**CORE106 Fall 2015**

**November 13, 2015**

**Notes**

**Alan Watts Wisdom of Insecurity (c. 1-3)**

**A book full of paradoxes**

(13) If living is to end in pain, incompleteness, and nothingness, it seems a cruel and futile experience for beings who are born to reason, hope, create, and love.

Hope is tragedy.

(15) For if all is relative, if life is a torrent without form or goal in whose flood absolutely nothing save change itself can last, it seems to be something in which there is “no future” and thus no hope.

(15) If happiness always depends on something expected in the future we are chasing a will o' the wisp that ever eludes our grasp until the future, and ourselves, vanish into the abyss of death.

(16) But it has been possible to make the insecurity of human life supportable by belief in unchanging things beyond the reach of calamity – in God, in man’s immortal soul, and in the government of the universe by the eternal laws of right.

No God. (18) The immediate results of this honesty have been deeply unsettling and depressing.

NB: Political religions are no good (19)

NB: The social and moral advantages of God are not convincing. (19, bottom).

(20) The agnostic, the skeptic, is neurotic, but this does not imply a false philosophy. It implies the discovery of facts to which he does not know how to adapt himself.

(21) This dope we call our high standard of living, a violent and complex stimulation of the senses…

(22) [It seems like there are two terrible choices: resurrect myth or say life “is a tale told by an idiot.”

(23) The common error of ordinary religious practice is to mistake the symbol for the reality….

(23) The reality which corresponds to “God” and “eternal life” is honest, above board, plain, and open for all to see. But seeing requires correction of mind….

**(24) Distinction between belief and faith…**

**(26) The hatred of idolatry relates to the worship of symbols. Symbols are not experience.**

**(27) The Vision of God is found in giving up any belief in the idea of God.**

**Pain and Time.**

**(29) For the animal happiness consists in enjoying life in the immediate present – not in the assurance that there is a whole future of joys ahead of him.**

**(30) One can become less vulnerable by becoming less sensitive.**

**(31) If, then, we are to be fully human and fully alive and aware, it seems that we must be willing to suffer for our pleasures. Without such willingness there can be no growth in the intensity of consciousness.**

**To strive for exclusion of pain is to strive for loss of consciousness.**

**Change and motion are the marks of life.**

**(33) Man is concerned to have enjoyable memories and expectations, especially the latter.**

**(34) The present cannot be lived happily unless the past has been cleared up and future is bright with promise.**

**(34) It is of little use to us to be able to remember and predict if it makes us unable to live fully in the present.**

**(36) There is a price to be paid for every increase in consciousness.**

**(37) For if our desires are out of accord with anything that the finite world can offer, it might seem that our nature is not of this world, that our hearts are made, not for the finite, but for infinity.**

**The Great Stream**

**(39) The conscious I and the unconscious me.**

**(40) For perishability and changefulness of the world is part and parcel of its liveliness and loveliness.**

**Motion is an essential ingredient and art, especially photography.**

**(41) The human body lives because it is a complex of motions, of circulation, respiration, and digestion.**

**(42) KEY We easily forget that consciousness also lives because it is moving.**

**(42) Because consciousness includes memories, we have the impression that “I” is something solid and still.**

**(43) We have thus made a problem for ourselves by confusing the intelligible with the fixed.**

**(44) To be meaningful, life must be understandable in terms of fixed ideas and laws….**

**(44) Thoughts and words are conventions.**

**(45) Thoughts and ideas and words are coins for real things.**

**(46) Natural processes are made intelligible by language and fixed ideas.**

**(47) It is extremely hard to describe the most important characteristic of life – its movement and fluidity.**

**Experience is a flowing process without beginning or end.**

**Symbolic representation is, in a sense, fixed. Even if it changes, it doesn’t change at the rate of experience.**

**(51) All the various definitions of the universe have had ulterior motives, being concerned with the future rather than the present.**

**Religion: assure a future beyond death.**

**Science: predictability, postpone death.**