

SUBVERTING THE FEAR OF DEATH:
PLATONIC, MEDIEVAL CHRISTIAN, AND ABSURDIST CRITICISMS OF
TRANSHUMANISM

A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

This thesis will apply the arguments of Plato, Boethius, and Camus concerning the fear of death to the issue of transhumanism. The aspect of transhumanism that this paper will be focusing on is the transhumanist project to eradicate death. This paper will first demonstrate that transhumanism is rooted in the fear of death. The paper will then demonstrate that this is the incorrect way to approach death using the arguments and warnings of the philosophers. All three authors in their respective books agree that humanity should not fear death because it is better to be happy with one's lot than to strive against fate. I am presenting the view of the three authors as a corrective to the view of death as seen in transhumanism.

Soli Deo Gloria

Introduction: Inherent Tragedy

The tragedy of Orpheus and Eurydice is a story of a man who enters the underworld to retrieve his wife but loses her before the surface. For the sake of his wife, Orpheus endeavored to triumph over death and was the closest in succeeding. However, in the end, he was more miserable than at the beginning. Orpheus was the unfortunate man who lost his wife twice. Humanity shares in his problem of being unable to overcome death. Orpheus tried to confront death in the incorrect way and failed. Rather than accept and grieve the death of his young wife, he tried to circumvent the inevitable. Tragedies like these have shown that human life seems intrinsically tragic and fatalistic. Much of literature, ancient, and modern, show the struggle between man and the inevitable demise he seeks to escape but is unable to. People are drawn to stories like these because they mirror human life. Human life on earth is itself a tragedy.¹ It is fated to end, and humans are doomed to die. As it is a tragedy, people seek to prevent it. They seek to change fate. This endeavor to change fate stems from their fear of death – as death is the perpetrator of this tragedy-

Similar to how Orpheus decided to confront death in the wrong way, so too do the transhumanists. The transhumanists are trying to rectify his failure. They are trying to complete Orpheus' endeavor and achieve his goal. Orpheus' story is rooted in his endeavor to overcome death rather than to accept it and the transhumanism enterprise follows the same path. They, like the protagonists in the tragedies, seek to answer the ageless problem of death. However, hanging over their revolutionary idea are voices from the past that consistently repeat the same basic thought. Socrates in 400 B.C., Boethius in 500 A.D., and Meursault in 1942 A.D. all echoed this same thought, and all accepted their deaths. All three were different kinds of men from different

¹ It is also a joy – one does not negate the other.

backgrounds who worshipped different gods. However, they all knew that it is only when man has accepted death that he will be able to fully enjoy life. Through all the differences, their voices united in a single chorus—one that is in direct contradiction with the transhumanist idea to eradicate death—saying: humanity should not fear death because it is better to be happy with one's lot than to strive against fate.

The Fear of Death in Literature and Transhumanism

The Last Days of Socrates begins with Socrates being taken to court on the charge of corrupting the youth. Socrates is found guilty and eventually condemned to death. Throughout the book, particularly in the *Apology*, Socrates discusses the fear of death as it was a tool openly used by his accusers. Boethius was a Christian senator until he was accused of trying to overthrow the king. Although Boethius was a trusted and valued senator, he ended up in prison and on death row. Lady Philosophy enters in the beginning of *The Consolation of Philosophy* when Boethius is lamenting his circumstances and crying with the muses. Throughout the book, she helps Boethius triumph over his circumstances. Albert Camus' absurdist² novel, *The Stranger*, follows the narrator, Meursault, as he navigates through life and death. The entire novel can be separated in three parts: his mother's death at the beginning, the Arab's death³ in the middle, and Meursault's death at the end. As Meursault awaits his death sentence for killing the Arab, he ponders death and the absurdity of life.

² Absurdism is a branch of existentialism. Existentialists believe we have no meaning in life. As teleology is removed, the usual response is despair. Absurdism contrasts this view and are instead happy in the absurdity of life. As Camus once said, "one must imagine Sisyphus as happy".

