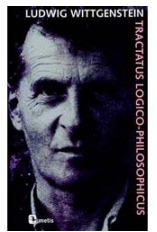
The 74 page book (shortest major work in the history of philosophy) that resulted from those intensive ruminations was the only one to be published in **LW's** lifetime. It is, of course, the now classic:



## **TRACTATUS – LOGICO – PHILOSOPHICUS**

(The daunting title, suggested by G. E. Moore, was a take-off on Spinoza's 1670 *Tractatus-Theologico-Politicus*.)

This cryptic cascading set of seven astounding aphorisms was the definitive expression of Logical Atomism. It became 'canonical' to Logical Positivists. (At least until they realized that **LW** was not as **anti-metaphysical** as they were!) Unlike the Vienna Circle, **LW** *did care* about the unspeakable ('nonsense.')



See if *you* can decipher the "Seven Basic Sentences"! They seem so simple and straightforward, but what in the world does he *mean*? (Is it "all as clear as crystal"?) Do they help you appreciate Logical Atomism? And how did this tiny tract revolutionize the philosophy of logic and language?!

1. The **world is all** that is the case.
2. What is the case is the existence of **atomic facts**.
3. The logical **picture** of the facts is the thought.
4. The thought is the significant **proposition**.
5. Propositions are **truth-functions** of elementary propositions.  
An elementary proposition is a truth-function of itself.
6. The general **form** of a truth-function is... (Here he gives a [ ] **formula**.)
7. Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be **silent**.

## Trying to decode the *Tractatus*:

"The truth of the thoughts that are here set forth seems to me unassailable and definitive. I believe I've found, on all essential points, the final resolution of the problems." From the Preface

*Below, we have repeated the seven enigmatic epigrams, added just a few of his sub-points for flavorful hints, and made some comments. This is in no way intended to be 'definitive'! It is only to inspire you to tackle the **Tractatus** on your own!*

### 1 The world is all that is the case.

*Here you might guess, rightly, that he is picking up where Kant and Schopenhauer left off...restricting us to the phenomenal world. So this bold statement proclaims: "There shall be no metaphysical speculation here!" Instead, he will demonstrate with rigorous mathematical formality that simple facts (plus the more complex facts built upon or extrapolated from them) ARE what the world is to us. The world is what it is. It is: that which is represented by atomic facts with Language as the representing medium.*

- 1.1 The world is the totality of facts, not of things. ...
- 1.2 The world divides into facts.
- 1.21 Each item can be the case or not the case while everything else remains the same.

### 2 What is the case is the existence of atomic facts. (*'Atomic'* meaning: reduced to the most elementary component of.)

- 2.1 We picture facts to ourselves. ... (*Using propositions, which are sentences that assert...*)
- 2.12 A picture is a model of reality. (...the elements of a picture are related to one another in a determinate way...and they represent objects...a picture is a fact.)

*The intriguing problem is how things as different from each other as Words-symbols and Objects-experiences can possibly have something vital in common. The common 'link' is atomic-level Logical Form. So pictures and objects must share a formal structure, which is logical. ☺ Truth and Falsehood exist by virtue of how accurately a picture represents an actual state of affairs. He said there is **no** such thing as a **picture** that is true "**a priori**" (one that you could 'know' is true without checking it against reality.)*

*How words relate to each other in sentence structure is directly analogous to how objects relate to one another in the world.*

*Thus, sentences can reflect the world. Neat, huh?*

- 2. 1511 and .1512 A picture is attached to reality; it reaches right out to it....it is laid against reality like a ruler.

### 3 The logical picture of the facts is the thought.

- 3.01 The totality of true thoughts is a picture of the world. ...
- 3.1 In a proposition a thought finds an expression that can be perceived by the senses.

*He is setting a limit to thought by finding the limits of language.*

### 4 The thought is the significant proposition.

- 4. 0031 All philosophy is a critique of language...

*This obviously is the crux of the matter for our overview. Philosophy can never do more than analyze propositions according to this mathematically logical method. Statements that can **not** be so dissected into a logical form do **not** belong in meaningful discourse!*

### 5 Propositions are truth-functions of elementary propositions. An elementary proposition is a truth-function of itself.

*This portion establishes "truth-functionality" such that all complex propositions are built out of atomic ones joined by truth-functional connectives (and, not, if, or...)*

### 6 The general form of a truth-function is... (*Here he gives a formula.*) ...

- 6.1 The propositions of logic are tautologies.

*Do you recall what a **tautology** is? Perhaps this will help:*

*Imagine you have been falsely accused of a capital crime. You are in court and your overpaid lawyer is establishing your iron-clad alibi.*

*He boldly declares to the judge and jury:*

*"No mortal can be more than one place at the same time.*

*My client is a mortal.*

*My client, therefore, could not possibly have been one place and at the crime scene at the time of the murder."*

*The lawyer is speaking irrefutably truthfully...Logically indubitably.*

*But do you relax and feel vindicated? Why not? What is the prosecutor going to ask?!! "But.... ...?!"*

*This illustrates the difference between tautologies—true but empty...and statements about the world that must be checked against the actual facts of reality...the actual 'state of affairs.' Those are sentences we need in real life.*

*And he continues...*

- 6.21 The propositions of mathematics are equations and therefore pseudo-propositions.
- 6.211 The propositions of mathematics express no thoughts.

*His genius is in addressing 'exceptions' to his 'Picture Theory.' Math equations and Logical tautologies tell us nothing about how the world is, but we need them. They explicate something essential about our vehicle for representing the world.*

One of the most troublesome statements is this radical 'devaluation'—the evaporation of Value from the world of facts.

