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Mr. Stegall

Test One

Camus

1. The Algerian way of life is about living philosophy (not unlike Hadot’s theory of philosophy as a way of life) the way people live religion. In a happy death Camus presents Mersault as a rather common 9-5 guy who realizes he has become stuck in the daily grind of life. That is until he comes across Zagreus, who gives him a unique opportunity to live the Algerian life by killing him. Zagreus is tired of living life with no legs and enlists Mersault to do the one thing he can’t do. Once Mersault assists in the suicide of Zagreus he receives a substantial reward which allows him to shed the chains of ordinary life. He travels to live the full life of experiences he yearned for while trapped in the mundane existence he had before. The Algerian/Mediterranean way of life is about embracing life and living in the moment. Our normal lives prevent us from having the time to embrace life in this way.

Nietzsche

1. Nietzsche concluded to live is to suffer and the only real question is how to interpret that suffering as a Christian or tragic meaning. We can either embrace one meaning in its entirety with no room for any parts of the other. If you embrace the entropy of the world and a limited temporal existence, then and only then, can you find the harmony of coexisting with that type of environment. This creates a quest like dichotomy to find the best way to achieve such a balance, but also creates the hardened strength from experience. While we must simply accept the flow of time we can however, find hope in the journey to the end of our time.

2. Nietzsche begins to explain the idea of morality as good and evil, but good isn’t necessarily doing good but tasks accomplished by good people. Say a great warrior destroys a neighboring enemy’s village. The village of the destroyer will celebrate him as a hero while the destroyed village will vilify him as evil, but the villages destruction is neither good or bad. So, he builds upon that by explaining that the nobles then controlled the narrative and decided that their own traits are good because of their good standing. President Nixon ran into this problem years later where he disastrously asserted he couldn’t have committed a crime because he was president and therefore couldn’t commit a crime as the chief executive of justice. Slave morality is born out of the resentment of the noble class and being cannon fodder for their noble quests or ideals. The noble morality can only be held by nobles since such traits wouldn’t serve well in the herd mentality of the lower classes. The lower classes of society even to this day are heavily reliant on others so the idea of doing for one’s self and especially at the great expense of others would seem abhorrent. This contemptuous relationship with the noble class results in a complete rejection of their ideals as evil or unworthy of praise.

Part Two

1. Nietzsche is saying that some profound idea about life comes from a person, so it inherits some properties of that person. A person could only reach that idea after living their own life, which is different from person to person, and reflects those formative experiences.

2. Kierkegaard uses his character Don Juan as an example of philosophy as a way of life by highlighting his lack of an ethos is his undoing. Don Juan is presented as a rash and passionate man of love, but his short-sided love for the aesthetic life is problematic. If he merely adopted an ethical philosophy, he could more efficiently woo his lovers and have extra time to enjoy the fruits of his labor.

3. I don’t think Camus would approve of the hunger artist simply because of all the other life he is denying by this commitment, but I think he would respect it. I think Kierkegaard would fully endorse the hunger artist because he found an idea worth living and dying for. Since Nietzsche deeply respected the noble morality, I think he would vehemently approve of the hunger artist.

4. The absurd is our universe, and the nothing that follows is the universes answer to us. The universe provides no intrinsic reasoning and unifying elements to guide humanity in its ever-frustrating search for those very things. I think humanity has mostly accepted that we won’t get answers in the traditional way we expect answers. God or science won’t appear in some tangible form and tell us the answers we need but sharing our experiences and thoughts can be the next best thing.

5. The myth of Silenus follows king Midas during his pursuit of Silenus, who was known to be a wise companion of Dionysus. Midas is in a deep pursuit of the answer to a nagging question of what is best for all men? He captures Silenus and attempts to find the answer to which Silenus tries to warn him the answer may not be what he is expecting. Eventually Silenus confess the answer to the question and tells Midas that the best thing for all men is to have never been born. That we are unlucky to be the sperm that makes it to the egg and the millions who perished without knowing life are the truly lucky ones. I mention a novel by Chuck Palahniuk called “The House on Paper Street” in which the protagonist spends his adult life building a purely aesthetic life, and his sub conscious manifests as a spilt personality. The story ends with him having to confront this revelation and accept that he was living a disingenuous life.

6. Since the presence of a snow storm would lead me to believe its winter, I would have to argue for having a Saturday class. During the winter we all mostly stay inside and try to keep warm, so there isn’t much to do in the way of actual experience. Why waste that time huddled in doors not gaining valuable experience?