³ Meursault murders him in the middle of the novel.

The views on the fear of death for the three philosophers differ in several manners. Socrates' view was based on a certain view of the afterlife. He believed in an afterlife that functions on a balance of good and evil and that being a just man was enough to have entry into Elysium. Boethius believed in the God of the Holy Bible. His view was based on the redemption of death through Christ Jesus. Camus had no belief in an afterlife. He believed that the present world was all that would ever happen. Socrates' view was based on what could be lost by death. Given that he was a just and good man, Socrates believed death could only advantage him. He believed that death is happy because it liberates people from the corruption of the body. Boethius' view was based on what could be gained through death. Through Lady Philosophy's counsel, Boethius came to the conclusion that death would be the doorway into true happiness and goodness. Boethius believed in the Resurrection and the Christian vision of eternal life. Camus' view was based on what the present life could gain by the existence of death. Camus believed death gave life meaning. He believed it was only through the acceptance of death that people could be happy. Camus believed that there was nobility in choosing to produce meaning for oneself in the face of absurdity. Through all their differences, in time and person as well as in view, they still knew the fear of death is a greater evil than death itself. This led them all to accept their deaths.⁴

The transhumanist enterprise shifts away from the view of the philosophers and instead decides to wage war against death. The main goal of transhumanism is the enhancement of man beyond his current human nature by merging human existence with technology. A consequence of this goal is extending the duration of a person's life. However, they do not believe in ultimate immortality. Transhumanists acknowledge the eventual heat death of the universe and that "Any

⁴ Page 11 explains the powerful warnings and dangers that each of the three authors provide.

death prior to the heat death of the universe is premature if your life is good.”⁵ Thus, they concede that eventual death is inevitable. The term transhumanism was first coined in an essay written by the English biologist and philosopher Julian Huxley.⁶ He wrote that a new understanding of the universe “has defined man’s responsibility and destiny—to be an agent for the rest of the world in the job of realizing [man’s] inherent potentialities as fully as possible.”⁷ He insists that it is as though man has been appointed the managing director of the business of evolution arguing, “What the job really boils down to is this—the fullest realization of man’s possibilities, whether by the individual, by the community, or by the species in its processional adventure along the corridors of time.”⁸ Huxley believed that it was only through technology that man could attain his full potential—that it was only through science that man could achieve his ultimate evolutionary state. He asserted that once issues such as poverty and war were solved, science could focus on its ultimate job which was “to explore human nature [human physical constitution], to find out what are the possibilities open to it.”⁹ He believed the human species could transcend humanity. He went on to name this phenomena *transhumanism*— “man remaining man, but transcending himself, by realizing new possibilities of and for his human nature.”¹⁰ Only then, Huxley argued, would man be consciously fulfilling his real destiny.

⁵ Nick Bostrom, “Letter from Utopia,” *Studies in Ethics, Law, and Technology* (2008).

⁶ Brother of Aldous Huxley

⁷ Huxley, Julian. “Transhumanism.” *London: Chatto & Windus*, no. New Bottles or New Wine (1957): 12.

⁸ Ibid., 13.

⁹ Ibid., 13.

¹⁰ Ibid., 15

Outline

This paper will seek to form a secular argument using the reasoning provided in *The Last Days of Socrates*, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, and *The Stranger* to show why all people should not fear death. In doing so, this paper endeavors to convince the audience to avoid seeking false immortality through technology. I will first concisely summarize Plato's, Boethius', and Camus' perspectives on the fear of death. After explaining how transhumanism approaches the problem of death, I will prove that it fails to heed the warnings of the three philosophers. After, I will demonstrate that the results produced by transhumanism are highly undesirable and are the fulfillment of the concerns presented by the philosophers, and thus should be avoided. Finally, I will respond to arguments presented against my thesis.