- 6. 4 All propositions are of equal value.
- 6. 41 The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything is as it is, and everything happens as it does...in it no value exists — and if it did exist it would have no value. If there is any value that does have value, it must lie outside the whole sphere of what happens and is the case.
- 6. 421 It is clear that ethics can not be put into words. Ethics is transcendental.

And now we come to the most interesting part! (If you have endured until now...you may have an "Aha!"!)

### **What kind of sentences does the Tractatus contain??**

And here, LW is not only ingenious but heroic! He admits that what he is trying to say cannot be said. Why? Think about it: How can he 'stand over above' Language itself and 'transcend' the world itself so as to learn and then state exactly HOW Language reflects Reality? He can't! But never mind that his statements are nonsense...for they are that 'higher kind' that sheds light!

Thus the most fascinating part of the work is:

- 6.54** My propositions are elucidators in this way: he who understands me finally recognizes them as senseless, when he has climbed out through them, on them, over them. (He must so to speak throw away the ladder after he has climbed up on it.) He must surmount these propositions; then he sees the world aright.

Please notice that he isn't claiming to offer transcendent knowledge! He has 'worked strictly from within' and shown that the limits of thought are the limits our world.

The real problem is: He can say that Language gives us a Picture of Reality. But it cannot give a picture of how it does it. So it cannot be said. That is 'beyond.' Therefore...if you can't say anything nice and logical, don't say anything at all...

## **7 Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.**

No sup-points here. That is how this amazing treatise concludes. It did not answer any philosophical question, and it ends in silence!

Hmm, where have we seen basic questions being answered by an "austere silence" before? [WV Unit 7]

Is Wittgenstein leaning toward somewhat of a **secular mysticism**? (He has been called a Western Zen Master!)

But he is probably just trying to abide by his own pre-established limitations and relegating traditional metaphysics to the realm of "that of which we can not make sensible propositions."

This would effectively end all *useless* speculation and confusion about ultimate reality, yet still appear to be reverent...silent in the face of the 'ineffable' ...which is better than being banal, fractious and rude!

This is probably his true intent, as he revealed in a letter to his publisher:

"The point of the book is ethical. ...My work consists of two parts: of the one which is here, and of everything which I have *not* written. And precisely this second part is the more important. For the Ethical is delimited from within...and I'm convinced that it can only be delimited this way. All that which many are babbling about today, I have defined in my book by remaining silent about it."

And thus, everything important to us, to our Philosophies and Worldviews...such as God, Good and Evil, the Soul, Immortality, Justice, Truth, Ultimate Meaning and Purpose, Foundations of Knowledge, and even **How** it can be that all the independent atomic facts even "add up" to a world! (How they relate to one another in an intelligible way!)

But...all of that winds up on the other side of the Limit! How ironic that this razor-edged little work ends mystifying itself!

## **Trying to Critique the Tractatus:**

When this brief but powerful work was published, it was received by the academic world with a strange admixture of adulation, awe and non-comprehension! People tended to try and use it to support their own views. The Logical Positivists delighted in its 'atomism' because they were so dismissive of religion and metaphysics. But **LW** was not! He seems to realize the terrible importance of 'all that which cannot be said!' And he may seem to have honored the silence...but we can legitimately ask why the silence does not satisfy.

Some critics called the book dense, obscurantist, and diseased! (It *may* be seen as self-disabling!) It cannot answer the most basic question of all: Why does the world exist? (To answer would be to state a fact and the world is already the totality of facts!)

One student critic noted that:

"...this book is a kind of curative nonsense, like a purgative for the soul; it is meant to cleanse the mind of philosophical confusion (that is—of philosophy itself) and, at the end, to remove itself as the final piece of 'confusion.'

To use a computer metaphor, the Tractatus is a program that wipes your whole philosophical 'hard drive', and erases itself as its final operation.

And after that erasure, we return to the ordinary world, free of philosophy, in the deafening silence that is our acknowledgement of '*das Mystiche*'—the mystical in and above the everyday world." (S. Guha)



## The ‘Drop-Out’ Decade:

Thinking that his *Tractatus* had cleared up *all* the metaphysical muddles and had ‘solved every soluble philosophical problem’...**LW** completely ‘dropped out’ of academia. He abandoned those hallowed halls and headed for the hills...the Austrian Alps, that is.

Was he being humble *or arrogant* to think he’d ‘clearly said all that could be said’ and would now retire to ‘silence’? He didn’t think he’d discovered innovative answers to all those age-old dilemmas (Free Will vs. Determinism; Mind — Body; Universals and Particulars, *etc.*) What he thinks he’s accomplished is showing us that they are non-questions! Remember *Tractatus* 6.5: “When the answer cannot be put into words, neither can the question...the riddle does not exist.” So much for traditional Philosophy! (The hard drive is erased!)

He once confided to a colleague that no-one could work on philosophy for more than five to ten years and the *Tractatus* had taken him seven! And, as it accomplished its purpose, **LW** abruptly stopped ‘doing philosophy’!

After forsaking academia, he spent nearly a decade engaged in rather ‘un-philosophical’ endeavors!

*He* taught elementary school in rural villages for a few years...but had little patience for youngsters who weren’t gifted in mathematics! He was too harsh a disciplinarian according to the children’s parents, and so he quit teaching, feeling like a failure!

