

Okay, so let's talk about metaphysics. Metaphysics is the philosophy of the substance of being(also known as ontology). Metaphysics is probably the most complicated philosophical concept, the most misunderstood metaphysical concepts next to epistemology, and probably the most important one, even though people view it as the most useless.

What's interesting is that we will get philosophers like Nietzsche who will dismiss the topic of metaphysics. When we get into the topic of metaphysics we'll get into the subject of God, of astral realms, entities. Religion is also the subject of metaphysics. Anyway, what metaphysics fundamentally is, is the substance of being. It isn't only the substance of being, it's also the substance of reality.

When I say the substance of being, you might think of yourself in the present moment, yourself as a being, so what it is like to be you: we can call that being. But, even that question of what is the ground, what is the ground fundamentally made of? Is the ground fundamentally made of particles, and are those particles made up of atoms, and those atoms made up neutrons, and those neutrons made of up quarks and down quarks, and fields and what not? Is that what the substance of reality is? Where there's void in between all of these things. Is reality made up of all these things?

This is sort of what the field of metaphysics is about. There is a correct answer to this thing, but this field is really important because when you encounter philosophies in the real world, for example, there's a cognitive approach which is very new . Which is like: we can understand how human beings function, by looking at various aspect of their brain, and scientific trials. The philosophy, the idea that we can move from these scientific trials toward an understanding of the human mind, is not only science, it's a cognitive approach.

It's a very difficult-to-talk about metaphysics, in the same way it is difficult to talk about culture. Because culture is a sort of metaphysics to the way we interact with reality. What I'm trying to do with this, is illustrate a couple of examples so your mind can really illustrate what metaphysics is.

The kind of people who think that metaphysics isn't important, that it's not practical, they are actually operating under both a metaphysics and ethics of pragmatism: that what exists is what is important, that everything has a value system, and that value system is based on its utility to you. This is a very ego-driven metaphysics, the reason I can articulate this, is because I have a sort of deep philosophy of the framework of metaphysics within me. So for you as a newcomer with no experience, I'm showing you the finished sandcastle, when I need to develop it from the ground up so you can see all of the building blocks.

What metaphysics essentially is, if we are going to live out our life, is how we are going to build out our experience. So if we were to sit and look at our hand in front of us, and look at our raw moment, and from looking at our raw moment, we come up with different stories about the world around us: we might say different stories like we are in this country, we are in this place. We come up with different narratives to guide us through life, but fundamentally we have this present moment.

Ultimately, all our different logical frameworks for how the world operates is based on the truth of this present moment.

Now let's step back, this story that I just gave you, describes a metaphysics of idealism, with an epistemology of truth and knowledge coming ultimately from the present moment. But this is just another story. There are other stories I can tell about the world around me. And this idea that I can tell these stories about reality, and that this can sort of create reality in your mind, is its own metaphysics of perspectivism. The idea that reality is fundamentally perspective. The idea that another person with another perspective occupies a fundamentally different reality is perspectivism.

Now, this is a metaphysics, but it is also an idea. But for me to say that perspectivism is a metaphysics, and that this metaphysics is an idea, implies that I think that the substance of reality is ideas (that the metaphysics of reality is ideas). That is the underlying metaphysics of idealism I am operating from. Do you see how I've gone in this endless circle where first I'm saying that my metaphysics is perspectivism, Now my metaphysics is idealism, now my metaphysics is pragmatism, now its perspectivism again.

It seems like if there can be so many kinds of metaphysics for the same experience of reality, then metaphysics must not matter. And this is the metaphysical philosophy of Nietzsche. He's saying that all this arguing over metaphysics is useless, we shouldn't even bother. And even the idea that Nietzsche's perspective is a metaphysics and not just truth, is still within the metaphysics of idealism.

The whole point that I want you to get, is that the point of this inquiry into metaphysics, is that so much of your experience of reality has underlying assumptions that are straight-up not true. So much of your experience of reality comes from other people telling it to you, and constructing it for you. The only way you are going to see this for yourself, is if you personally ask yourself, what is the metaphysics of your life.

In fact, one of the only ways to understand what metaphysics actually is, is for you to sit with yourself, and ask yourself, what is metaphysics.

Now for me, one of the easiest ways to understand metaphysics is to understand physics. Physics, Newtonian physics, relies on the assumption of an objective reality. While

Einsteinian General relativity, does not rely on the assumption of an objective space or an objective time, while it still relies on the assumption of an objective reality.

So, we can say that the assumption of an objective reality. The assumption that reality is fundamentally made up of particles, made up of atoms, made up of this, made up of ever-smaller building blocks, that assumption is a metaphysics. That assumption is a metaphysics for science. That is a materialist metaphysics for science. Now, if I have a materialist metaphysics for my day-to-day life, that may look like me trying to accumulate as much money as possible. Buy as big houses as possible, buy as big different things, because I ultimately assume that reality is flesh, blood, brick, stone. So in my life as a human being, I want to acquire as much flesh and blood, brick and stone. Ultimately the idea of an idealist metaphysics will always deprive human relationships, because human relationships are not material, or maybe it privileges these human relationships for material gain.

Ultimately, a materialist metaphysics cannot account for your own emotional state, except for how these emotional states and relationships relate to material consequences. So inherent in a materialist metaphysics is sort of a pragmatic ethic. If you think that the only thing that really exist is particles, and you are just a monkey in space. You are going to believe that the only thing that can be valued are these material things that exist. So it's going to lead to a probably pragmatic ethics. In which you seek out and try to get as much of these things that actually exist.

What about an idealist metaphysics. I mean we are walking on ground, and probably sitting on a chair, so materialism has some sway. I remember that as a young kid, I thought to myself: the idealists are fucking insane. Because at the end of the day, we live in a material world. But the idealist says, hey, all we know about the material world exists within your mind. Atoms ultimately exist within our mind.

“ Well you can see atoms within the lab”

Yes you can see atoms but these perceptions come through your mind. It's interesting because one of the only ways to really step back from your metaphysical system is to adopt an idealist metaphysics. From an idealist metaphysics we can start to believe in God. If we can adopt the idea that our mind constructs our physical body, than where does our mind come from? This leads to a sort of idea that we all emanate from the mind of God.

There are various different theories that don't really make sense if you account for them with physical explanations. One of the problems with behaviorism which is sort of a metaphysics and philosophy that... Behaviorism is sort of a scientific philosophy built on a materialist metaphysics that humans are fundamentally input-output state machines.

Positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement: that is what a human being. So the idea of a metaphysics is sort of that materialist grounding for this behaviorism philosophy

Okay, now we've gotten somewhere. This philosophy was sort of put together by Chomsky, when we started talking about the development of language, look up transformational grammar in children. Chomsky's idea was that children do not receive enough input/output in order to understand language. This challenges the notion of a materialist metaphysics (not quite, we can reduce everything to neurons if we want to).

The problem with a materialist metaphysics ultimately is that you can't deconstruct a perspective of reality from within a materialist metaphysics because you'll get hijacked by an ego.

So, now we are moving into psychology and epistemology, how do we know something to be true?

We can't use our epistemology of the present moment as being true if we have a materialist metaphysics. The world is fundamentally different when you are drunk, high, watching TV, you can't really account for this unless you go beyond a materialist metaphysics.

I'm using so many words here, but the key thing I want you to understand here, is that philosophy is nothing more than describing what is going on right in front of you. If you can describe your experience of reality, whether that be on a blog, or something else, you are a philosopher.