Platonism, Christianity, and Absurdism on Transhumanism

The Golden Thread

All three philosophers formed arguments as to how a person should be happy with one's lot and not seek to change it. All three philosophers knew that it is futile to fight against fate. In their respective books, they state what the correct approach to futility should be. *The Last Days of Socrates* by Plato, *The Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius, and *The Stranger* by Camus all agree that it is better to be happy and accept death than to go on fearing it. They knew there is no gain in achieving centuries of life if doing so destroys one's happiness. This is the golden thread uniting the three.

Socrates teaches humanity in *The Last Days of Socrates* that humans should not fear death because it is ignorant and prideful to fear that which is unknown. Socrates goes on to say in the *Apology*,

The fear of death is indeed the pretense of wisdom, and not real wisdom, being a pretense of knowing the unknown; and no one knows whether death, which men in their fear apprehend to be the greatest evil, may not be the greatest good. Is not this ignorance of a disgraceful sort, the ignorance which is the conceit that a man knows what he does not know?¹¹

Socrates believed that the fear of death stems from a place of pride, and that the results of death are not evil. Socrates believed that the rational, virtuous man is happy. It is the irrational and the vicious who fear death. Transhumanists today fear the unknown and desire to merge life with technology. They fear a supposed evil which then leads them to indulge in a certain evil.

Boethius in *The Consolation of Philosophy* teaches humanity to not fear death because fortune, and likewise death, is unpredictable and inescapable. It cannot be controlled.¹² Boethius believed the happy man is one who finds his fulfillment in God and who pursues the true Good rather than flees fortune. He realized that to live as a thrall to the whims of fortune would be a miserable existence. First, Lady Philosophy convinces Boethius of the inconstancy of Fortune¹³ for “The temporary nature of any situation should keep a person from fearing Fortune's threats or hoping for her enticements”.¹⁴ She goes on to say how Fortune appears to be the greatest evil since it takes happiness away from people. However, Lady Philosophy then proves that Fortune

¹¹ Plato, *The Last Days of Socrates*, trans. Hugh Tredennick and Harold Tarrant (Penguin Books, 2003). 29 a,b

¹² Boethius was a Roman senator and philosopher working under King Theodoric the Great when Boethius was imprisoned on charges of conspiracy to overthrow the king. While in prison, Boethius wrote *The Consolation of Philosophy* where Lady Philosophy visited Boethius and ultimately led him to consolation.

¹³ The view of fortune in the Middle Ages was as a wheel, or the *Rota Fortunae*. Fortuna would spin the wheel and a person would receive good or bad fortune depending on if they were at the top or the bottom.

¹⁴ Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. Victor Watts, Revised. (United States of America: Penguin Books, 1999). 23.

does not take away true happiness for true happiness does not lie in what the world gives. Lady Philosophy says “True and perfect happiness is that which makes a man self-sufficient, strong, worthy of respect, glorious and joyful... Clearly, therefore [since, individually, these things are still found lacking], these things offer man only shadows of the true Good, or imperfect blessings, and cannot confer true and perfect Good.”¹⁵ Boethius knew that the aim of man was to be self-sufficient, strong, worthy of respect, glorious, and joyful. However, Boethius also knew that these could never be achieved on earth. The transhumanists, like Boethius, desire these things. However, unlike Boethius, they believe they can be achieved on earth. They believe that enhancing humans so that they can live longer is what will allow them to achieve these ideals. Lady Philosophy convinces Boethius that the perfect Good is true happiness, saying,

It follows that true happiness is to be found in the supreme God...Since it is through the possession of happiness that people become happy, and since happiness is in fact divinity, it is clear that it is through the possession of divinity that they become happy.¹⁶

Boethius found that Fortune, and likewise death, could not take away true happiness for true happiness could only be found in God. The pervading truth found in Boethius is that happiness cannot be found in the fickle and the capricious. Transhumanists agree that death will not be stopped with their advancements. The only goal they are achieving is prolonging the inevitable. Thus, death is fickle, and happiness cannot be found in the avoidance of it—rather, it will be found once death has been accepted.