*He* then worked as an assistant gardener in the *Brothers of Mercy* monastery in Hutteldorf, and he inquired into the requirements for becoming a monk, so he must have considered the religious life!

*He* designed (down to the gold-plated doorknobs) *and built* a modernistic mansion for his sister in Vienna.

But, would this restless man with a resplendent mind be content to wander, we wonder?

**Return to Academia:** “I have been forced to recognize grave mistakes in what I wrote in that book.”

“The *Tractatus* is like a neat clock, but it doesn’t tell the right time!” 🕒

Over the years he began to have second thoughts about the *Tractatus*, especially when the Logical Positivist Moritz Schlick asked him to explain it! Other colleagues urged his return to academia, not the least of whom was his mentors. Bertrand Russell and George E. Moore served on the ‘committee’ that had *Tractatus* accepted as a doctoral dissertation.



Thus, in 1929 **LW** was granted a Ph. D. and a fellowship, and subsequently a professorship and Moore’s chair.

Except for those sabbatical sojourns and the interruption of another war, he remained at Cambridge until the end of his life.

During WWII he served in a London hospital as an orderly and did actual medical research as a lab assistant.

(Being defined Jewish ✨ by Nazi racial laws, he dare not return to Hitler’s Austria.)

## **“He’s Changed!”:**

When **LW** spoke, it was apparent that his extreme Logical Atomism was gone. It soon ‘got around’ that he had changed! His new ideas circulated *via* student’s lecture notes!

🔗 (See how important good note-taking is?) 🗒

Let’s compare “**EARLY**” and “**LATER**” Wittgenstein, as textbooks typically refer to his two approaches.

First we’ll mention common aspects of **BOTH** periods.

**BOTH** are concerned with the scope, limits, and nature of **Language** — *How can* it represent the world and *How does* it relate to Math and Logic? BOTH leave the world just ‘as it is.’ (*Describe but not prescribe!*)

**BOTH** restrict the entire philosophical quest to the limitations of language, and attempt to demarcate strictly between valid and in-valid usage...thus between *sense and non-sense!*

**CHANGE:** The change from Early to Later is the move away from the attempt at unambiguous IDEAL language to a careful scrutiny of ORDINARY language. (The change is a move away **from** linguistic analysis *via* pristine symbolic logic **to** paying closer attention to the often misleading mess of ordinary everyday speech-acts!)

### 📄 **EARLY:**

Treat Language in the Abstract (apart from everyday use!) Render language into mathematically precise statements.

Find ‘presupposition-less’ truth-function propositions with no ‘background.’

Find the simple essence of language—break it down into basic propositions that can stand in one-to-one isomorphic relation to the world.

Words are ‘logical atoms’ directly corresponding to individual elements of the world.

Posit a “Picture Theory” whereby language is like a map of reality. Words ‘mirror’ the world.

### 🏹 **The Purpose of Philosophy is:**

To understand the logic of language and to clarify thought...*NOT* to find ultimate truth or answer old queries!

The so-called ‘philosophical problems,’ and *why* they are posed at all, are the result of *misunderstanding* the logic of language. (There is simply *no sense* in asking questions that avail *no sensible* answer!)

### 📄 **LATER:**

Do NOT treat language in the abstract — put the background (conditions & contexts) back into the analysis. Repudiate the extreme Logical Atomism. There is NO basic essence in language, not even in particular words.

Change **FROM** asserting: “Despite all appearances, this MUST be the case...”

**TO** accepting: “Let’s see what IS the case by looking at what language-users actually DO!”

Repudiate the Picture Theory. Language is a set of tools, not a mirror. Words neither reflect independent reality nor innate inner thoughts.

Language functions like a GAME (in social situations—with rules transmitted by convention), not like independent ‘atoms.’

Confusions are ameliorated by “bringing words back from a metaphysical **misuse** to their everyday **use**.”

The meaning of a word is in its usage, not in reducing it to its atomic fact. And the uses are many & varied.

### 🏹 **The Purpose of Philosophy is:**

To show us how easily we are ‘enchanted’ by language, and to help us resist that temptation to see *unity* where none exists! Humans have an urge to generalize AND generate all-embracing explanatory systems! We are tempted to draw abstractions. But that neurotic impulse distorts the nature of language and ignores the wild diversity of its uses. Using words to paint meta-pictures sends language on a ‘holiday’! To change metaphors: Such misuse is to try and glide over frictionless ice instead of just trudging over the rough ground!

“Philosophy is a battle *against* language’s bewitchment of our intelligence! We must not let language fool us!

*“Nothing is so difficult as not deceiving yourself.”*

A philosopher’s task is to diagnose the cause of conceptual confusions...muddles that result from deviating from the natural use of language! So, philosophy is therapeutic not theoretical!

*“The philosopher’s treatment of a question is like the treatment of an illness.”* PI, 255

But unfortunately, there is no bedrock beneath our work.

*“At the foundation of well-founded beliefs lies belief that is not well founded.”* OC, 253

Science may find new facts about the world but it cannot touch philosophical questions. Philosophy cannot add facts, it can only rearrange them, and it cannot give them a foundation! It can’t even ask the philosophical questions anymore! It leaves the world as it is. Neither science nor language has a basis...it is just ‘what we do.’ We speak.

And we must do so with absolutely no guarantee that we are speaking truth about the world.

