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Camus Vs. Feinberg

I consider life as a very complex painting, which has all color spectrums, and every color has its role and impact that makes the painting fully complete. Routine, love, hope, rational, and irrational things, laughter, sorrow, etc. are the built-in color of the paint. It depends on the individual's own eyes, their own experiences, intellectual capabilities, and perceptions to interpret the paint and magnify or focus on one or more of these colors and judge the painting. I will compare and contrast how two scholars Joel Feinberg and Albert Camus, see and interpret life's painting. Both agree on the existence of one dominant color, absurdity, that makes the painting objectively meaningless, and they suggest us to craft our own painting and enjoy it.

Let us begin by analyzing Camus's famous depiction of absurdity in the human condition. From Camus's point of view, life is absurd because it is crammed with routine. "Four hours in the office or the factory, meal, streetcar, four hours of work, meal, sleep, and Monday, Tuesday.." (Camus, 69). Camus also points out another reason for absurdity: the universe is not able to fulfill our human desires for inhabiting a world that is meaningful, intelligible, fair. Because humans naturally comprehend the universe in terms of this tangible world and draw their wishes based on the illusion that convinces them, then daily lives are meaningful. Moreover, one at some point, individuals start questioning and confronting the world we live in, wondering whether it possess any meaning. "But one day, the "why" arises, and everything begins in that weariness with amazement" (Camus, 69). He believes that humans, at some point, become sick and tired of their routines and the unresponsive universe. Plus, the individual's inevitable death

raises the notion of the absurd. An individual's achievement and lifelong laborer vanishes through death and eventually turns into nothing. At this moment, the new self will be born, and he called such an individual "The Absurd Man" (Camus, 99). Camus suggests there are three fates of the absurd man that one can pick. The absurd man might choose to commit suicide to skip conflict. This is done by taking his own life embracing the idea of God and the option to what Camus dubs us "intellectual suicide." The third option is a rebellion. This is when a person is able to create his own path without looking to false constructions of meaning for life's validation. He admires the rebel who divorces himself from the concept of God since there is no such supernatural power that governs the universe. And Camus interprets faith in God is a cowardly evasion of the absurd, a desperate ploy to prop up the significance of humans in the wake of their own finitude.

In order to illustrate his idea of rebellion, Camus wields the myth of Sisyphus. Sisyphus was a king in the myth of the ancient Greeks. Since he was obsessed with life, he attempts to cheat death multiple times. Due to that, he was condemned to roll a heavy stone up to the top of a hill. The rock rolls back to the bottom of the hill when he reaches to the tip of the hill. He tried again and over again eternally since gods forced this punishment upon him endlessly. That keeps him rolling the stone regardless of its futile purpose. All of his strong labor produces nothing; thus, he's life epitomizes meaninglessness. Camus matches Sisyphus' life with ours and claims that our lives are objectively meaningless, just like Sisyphus labor. We daily engage with inevitable routines repetitively until death. This renders our labor futile cyclical and meaningless. Eventually, even though we roll our stone to the tip of the hill, death will undo all our labors.

Like Camus, Feinberg recognizes life's absurdity, and he agrees that life is objectively meaningless. However, Feinberg outlines different sorts of absurdity in the human condition. Moreover, he characterizes them into five central categories. "it can be pointless, trivial (instrumentally disproportionate), futile, unrealistically pretentious, or otherwise incongruous or a "poor fit," like actions that presuppose false or logically inconsistent beliefs" (Feinberg, 153). Feinberg's further explanation reveals the reasons that make him intertwine the absurdity of life into one of the above five categories. These absurdities have two common properties, irrationality and disharmony or disproportionality. He argues that irrationality or false belief is one reason that categorizes an individual's laborer into absurd actions. The other element of absurdity is caused by a conflict of two things or disproportionality. "Where there is absurdity, there are always two things clashing or in disharmony" (Feinberg, 150). In order to judge the existence of absurdity, conflict has to occur due to the interaction or disconnection between two things. This might exist within one distinct entity or separately. Disharmony, disparity, or incompatibility between these things explicitly leads to absurdity.

The first type of absurdity, which Feinburg refers to is pointless labor, which happens when an individual irrationally engages in an activity without realizing its purpose or merely rationalizes the purpose of drudgery. One can vividly be able to see the disproportion between the laborer and its purpose. The achievement will manifest the drudgery of the action, which can not be justified by the paltry or non-existent result. "like Sisyphus rock-pushing" (Feinburg, 152). This tells us that once Sisyphus achieved putting the rock at the summit of the hill. He then can give the reason, and explain why he was rolling the rock. Otherwise, he would never have meaning for his laborer. The second type of absurdity Feinburg introduces us to is a triviality.

That addresses a disproportional relation between an individual's conscious purpose and the horrible drudgery of the task at hand. Suppose Sisyphus has a conscious purpose of putting the rock at the hilltop, but a relatively worthless result that comes out from this labor. We can find another absurdity when we encounter one with a clear and proportional point. However, it is impossible to achieve regardless of what the laborer does; it will be called futile absurdity. In this case, instrumental inefficiency causes the individual not to achieve the goal. "Ugh, tuna fish again" (Feinberg, 153). This absurdity arises when an individual whose goal is having lunch other than tuna fish always makes tuna fish sandwiches due to his poor memory. Another type of conflict arises between our perception toward ourselves and the objective world, which creates an unrealistically pretentious absurdity. This type of absurdity arises between our subjective stance, which treats our individual lives as so important, and yet on an objective level, our lives do not matter since we are but a speck in a vast cosmos, "Why, no! Why should I feel small? .." (Feinberg, 151). This conflict arises when an everyday person puts her own life into the perspective of the vast universe, and she realizes that what she takes to be so subjectively significant is meaningless from a broader vantage point.

It is time to explore how Feinberg came up with the four model self-fulfillment solution to overcome absurdity. One involves satisfying an individual's desires or wishes. Second, filling up or being complete accomplishing an individual goal, third, being incomplete, starting over, and lastly, knowing one's strengths, capabilities, or potentialities.

I disagree with Camus's intellectual or philosophical suicide narrative and his advocacy of rejecting faith in God. It is not intellectual suicide; instead, it is choosing to live and finding the meaning of life and living fully by reconciling and harmonizing oneself with the universe and

God. It is human nature to seek harmony with the Univers such that it is impossible to ignore such longings. That is why since the human cognitive process starts developing, one has been in dire need of looking for ways to figure out the fundamental questions of our origin and destination. This would be answered by faith in God. Camus disproves the notion of God since he was not able to see him with his naked eyes, touch with his bare hands. Is it not futile absurdity?. Trying to answer such a question with the help of our sense organ is irrational since it has a natural limitation. He did not see or touch oxygen that he used to inhale; does that mean oxygen does not exist. The existence of everything around us, including ourselves, is enough evidence for the existence of God, something never comes out from nothing. There had to be a creator.

Camus claims that the universe will not fulfill human desires for intelligibility. If the universe fulfills all of our desires, this would be a catastrophe because each of us desires to contradict one another. However, one's desires are fulfilled at the cost of the others. Since an individual brain process freely, human wishes change from time to time, today's wish might be irrelevant tomorrow and make a new wish. On top of that, as I mentioned above, each individual's wish practically does not match. For an instant, one might wish a sunny day, whereas the other individual sits on the couch and wants to see the rainfall across the window, so practically, it is hard to fulfill everyone's desire.

Works cited

Klemke, E D, and Steven M. Cahn. *The Meaning of life: A Reader.*, 2008. print.