Camus in *The Stranger* teaches humanity to not fear death because it is better to choose to be happy in an absurd world than to despair. Similarly, Meursault in Camus’ *The Stranger* realizes at the end of the story that it is better to choose to be happy in the absurdity of the world

¹⁵ Ibid., 65

¹⁶ Ibid., 69,71

than it is to strive against it. Joesana Tjahjani writes in the *Absurdity and the Significance of the Idea of Death in Albert Camus' L'Etranger* saying,

Human's choice could reduce misery by accepting the reality that not everything can be fixed, finished, or explained. According to Camus, to face the absurd was not by running away from life, but by living the absurd life with conscience...The shift in Meursault's narration supports the indication that death is a factor that leads him towards his consciousness and, along with it, his freedom.¹⁷

Camus faces his death with joy as he finally becomes free from the fear of death. Camus' *The Stranger* famously opens with the words "Maman died today. Or yesterday maybe, I don't know."¹⁸ Meursault, the man whose mother just died, is indifferent to her death and death in general. When he goes to see his mother's body, he refuses to open the casket. Throughout the whole funeral, he is consistently complaining about the emotions of his Maman's friends or the heat. As soon as he returns from the funeral, he goes to the beach and to see a comedy film in the theatre. Throughout the whole story, Meursault consistently denies death. By the end of the novel, Meursault is in prison for having murdered an Arab. It is not until the final pages of the novel that Meursault's thoughts turn back to Maman saying, "For the first time in a long time, I thought about Maman. I felt as if I understand why at the end of her life, she had taken a 'fiancé,' why she had played at the beginning again. And I felt ready to live it all again too."¹⁹ It was finally when Meursault thought about death and his Maman that he broke fully free from the fear of death. He had encountered the absurdity of his life and of life itself. And by doing so, he became truly free. At the end of his life, he found happiness in the absurdity of living despite the inevitability of death. He found peace. Transhumanists are trying to find the goal of their lives

¹⁷ Indiana Salsabila and Joesana Tjahjani, "Absurdity and The Significance of the Idea of Death in Albert Camus' L'Etranger," *University of Indonesia* (August 2020). 2

¹⁸ Albert Camus, *The Stranger*, trans. Matthew Ward (New York: Vintage Books, 1946). 1.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 122.

and they believe that if they prolong their lives, they will have found it. They must listen to Meursault and accept their own mortality.

Transhumanism and the Fear of Death

The transhumanist movement to eradicate death is grounded in and motivated by a ruinous fear of death. This fear destroys happiness. Transhumanists approach death as an issue that needs to be solved. For them, the very essence of death is indicative of a primitive evolutionary state. They believe that it is only with technology that humans can reach a better evolutionary state. Although most transhumanists affirm that their goal of enhancement stems from a desire to enjoy and live life to the fullest, they concede to utilizing the fear of death on others.²⁰ Yuval Noah Harari writes in *Homo Deus* that “once people think (with or without good reason) that they have a serious chance of *escaping* death, the desire for life will refuse to go on pulling the rickety wagon of art, ideology and religion, and will sweep forward like an avalanche.”²¹ He uses the phrase “escape” repeatedly when describing the relationship of transhumanism and death. This word is only used when someone wants to flee something undesirable. Although transhumanists will not admit the underlying motivator for their actions, it can still be seen by their choice of words.

The Consequences of Transhumanism

Transhumanism will result in wickedness, misery, and futility. These are the fulfillment of the concerns presented by the three philosophers. Socrates warns that methods for prolonging

²⁰ Harari writes about this in his *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow* on page 21. This quote is in used in the paper on page 14.