## Epitaph:

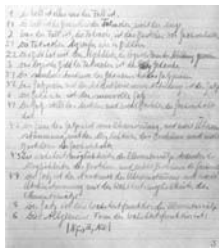
The matchlessly brilliant Ludwig Wittgenstein resigned his chair in 1947. After another sojourn to Ireland, he returned to Cambridge and was diagnosed with prostrate cancer. He died at the age of 62 on April 29<sup>th</sup> 1951.

His last words were: "...I have had a wonderful life." He is buried in the St. Giles cemetery in Cambridge.

Wittgenstein pondered and scribbled with incandescent passion. But **not** with systematic conclusiveness! (Which we can be sure was deliberate.)

He bequeathed over 30,000 manuscript pages (mostly hand-written and in German) to three of his students. Definitive editions have been a matter of much controversy.

But no one contests the fact that Ludwig Wittgenstein is a dazzling superstar in the history of philosophy.



His other masterpiece *Philosophical Investigations* was published posthumously in 1953. In 1989, the centenary of his birth, many international conferences were held to honor Wittgenstein and to discuss the continuing impact of his work. Over 30 new books were published on him in that year alone.

And, if all of his own 'sketches' and 'remarks' were compiled and published in books (never mind the countless pages he destroyed in frustration over the years!) we would have to add a new wing to our library.



## Epilogue:

*"The great problem round which everything that I write turns is:  
Is there an order in the world 'a priori', and if so what does it consist in?"* Notebook, 53

*"Everything we do consists in trying to find the liberating word."* LW, 1930

**LW** left us with a *philosophy of language* (and no other philosophy!) that is foundationless, pragmatic and perspectival. Characterizing language as *rule-guided social conventions* has influenced other fields such as sociology, anthropology, and psychology. And, because those *rules* are in flux, never final, and open to endless interpretations...his impact on all **Postmodern Thought** is inestimable.

Bertrand Russell said that **LW** was the most perfect example of a **genius** he'd ever known:

*...profound, passionate, and intense.*

He was profound enough to ask 'what exactly does a 'proof' prove?' 'What *gives* Logical Necessity its force?' He *seems* to have passionately longed for what lies beyond the limits of our language...to break free from the prison-house of our own finite conceptual architecture...and to hear more than austere but 'deafening' silence! It *could* be that this intensely lonesome genius was aching for a Transcendent Logos.

*If only* he had used his gifted intellect to make the needed connection between what he seems to have spiritually 'yearned for' and what he concluded could not be 'spoken of'...and that is:

The God Who has Given the Gift and has Spoken Propositional Truth.

*"In the beginning was the Word..."*

Notice the ornery obstinate ‘catch’ for these Twentieth Century Linguistic/Analytic approaches:

We can’t “do philosophy’ or describe reality **without language**...but language is notoriously “problematic” and the more we try to nail it down, the more it seems to slip away from us!

If **Language cannot** connect **Us** to a **World**, then how can **We** utilize it to assert **True** sentences about **Reality**? How can we say we **know** anything? How can we interpret scientific data *or* describe the concepts in our minds?

How can we, after twenty-seven centuries of attempting to explain reality, overcome our philosophical *Tower of Babbling*?

## HOW CAN WE EVER ‘SPEAK TRUTH’?

To **WHAT EXACTLY** do our words *refer*?

Platonic Forms? Objects? Independent Substance? Sense Experiences?  
Actions? Absolute Values? Incorrigible ‘Facts’? Unmediated External Reality?

**NO!** ☹️

Words only ever refer to other words, *ad infinitum!*

Imagine you are reading a Boville assignment and you get to a word you don’t know. *What do you do?*



You look it up in the **dictionary**. The definition is *another* word you don’t know, so you look *it* up...but, you find *another* unfamiliar term...you look *it* up only to find *yet another* word that needs to be defined. Frustrated, you just want to reach *one* clear term! You instinctively realize you need to be *referred* to something rock-solid! So you don’t give up. Eventually you’ll find that durable definition. Right?

**NO!** ☹️

You must spend the rest of the day, the semester...your life...in an Unabridged Twilight Zone! Well, it’s a bit like that. Talk about a swirling whirlpool of “meaning”-less-ness! The **Analytic Abyss!**

Words only ever refer to other words, *all the way down!*

**There IS no “original text” as Nietzsche said!**

Language points to ☞ **NOTHING** fixed and solid at all.

{You will see this treacherous slippage continue sliding to Structuralism and Deconstructionism.}

**But first, a quick review of Phenomenalism and Existentialism.**

# PHENOMENOLOGY

If the term PHENOMENOLOGY is intimidating, SIMPLY think of it as **APPEARANCE-OLGY**.

This philosophical approach would study “appearances only”! Why? Because only **appearances** are knowable...**not** the **object** that appears! Thus, it is a method that attempts to “**suspend belief in the object.**” Why? Because the ‘object-as-it-is-independently’ (from how it appears TO US) cannot be ‘known.’

Although the term had been around since the 18<sup>th</sup> c., Edmund Husserl (d.1938) used it for his study of —  
**CONSCIOUSNESS**

Intentionality and referentiality (not just awareness but awareness **OF** something) are distinctive marks of consciousness and make it unique in the universe! But it’s one thing to notice the distinct marks of consciousness and another to locate it and truly define it!

Husserl wanted to solve the old Cartesian Dualism problem (how does the mind ‘connect’ with body?) and solve the problem of how content can ‘belong’ to the mind.

He eventually abandoned his attempt to keep the subjective *and* naturalistic approach to knowledge together, but his Phenomenology inspired some rather ‘wayward disciples.’ Philosophers who delved into **sheer self-awareness** as a prime truth. Who were the ones to make human subjectivity the starting place *and* the end-all for philosophy and the ‘rule-of-life’? The daring but doomed *Existentialists*.

