

Critical Journal 01

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The unexamined life is not worth living is a statement so potent in its universality and contextualization, that pondering its significance could easily become a full philosophical work. Yet, after having sifted through my thoughts (over many hours of contemplation), I have found that this statement truly requires one major component to even begin to understand what it *could* insinuate, that component being – *context*.

From my own personal interpretation, I have been able to gather that a life unexamined is a life unlived. Or, at a minimum, a life lived without the colour of experience and the rejection of personal expansion. In many ways, a life unexamined allows one to remain within an echo chamber of consolation, unmoved by alternative perspectives, unchallenged by the ebbs and flows of life's trials, tribulations, or discourse. It is to live quietly, silently, and comfortably...*it is a choice, nonetheless*, that is, if it doesn't become a mode of censorship first.

The statement doesn't provoke me negatively, instead, I find myself having difficulty articulating my thoughts to encapsulate the impact it has on my subjective reality. One thing is for certain, my opinion on the matter may not be popular or well received but that is the beauty of examining thought; it allows space for discovery and for evolution to occur within the psyche. That is precisely why a life where thoughts are simply thoughts, and life is simply linear...is a life unexamined and to remain impartial to the potentials of alternative meaning, is a life unfulfilled.

To examine life, is to allow one's existence to merge with the world around them, not just out of curiosity but with intention. Socrates didn't fear death because he did not know what would happen after he died, and in many respects, *he didn't fear life either* because he didn't understand or know everything about it – that would be claiming a godly complex.

On one hand not concerning oneself with matters that have not materialized in the immediate, can make for a simplistic and even an uncomplicated existence. To me, that is a form of avoidance as doing so could foster an ignorance to the very communities that have forged the way for one to inherit that privilege. To remain within the confines of what one already knows and to become an ‘expert’ in a discipline without encouraging the mind to process alternate thought patterns or approach; would be to comprehend something *partly*. On the other hand, to inherit knowledge without the tools or capacity to examine its depths because of lack of experience or willfulness, could promote a suffering within the imagination, inspiring a fear of potential and the cyclical deliberation between the ‘what-ifs’, could become a daunting task...understandably.

The Axial age allowed for deeper and more modernized understanding of religion, creating a clear distinction of what ‘philosophical thought’ meant (Ellis, 2020). By way of this, Socrates was doing exactly what he claimed, he remained true to the forefathers of thought, he remained steadfast, unbiased, without inherited privilege and without labelling himself a ‘sophist’ or an expert to obtain credibility. This made him a threat to hierarchies of power, not merely because he was intellectual and sound within his logic, but because he was a man of *deeds* not merely *words*. Socrates was a man of virtue, pursuit, examination, and consistent contemplation but that didn’t make him an Atheist. He would find pleasure walking among communities, sitting with the laymen, the impoverished, the rich and the ‘sophists’ to understand how the ecosystem of culture evolved or regressed regardless of intellectual declarations or piety.

Even within Hesiod’s *The Theogony*, the submission that “we know how to speak many false things as though they were true; but we know, when we will, to utter true things” (Homer, Hesiod, 2020) suggests a level of deception by the Shepherds of the wilderness. If we were to

frame this from the perspective of the Shepherds being the Athenian government, and the wilderness being Athens, it becomes clear that *truth* is a matter of opportune convenience, and it is *power* in the hand of one (judgment) that directs the course of many. This directly contradicts the underlying ethos of democracy and if Socrates was to continue living, his logic *could inspire anarchy* among the masses and ultimately a loss of control. Religion has always been a vessel for governments to control the majority, and if the framework is already rooted within a society, convincing the herd that the outlier is a disturbance becomes a matter of speaking half-truths disguised as virtue. Eradication then becomes a solution to keep the herd focused within the wilderness, to prevent curiosity, to prevent the threat of inconvenience.

Hence why ‘impiety’ was the failsafe conviction for Socrates. He had already proven that those who claimed to be wise, were indeed not and many of these individuals were in positions of power. If Socrates were to expose the incompetency of those that wielded rule with sound reason and logic...well the herd would have themselves a new shepherd, wouldn’t they? Subsequently, status would cease to have meaning, money would hold no leverage and the power of the select few would return to the collective...the people *would be free to examine life* on their own accord.

This deception is what provokes me.

In truth, I am unsure of one question I would like to ask Plato as there are too many. Quite honestly, I would probably freeze and stare because of my mind and mouth being incapable of working together to form a cohesive thought. However, as I continued to ponder this over the course of the week, I did come to one that I would like to ask (whether it was the first or last): “What did it feel like... to exist within his energy?”

The reasoning for this is simple.

Humans are a supernatural species, we ponder three major questions on a consistent basis: why am I here, what is my purpose and where am I going?

But one thing is for certain, we are a species made of energy and we respond to frequency very compliantly. For me this is a form of feeling that can be exercised like a muscle to strengthen intuition. We know something is bad based on a feeling, we know something is good based on a feeling...sometimes we can explain these responses, other times we allow ourselves to interpret these frequencies as 'instinct'. Words are easy to conjure and with a silver tongue they are easy to manipulate whether it is unconsciously or not. Often, words are incapable of encapsulating a moment, an individual or even a thought, to describe an essence is one thing, to experience its potency firsthand adds to the depth and impact of its truth. I want to know how true it felt, I want to know how sincere he was, I want to know *how human he truly was...*

I need context.

References

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