²¹ Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow* (HarperCollins Publishers, 2017). 22.

life will eventually end in wickedness. While the aim of transhumanism did not come out of wickedness (but out of fear), if transhumanism comes to completion, then wickedness will come as well. Yuval Noah Harari writes in *Homo Deus* that normal humans will automatically be seen as inferior, and that transhumanism will stratify society. Greater technology only means a greater capacity for wickedness. Furthermore, there are several ethical problems with transhumanism that have to do with research and experimentation.²² Only wickedness can be born out of this. Boethius warns the transhumanists that they will only be satisfied with the true Good. If they continue to rebel, it will end in misery and longing. The transhumanists themselves concede that after death is eradicated, they will continue to fix more things until society is perfected. Boethius is warning them that society will never be perfect, humans will never be perfect, and life will never be perfect. That road has no end. Transhumanists will be transfixed by their perception of perfection and, as they will be unable to attain it, they will become miserable—forever longing for unattainable perfection. Camus warns the transhumanists that life is only enjoyable once a person accepts the absurdity of life. Transhumanists instead decide to rebel against the absurdity. As such, they cannot enjoy life. Their lives will be filled with endless attempts at eradicating absurdity. They will forever be stuck in a place of discontentment and will not live. Thus, transhumanism will result in wickedness, misery, and futility. Thus, the results produced by transhumanism are highly undesirable and are the fulfillment of the concerns presented by Plato, Boethius, and Camus.

²² Research is being done on embryos, people will be damaged by experimentation with techniques such as CRISPR, cheap labor will be used to make this tech, and much more.

Transhumanist Objections

The Right to Eradicate Death

An alternative perspective is that man has the right to life, and, as death is taking away that right, man has every right to wage war against death. Humans around the world can all acknowledge that everyone has the right to life.²³ In John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* Section 6, he mentions the right to life stating,

Everyone is obliged to preserve himself and not opt out of life willfully, so for the same reason everyone ought, when his own survival isn't at stake, to do as much as he can to preserve the rest of mankind; and except when it's a matter of punishing an offender, no-one may take away or damage anything that contributes to the preservation of someone else's *life*, liberty, *health*, limb, or goods.²⁴

Transhumanists believe the right to life is the very right that necessitates an active war against the entity that takes away life and health—death. Yuval Noah Harari argues that “since death clearly violates this right [the right to life], death is a crime against humanity, and we ought to wage total war against it.”²⁵ The sanctity of human life has been affirmed throughout the world and must not be handled carelessly. It should be protected at all costs. Transhumanism thus completes “the flagship enterprise of modern science [which] is to defeat death and grant humans eternal youth.”²⁶ Harari emphasizes that since people die of technical issues, people can live by solving those issues.

²³ A right outlined in Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights drafted after WWII. John Locke also discusses this in his *Second Treatise of Government*.

²⁴ John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1980). 6.

²⁵ Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow* (HarperCollins Publishers, 2017). 17.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

Dylan Thomas wrote a poem for his dying father where he writes, “Do not go gentle into that good night, // Old age should burn and rave at close of day; // Rage, rage against the dying of the light.”²⁷ Thomas’ father was dying and fading away. In the poem, Thomas expresses his wish that his father not “go gentle into that good night”. Thomas believed that it is admirable to fight one’s demise to prove to death that humans are not slaves to it, and, so one day, humans can win the fight against death. Transhumanists have adopted the saying to be their maxim. In sum, everyone should rage against death—rage against the dying of the light. Transhumanists believe “the fear of death ingrained in most humans will give the war against death an irresistible momentum.”²⁸ Harari argues that deeply rooted in human nature is a dissatisfaction with the state of things. It is this dissatisfaction that makes people humans. According to this view, there is nothing more human than to fight against the inevitable. There is nobility in fighting, and people should not grow complacent and accept their demise. Even if there is nothing to be done about their death, they should not give death the satisfaction of going quietly. They must fight against apathy. They must fight against death. They must fear death. In Simon Young’s “Transhumanist Manifesto,” he declares, “Death is an obscenity. The goal of life is survival—death is not part of the plan, so why take it lying down? Better to rage, rage, rage against the dying of the light”.²⁹ As such, for the transhumanist, humans should rage against death until they kill death itself.