## EXISTENTIALISM ‘Y’

*“Existence Precedes Essence”*

We spent time in the WV portion of the course on this serious and highly subjective approach to life.

We described Existentialism as a courageously sustained (day after day...moment by moment) attempt to:

**‘Transcend’ Nihilism.**

Trouble was...*how* can human beings, alone in the cruel cosmos, *transcend* anything?!

The existentialist worldview contains **no provision for Transcendence!**

There is **‘no exit’** from such a world. It is a **prison** of meaninglessness.



Yet existentialist authors touted human **FREEDOM!!**

The awesome (awful!) autonomy to create *subjective* values out of the *objective* void.

Our freedom also means the responsibility to define ourselves in a constant present tense. We begin with the sheer absurdity of our own **Existence** and must proceed to craft an **Essence**. Thus their famous motto. But tragically, as much as they might proclaim freedom, what can that word mean in a **closed** cosmos?

(Remember that Atheistic Existentialists *presume* a Naturalistic WV...*admit* that it comes to Nihilism...  
...and *then must* attempt to **create** meaning.)

They embolden the word ‘**create**’ as a freedom. But look at the word ‘**must**.’ *That* is a choiceless choice. ‘Tis a burdensome freedom. ‘Tis a condemnation...a “life sentence.” The burden is ultimately *unbearable*.

Some, overcome by the angst, admit it...while others ‘revel in whimsy’ and ‘embrace the absurdity.’  
In the end, the objective cosmos swallows up each subjective self-creator in cold clammy death.

**Nihilism will have the last word.**



## STRUCTURALISM AND OST – STRUCTURALISM

**Ferdinand de Saussure** (1857—1913) *The ‘Father of 20<sup>th</sup> century Linguistics’*

- ☐ Every Language is a system of \_\_\_\_\_, which are **arbitrary** conventions.  
(And obviously, arbitrarily assigned conventions cannot be inherent *in* the essential nature of things)
- ☐ Result: NO FIXED UNIVERSAL CONCEPTS (What do you guess that’ll do to ‘**Truth**’ as a category?!)
- ☐ “Any connection between signifier and signified is arbitrary.” (What will that do to ‘communication’?!)
- ☐ The Science of **signs** is called \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Saussure’s theories contained ambiguities which when expanded by the following thinkers created even more problematics! Linguistics influenced other disciplines such as cultural anthropology and literary criticism.

**Claude Levi-Strauss** (1908 — ) *An anthropologist!*

- ◆ He proposed that universal laws of language must govern mythical thinking (because different cultures do create very similar myths) therefore, *all thought* follows these laws.
- ◆ He develops ‘Structuralism.’
- ◆ Still looks for “universals” (a universal logic) but on a structural level *IN* the human mind, not over the rainbow.

**Jacques Lacan** (1901—1981) *A psychoanalyst!*

- ☐ He radicalizes Structuralism (so now Post-structuralism!) and reinterprets Freudian theory along these lines.
- ☐ The unconscious mind is structured like a \_\_\_\_\_.
- ☐ The agency of the unconscious is intimately related to the functional dynamics of Language...and Language is as structurally complex and sophisticated as consciousness itself.
- ☐ The **signifier** is irremediably divorced from the **signified** in a chronic tension of *LACK*...
- ☐ The ‘Self’ has no unshifting point of reference.
- ☐ This makes each Self an effect and never a cause!  
Your very consciousness is just a part of a pre-established language/symbol system.
- ☐ This would mean that we do not speak language...language speaks through us!

## DE CONSTRUCTIONISM

**Jacques Derrida** (d. 2004) *A philosopher or an anti-philosopher?*

- ☐ A French Algerian (like Camus) Derrida was influenced by Jean Jacques Rousseau and Friedrich Nietzsche.
- ☐ He further radicalizes Saussure...applies to literary criticism, philosophy and political institutions.
- ☐ Derrida can be compared to *what* Athenian Age philosophy? \_\_\_\_\_.
- ☐ There is never any MEANING fully present (Linguistic Relativism)
- ☐ All TEXTS deconstruct, all meaning **recedes endlessly**.....
- ☐ Language cannot express an idea without changing it...there ARE no fixed essences or anchoring concepts.
- ☐ “The notion that **Truth** under-girds everything has been the ruling **ILLUSION** of western Metaphysics!”
- ☐ Such an obsession he’d call: “**Logocentrism.**” (But is this an ‘illusion’ or *is there* a ‘reason’ for why we desire a *logos of truth* under-girding our world and worldviews?! This is something for us to think about!)

## Deconstructionism as Literary Criticism

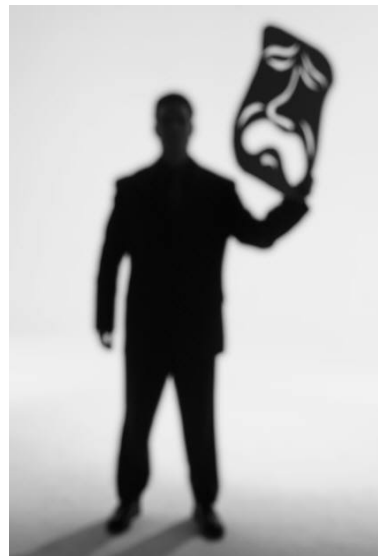
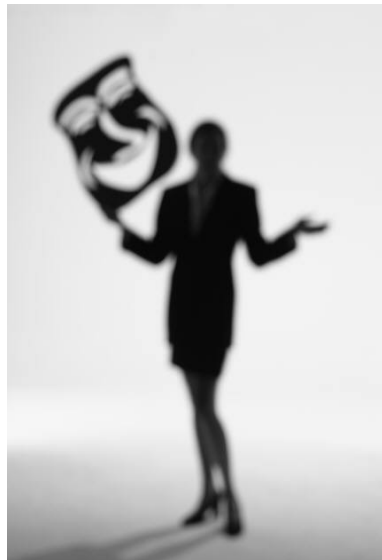


- 📖 Take ANY **text** and render it gutless! View it from ALL possible interpretations 🗨️🗨️🗨️🗨️🗨️🗨️🗨️🗨️
- 📖 These 'views' will naturally 'cancel each other out' (be **mutually contradictory**) 🖐️🖐️🖐️🖐️
- 📖 Quite regardless of the author's intent, every text has many layers of meaning. It is thus open to any interpretation and then endless reinterpretations. Do you detect **shades of Nietzsche** here? We aren't interpreting any original text... ..all we ever have is interpretations of interpretations of interpretations of interpretations...*ad nauseum!*))))
- 📖 **All texts self-destruct** and collapse in on themselves...
- 📖 **No text can stand alone**...so, **no** definitive interpretation can ever be had...
- 📖 **No** way to say what the text really **means**...
- 📖 Ergo...All **meaning** is infinitely deferred...

## Deconstructionism as a *Personal* Philosophy



Our lives are a text...but without an original "author's intent" they too are a 'work of fiction!' 🤔🤔



(Will I ever know whether my 'screenplay' is a funny tragedy or a sad comedy? 🎬)

If you think about it, this is **worse** than Atheistic Existentialism! — ("Existence precedes Essence.")

- ☛ Start with Existence but never ever *reach* a self-defining Essence!! The 'decon' motto would have to be: "Essence **recedes** from Existence"!

Our lives are always merely 'virtual-reality!' 🗿?





This has been a terribly inadequate review of the most significant philosophies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

It has also been a sad recounting of how Philosophy collapsed in on itself and **DE~~CON~~Constructed** by this era.

*All Hope in the Human Intellectual Enterprise  
The Quest for Ultimate Meaning  
The Search for True Knowledge about Reality  
If this has all been forsaken...  
Where will Philosophy 'turn' from here?*



### For Further Reflection and Discussion

1. Was the shift from **Modern to Postmodern** as tumultuous as the shift from **Medieval to Modern**?  
Or was it much more subtle and deceptive!  
What factors are most responsible for the shifty shift?
2. The 19<sup>th</sup> century capitulation to **Modern Secularism** left a gaping 'hole in the soul' that was quickly filled by a spate of false spiritualities and new religions. Now, to what 'influx' will the 20<sup>th</sup> century's surrender to **Postmodernism** leave us wide open?!
3.  Now you have to take the **QUIZ** on Influential Twentieth Century Philosophers. 

# INFLUENTIAL PHILOSOPHERS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY



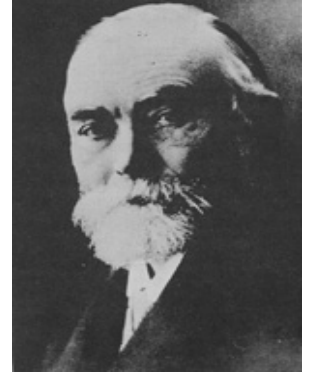
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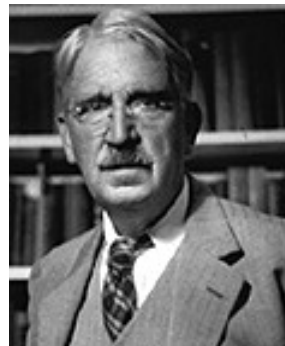
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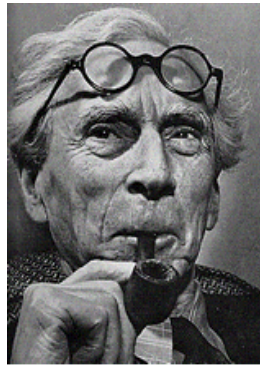
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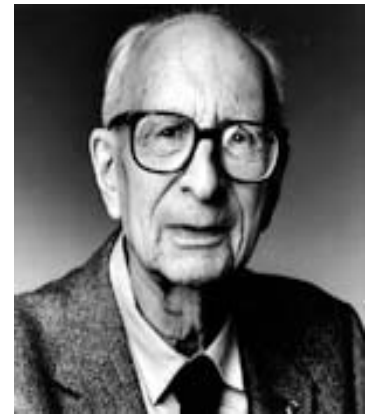
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14.



15.



16.

WRITE THE PHILOSOPHER'S NAME (AND THE # OF HIS PICTURE)  
NEXT TO THE CORRESPONDING QUOTATION BELOW

"Truth happens to an idea. It becomes true...made true by events." \_\_\_\_\_ (1842—1910)

"In language, there are only differences..." \_\_\_\_\_ (1857—1913)

"Opinion fated to be agreed upon by all who investigate, is what we mean by the Truth." \_\_\_\_\_ (1839—1914)

"There is nothing more objective than the laws of arithmetic." \_\_\_\_\_ (1848—1925)

"I exist, and all that is not—I is mere phenomenon dissolving into phenomenal connections."  
"Objectivity belongs to the unity of experience." \_\_\_\_\_ (1859—1938)

"The meaning of a word is in its usage." \_\_\_\_\_ (1889—1951)  
He said that philosophical problems result from confusing misuse of language.