On the contrary, transhumanists do not completely eliminate death and are instead held more captured by death. Transhumanists believe that by merging humanity with technology, they will be eradicating death. This is not so. The transhumanist enterprise would merely prolong

²⁷ Thomas, Dylan. “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night.” *Botteghe Oscure* (1951). 1-3

²⁸ Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow* (HarperCollins Publishers, 2017). 21.

²⁹ Simon Young, *Designer Evolution: A Transhumanist Manifesto* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2006), 42.

someone's death—it would not eradicate it completely. In doing so, transhumanists play directly into the hands of death. The personified version of death is as a caped man with a scythe chasing a person. By prolonging the inevitable fate, they are merely prolonging the chase. As such, they are not rebelling against death. They are not raging against death as they would hope. They are merely running rabbits who will eventually be caught by the toying dog.³⁰ This view of life would drastically diminish the quality of life. The person would spend their life trying to prevent the inevitable from happening. They would not be able to enjoy life if their primary objective was coddling it. The consequence of living is dying.

The Lack of Possibility

Proponents of transhumanism might argue that philosophies which commend acceptance of death did not consider the possibility of transcending death afforded by modern technology. Modern technology is now making the previously impossible possible. Man did not have the technology nor the feasibility to obtain anything else. This is similar to how Huxley asserts that the people of the world would no longer be satisfied “with a subnormal standard of physical health and material living now that science [had] revealed the possibility of raising it.”³¹ The possibility of defeating death increases the momentum in the fight against death. Thus, the lack of options increases the persuasiveness of accepting death. However, this is not so.

Socrates believed that death was not evil. He knew he was a just man and as such there were only two options: either death was a place of judgment, and, as he was a just man, he would be fine, or death would be nothing but a long nap. Regardless, Socrates had nothing to lose and everything to gain. He goes on to say, “Neither I nor any other ought to use his wits to escape

³⁰ Cf. Twenty One Pilot's Heavydirtysoul: “Death inspires me like a dog inspires a rabbit”.

³¹ Julian Huxley, “Transhumanism,” *London: Chatto & Windus*, no. New Bottles or New Wine (1957): 14.

death by any means... in every kind of danger, there are plenty of devices for avoiding death if you are unscrupulous enough and stop at nothing. But I suggest, gentlemen, that the difficulty is not so much to escape death; the real difficulty is to escape wickedness, which is far more fleet of foot.”³² This is an issue of morality Socrates knew that death was unavoidable. He knew there was no use in trying to avoid death and that it was more likely a person would fall into wickedness in endeavoring to avoid such a thing. Socrates recognized that human effort could delay death, but that effort would involve wickedness. A person would then be judged for all the wickedness that was committed in their futile attempt to delay death.

Boethius, likewise, would have accepted death even if transhumanism had been a possibility. He found the source of true happiness with the help of Lady Philosophy writing, “True and perfect happiness is that which makes a man self-sufficient, strong, worthy of respect, glorious and joyful.”³³ Lady Philosophy then goes on to ask whether there was anything among mortal and degenerate things that offered such a state. Boethius answered, “These things offer man only shadows of the true Good, or imperfect blessings, and cannot confer true and perfect Good.”³⁴ Furthermore, transhumanists are not self-sufficient. Instead, people would be even more dependent on other things—in this case technology. Thus, Boethius would have chosen to accept death in hopes of achieving true happiness rather than staying alive with the shadows of the true Good.

Meursault, like the others, would have accepted death even if transhumanism had been a possibility. Camus famously scribbled in the margins of one of his notebooks, “There is but one

³² Plato, *The Last Days of Socrates*, trans. Hugh Tredennick and Harold Tarrant (Penguin Books, 2003). 39a.

³³ Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. Victor Watts, Revised. (United States of America: Penguin Books, 1999). 65.