"Restoring cooperation between man's beliefs about the world and beliefs about  
values and purpose that should guide his conduct is the deepest problem of modern life."  
\_\_\_\_\_ (1859—1952)

He would say that if a philosophical argument came in conflict with common sense,  
it is more likely to be the philosophy that has gone astray! \_\_\_\_\_ (1873—1958)

"All of us, among the ruins, are preparing for rebirth beyond nihilism. But few of us know it."  
"I REBEL THEREFORE I EXIST." \_\_\_\_\_ (1913—1960)

"Mathematics has both truth and beauty...the cold austere beauty like that of sculpture."  
"All the great religions of the world are untrue and are dangerous."  
"Absolutely nothing is seen by two minds simultaneously."  
"The secret of happiness is to face the fact that the world is horrible, horrible horrible." \_\_\_\_\_ (1872—1970)

"Man alone, when addressed by the voice of Be-ing, experiences the *marvel of all marvels*:  
that what-is is!" \_\_\_\_\_ (1889—1976)

"My freedom is anguished at being the foundation of all values while my freedom itself is without foundation."  
"Hell is other people." \_\_\_\_\_ (1905—1980)

"How can we be sure we're not imposters?" \_\_\_\_\_ (1901—1981)

One of the most influential philosophers of the latter half of the century, he attacked the "Analytic—Synthetic" distinction,  
was a brilliant logician, mathematician and epistemologist...but he had a bleak view of language.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (1908—2000)

"History (has been a) series of substitutions of centre for centre...centre has received many different names: Essence,  
Existence, Substance, Truth, Transcendence, God, Man, and Consciousness. The history of Metaphysics is the history of  
such metaphors and metonymies...as this 'centre' has been thought to be invariable present."  
\_\_\_\_\_ (1930—2004)

"Sartre was wrong...Hell is ourselves. In a civilization when man is bent on destruction of life, it is necessary to insist that a  
properly appointed humanism cannot begin of its own accord but must place the world before life, life before man,  
and respect of others before self-respect."  
\_\_\_\_\_ (1908 — )

## II. POMO AND NEW AGE

**POSTMODERNISM AND THE NEW AGE**  
**≈ TOTAL CONCEPTUAL RELATIVISM**  
**≈ COSMIC EGO-CENTRICITY!**



**'THERE IS NOTHING TO KNOW BUT THIS:  
YOU MAY GO AND FOLLOW YOUR BLISS.'**

*I SEEK MY OWN WAY*

*I AM MY OWN TRUTH*

*THUS I LIVE MY LIFE*

## Postmodernism + New Age = Total Conceptual Relativism = Cosmic Ego-centricity!

The history of worldviews (philosophical *and* religious) may be understood as a search for truth. This 'search for truth' has been a story of the human's attempt to **know reality**...even reaching to '**ultimate reality**'...and to know **how to live** in blessed, virtuous accord with reality.

[ Truth = an accurate, objective description of a reality really there. ]

Over the eras we have studied, one fundamental assumption was:

That there really was objective reality there to subjectively relate to!

"Something exists and we are conscious of it!" So...discover it, measure it, study it, find it, conform to it, "know" it...maybe even love it and serve it.

***But that was then.***

NOW, however —

There *IS no objective reality there*. Nothing to know, to relate to, be in awe of, to receive revelation from, to be certain of. Nothing solidly *there* to PERCEIVE.

It's all perception.

And that must always be relative...in flux...constantly changing.

Or it is all illusion.

Or the only thing we have is the subjective SELF.

Maybe even the divine self.

Who's to say?

This is far worse than moral relativism. This is epistemological relativism. Metaphysical relativism! This is the postmodern maelstrom. **There is NO ultimate truth at all!**

We have to be our own god, create our own reality and retain our own truth. And if truth can be individually generated then there is nothing to communicate. The very concept of truth has been obliterated.

Christian philosopher Peter Kreeft gave a simple demonstration of how *upside down* our society is. First, an example of 'classifying things':

Imagine two boxes and four items:

1. Soccer ball

2. Basketball

3. Goalie net

4. Hoop

Now, put two items in one box and two in the other box.

You might put the two *netted* things together in one box and the two *spherical* things in the other.

*OR* — you might box them according to how they are *utilized*: The two soccer items together and the two basketball things together, right? So you get the idea of categorizing things.

Now, couple these four human endeavors into two categories:

1. RELIGION

2. TECHNOLOGY

3. MAGIC

4. SCIENCE

How do you think MOST people categorize these things? They put:

SCIENCE with TECHNOLOGY

and

RELIGION with MAGIC

Why? SCIENCE and TECHNOLOGY are deemed modern. Traditionally they have both used the experimental method and both pertain to the natural world. They are rational.

RELIGION and MAGIC are deemed ancient. They are not scientifically verifiable. They pertain to the “supernatural” realm and can be irrational or supra-rational.

***But that was then.***

Regarding the present discussion, if I asked you to classify the four things again, what would **you** put together? How about putting:

**SCIENCE with RELIGION      and      MAGIC with TECHNOLOGY**

Why? Because Religion and Science have a lot in common! They both assume an external reality *there*, outside our perception. Both strive to study, know and conform to that reality.

Whereas, Magic and Technology try to manipulate reality for our use. Both attempt to have power over reality...to make whatever reality *is* there submit to our bidding.

Astonishingly, this is much more like our way of relating to reality today. REALITY— if it is **‘there’** at all — must conform to us! **Our will be done.** Reality is like a center-less swirl of impressions with no value, meaning or purpose except whatever we wish to impose on IT.

There is NO true view of reality possible anymore. No grand metanarrative. No truth. Except whatever I wish to say it is. We have even turned science into scientism and religion into occult!

That is **postmodern life**. That is the **New Age Way**. No **truth** except what we create. Today, techno-cyberspace is our secular MAGIC! Or, if the occult works better for you, use that. Or, if a synthesis of religion and science works better for you, use that...just deify nature and it’s all yours. Whether you prefer a **spiritual journey** or a **secular mindset** ...

YOU are your own arbiter of truth. Go YOUR own way in life. YOU are the center of reality.

To paraphrase Sartre, “My freedom to generate truth is the sole foundation for my reality...yet it is anguished...for such freedom has no foundation.”

This self-centered world, devoid of truth, bereft of meaning, and filled with false spiritualities...this is the world in which we live. Next door are neighbors to whom we must witness.

If we believe that Judeo-Christian Biblical Monotheism *is* the only true worldview, then we must learn to communicate it with all integrity, purity and sagacity.

If we know that Jesus Christ IS the way, the truth and the life...then we must LIVE that life with all humility, grace, holiness, power and love.



### III. A CHARGE to CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY STUDENTS

The challenge to you can be extended by revisiting our course objectives:

① Become conversant with the **HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY**. (And do care about **HISTORY** in general!)

Remember the **eras** you learned as a backdrop. Zero in on the most influential philosophers and philosophical schools. Read primary sources to ‘get the gist’ of their ideas. Then analyze how human history has been impacted by shifts in ‘reality apprehension.’ Formulate your own ‘graphs’ of human progress and regress. Care *more than ever* about the **history of ideas**, as ideas have terribly serious consequences for humanity.

An ‘overall’ knowledge of intellectual history is essential for evaluating **our own era**. Do not condemn the world if you can’t cogently challenge the world! Proceed with wisdom, integrity and ‘earned credibility.’ We must ‘earn the right to be heard’ if we want to challenge our secular, religious, and/or postmodern colleagues! We must **think more**, not less, than those around us do! And, much more deeply. Thus our second objective:

② Demonstrate a “working knowledge” of **WORLDVIEWS**. Detect their under-girding **assumptions**.

Apply logical criteria to examine them for meaning, coherence, and ultimately, for **TRUTH!**

Practice **worldview-level thinking** every day. It is a mightily helpful tool for exposing unspoken assumptions and hidden agendas! It cuts through layers of rhetoric with surgical precision. Appreciate the basic Laws of Thought as giving us *ontological* grounding as well as *logical* devices. (*Try to imagine any palpable existence without them!*)

Don’t speak *about* truth if you do not understand what *constitutes* truth as a necessary category for *any* intelligible worldview! Don’t loudly proudly claim to *possess* Truth if you cannot humbly but clearly *defend* it! Philosophical and Religious Studies departments are both in dire need of the clarification of WV-level critique. **‘WV savvy’** Christians can and must take the lead in recasting academia with the crucible of TRUTH.

③ Pay close attention to both **secular and ‘spiritual’ movements** today. Know exactly how they depart from Christian belief. Therefore, it is incumbent on true (*i.e.- ever-reforming*) Christians to:

Refine, elucidate, *and authenticate by your life* the **only God-given** (the Biblical-Hebraic) **WV:**

“Judeo-Christian Historic-Revelatory Ethical-Communal Redemptive Monotheism”

Continue to follow the harsh resurgence of Atheism along with issues of Evolution, Intelligent Design, and the ‘Science & Faith Dialogue.’ But be *even more* concerned with the innovative *science and spirituality synthesis*. Be keenly aware of the pervasive influence of Pantheistic-Monism and the deception of New Age Syncretism. See what a stark contradistinction *Judeo-Christian Historic-Revelatory Ethical-Communal Redemptive Monotheism* is!

Rejoice that the Bible, correctly interpreted, truly does offer a full-orbed, well-integrated WV *and* life-plan! **Hebraic Holism** avoids both errors of Monism *and* Dualism. Our revealed WV is able to provide continued (and desperately needed) correction to *all manmade Christian Theologies* and contemporary ‘Christian’ cultures.

Remember that the Bible is interpreted *most authentically* through *its own WV lenses*. Lenses which center upon: the **character** of its **relational** yet utterly **Holy God**...its **covenantal** ‘meta-narrative’... *and* the particular identity of its central characters and authors! Never forget that “salvation *is* of the Jews!”

Therefore, delve deeply into what our **Judaic Roots** should mean to us. Especially now that we have seen how disastrous their **loss** has been in history, *and* how these roots are being ‘severed’ by syncretists today. Finally, because the Bible **tells the truth**...Learn it well and live it redemptively. Proclaim it boldly and lovingly.

And always...center on the center...**Yeshua**. He alone is God Incarnate. He is the Savior, Lord, Judge, and the King of the Universe. He is the Aleph and the Tav. He *is* the **Truth**...and there is no higher reality.

He is the **Way**...who else would we want to follow...He is the **Life**...how else could we ever want to live.

**AMEN**

*May God Bless You  
As you continue the voyage  
And 'stay the course'!*



*Bon Voyage*