³⁴ Ibid. 65.

freedom, to put oneself right with death. After that everything is possible.”³⁵ By avoiding it, one does not put oneself right with death. Furthermore, in *The Stranger*, Meursault turns down his appeal to overturn the verdict of his execution. He finally sees the significance of life because of death. It was because of death that Meursault awoke to the absurdity of life, and it was in the absurdity of life that Meursault found meaning. As Alan Gullette writes, “The meaning, value, and significance of life is only seen in light of death, yet most people miss it through the denial of death.”³⁶ Rather than striving against the inevitability of death, one is only truly free when one realizes the absurdity of life and appreciates it. Camus believed that there was nobility in choosing to produce meaning for oneself in the face of absurdity. Thus, Meursault³⁷ still would have accepted death.

Socrates, Boethius, and Meursault all considered practical measures that would cause the prolonging of life. Socrates recognized the possibility of appealing and forsaking his convictions. However, he realized that would end in wickedness. Boethius recognized that if he stayed living, he would never reach the true Good. Rather than stay with the shadows of the true Good, he accepted his death. Finally, Meursault had the option of an appeal, but he rejected it. Meursault recognized that life was absurd, and it was only when he accepted that idea that he was truly happy. Socrates, Boethius, and Meursault all had the theoretical means of escaping their immediate deaths, but they chose not to avail themselves of these methods. Thus, these men would have accepted death regardless of various means to avoid it.

³⁵ Albert Camus, *Camus' Notebooks: 1942-1951*, trans. Justin O'Brien and Philp Thody, (1965). 151.

³⁶ Alan Gullette, “Death and Absurdism in Camus' *The Stranger*,” *University of Tennessee-Knoxville* (1979). 2.

³⁷ And by extension, Camus as well.

Conclusion: The Joyful Tragedy

Death is tragic – there is no denying it. However, tragedy is necessary for deeper joy. The tragedy is necessary to fully appreciate the comedy. Life necessitates suffering for meaning and joy. Thus, death is necessary. After all, the light shines brightest in the darkness. Plato, Boethius, and Camus all saw that physical death was not the greatest evil.³⁸ They all realized that living in the fear of death is a fate that is worse than death itself. Socrates saw that death was necessary to protect himself from wickedness. Boethius saw that death was necessary to reach the true Good. Camus saw that death was necessary to enjoy life. A person can only really enjoy life once they have accepted death. Living life and enjoying life requires risk – the risk being the possibility of death. If one is too preoccupied with coddling their life, they will not live.³⁹ People must listen to Socrates, Boethius, and Meursault in their plight against death. They all had valid and, most importantly, different reasons for accepting their demise. Their varied arguments are useful for seeing the different approaches to death. Their argument that humanity should not fear death because it is better to be happy with one's lot than to strive against fate should be listened to especially concerning transhumanism. It is only once humans have accepted death that they will be able to live.

The sting of death cannot be wiped away by any human intervention. Death is a consequence of sin (Romans 6:23 NIV). However, it is also an entry into everlasting life for believers. Romans 8:20-25 writes,

³⁸ Perhaps even good in the eyes of Socrates.

³⁹ For reference, this does not mean people should take unnecessary risks and be reckless. However, it comes down to the fear of death holding people prisoner. If people let the fear of death rule their lives, they will not be able to enjoy life in the simplest sense. They will be continually paralyzed by the fear. All three philosophers realized what their lives would become if they chose to fear death and so they instead chose to accept it.

For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope, we were saved.

Death is redeemed through Jesus Christ as He triumphed once and for all over sin and death.

Jesus was and is the true eradicator of death and it is only through Him that people can achieve true immortality that contains joy, peace, and fulfillment.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ A fitting quote by Paul Tripp says, "Because we live as this world is all there is, we're perennially demanding and disappointed thinking we have been dealt a particularly difficult hand. We envy the people around us who appear to have what we don't, and we find it hard to celebrate the success of others. With the assumption that this world is our final destination, we constantly want more and better. We are never able to say, 'I have enough'. We possess too much, eat too much, spend too much, drink too much, demand too much, complain too much, expect too much, keep score too much, ask too much, and we are disappointed too much. You see we don't need a better *now*. We need hope and we need our forever reality to reshape our here and now."

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