Introduction to Philosophy

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

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CONTENTS

PROLOGUE

This *Introduction to Philosophy: An Anthology* is a collection of essential readings from a wide variety of contemporary writers and philosophers designed to help students unfamiliar with philosophy understand that they know more than they think. Where you were born, the environment you are raised in, the work you do, the languages you speak, and the beliefs you hold shape your view of the world. The questions you ask in those spaces and the answers you give to those questions depend in part on your lived experiences in those spaces. An important element of this open education resource (OER), being grounded through a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) lens, is designed to help students grapple with philosophical concepts in a way that links directly to their own lived experience. Why is this important? Well, incorporating deeper discussions involving inequities in our society can allow students to broaden their perspectives and experiences beyond what they already know. From a young age, we all tend to ask our parents and teachers a lot of questions: "Why this?" "What about that?" "Who am I?" When we add a DEI lens, we broaden our understanding and perspective to be more inclusive and equitable. So, when you approach the study of philosophy through this OER, you are entering the land of many questions and answers, but mostly, questions about the self, searching for reasons for our values and beliefs, and understanding good reasons for our answers by making connections to each other.

This OER asks students to think about how they think and how they know what they know. Students will start by challenging assumptions and flexing those critical thinking skills we all have—not just in an abstract way but in a practical, everyday way. Students will explore the branches of philosophy, including metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics, by asking questions like: "Where did we come from?" "How do we know right from wrong?" "Who are we?" "Why are we here?" "How should we live?" "What does "a good life" mean?" and "Why do bad things happen?"

Throughout this OER, students will practice recognizing and assessing our all-too-human assumptions, cultivating arguments, and learning to justify their beliefs and values clearly and rationally by asking deeper, more probing questions they face in their lives and the world. Even if we disagree with an argument, when we examine branches of philosophy, including metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, and social and political philosophy, we can learn from other people and, through their experiences, to respect differing opinions or views. Engaging in this philosophical work means we can agree to disagree by respectfully listening and reading.

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Suggested Readings

[Massachusetts Center for Native American Awareness](#)
[A guide to Indigenous land acknowledgment](#)
'[We are all on Native Land: A conversation about Land Acknowledgements](#)' (YouTube video)
[Native-Land.ca | Our home on native land](#) (mapping of native lands)
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PART I
CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

If this is your first exposure to the study of philosophy, then you will quickly notice that philosophy is both seriously weird and weirdly serious. It is seriously weird because it takes on topics that don't fit into other areas of study. This isn't a coincidence; philosophy has a long history of asking questions before there's enough clarity to start answering those questions. Once there is enough clarity, then a new type of knowledge is born. Before science, there was natural philosophy. Before psychology, there was the philosophy of mind. Before an area becomes systematic and comprehensible, philosophy explores the landscape, mapping at least the more interesting properties and what connections there seem to be. So, almost by definition, if a question is philosophical, it will likely seem strange.

Philosophy is also weirdly serious since it doesn't brush past questions which are often otherwise dismissed.

How can you have free will if you are just a biological machine? Why would an all-powerful, benevolent, and wise deity create evil? What does it mean for something to exist?

You can imagine asking these questions without expecting an answer; in this book, you will read what philosophers who took those questions seriously came up with. Whether or not you agree with those answers, you will see that it is possible to make progress, to not just give up without any answer. If those questions and the other ones you'll see in this book matter to you, then being able to answer them will be a matter of the utmost seriousness for you.

This introduction to philosophy will touch on some key questions that have been around for centuries and that neither science nor religion have addressed to the general satisfaction of those who wonder. This book isn't comprehensive; there is more to be said on every one of these issues. This book isn't authoritative; there are other voices to be heard and approaches to attempt to address the same questions. This book isn't conclusive; if you find that there's more that you need to know, then this will be just the beginning for you. This book is a starting point. Hopefully, it will also be a source of inspiration for your philosophical journey.

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Chapter 1 Prompt

The Trolley Problem, a classic ethical thought experiment, presents a situation where one must make a difficult decision involving the potential sacrifice of lives. Let's consider our decision-making process and the implications of those choices.

You are standing next to a trolley track. A trolley is coming down the track, and you can pull a lever to divert it onto another track. On the current track, five people are tied down and will be hit by the trolley if you do nothing. On the other track, there is one person tied down. You must decide whether to pull the lever to divert the trolley, sacrificing one person to save five.

Now, consider the backgrounds of the individuals involved. For instance, would this influence your decision if the five people on the track and the one person on the alternate track come from different socio-economic or racial backgrounds? If one person on the alternate track is from a historically marginalized community, would it change the ethical evaluation?

The Trolley Problem

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PART II
CHAPTER 2 - WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

The chapter explores the nature of philosophy and its various branches, emphasizing the importance of philosophical inquiry in addressing questions that fall outside the scope of science. It highlights metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics as the three main areas of philosophical investigation.

Metaphysics delves into fundamental questions about the nature of reality, such as the existence of God, the nature of free will, the concept of time, and the existence of non-physical entities like numbers and properties. While historically, there have been various metaphysical positions, contemporary analytic metaphysics aims to understand how these claims about reality logically fit together. Metaphysicians analyze metaphysical puzzles and seek to comprehend the realm of possibility and necessity.

Epistemology focuses on knowledge and justified belief, addressing questions about what constitutes knowledge, the limitations of knowledge, skepticism, and rational justification for beliefs. It also examines the similarities and challenges faced by scientific and moral knowledge, as well as the reasonableness of beliefs in the absence of absolute certainty.

Ethics concerns what we ought to do, how we should live, and how our communities should be organized. It challenges traditional views that tie morality solely to religious or societal commands, emphasizing that moral reasoning and reflection play a crucial role in ethical deliberation.

This chapter also addresses the reemergence of metaphysics in contemporary philosophy and the critical examination of scientific and moral knowledge, highlighting the intricate and interconnected nature of philosophical inquiries across different branches.

Overall, this chapter is a comprehensive overview of philosophical inquiry's diverse and intricate nature. It emphasizes philosophy's significance in addressing fundamental questions that lie beyond the scope of science and underscores the continued relevance and vitality of philosophical investigations in contemporary discourse.

Skuster, Marc. "An Introduction to Philosophy, Second Edition". OER Commons. Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education, 18 Sep. 2020. Web. 01 Mar. 2024.

Many answers have been proposed in reply to the question that is the title of his chapter, but most are aiming at something similar. My favorite answer is that philosophy is all of rational inquiry except for science.

Perhaps you think science exhausts inquiry. About a hundred years ago, many philosophers, especially those known as [Logical Positivists](#), thought there was nothing we could intelligibly inquire into *except* scientific matters. But this view is probably not right. What branch of science addresses the question of whether or not science covers all of rational inquiry? If the question strikes you as puzzling, this might be because you already recognize that whether or not science can answer every question is not itself a scientific issue. Questions about the limits of human inquiry and knowledge are philosophical questions.

Philosophical inquiry

We can get a better understanding of philosophy by considering what sorts of things other than scientific issues humans might inquire into. Philosophical issues are as diverse and far ranging as those we find in the sciences, but a great many of them fall into one of three big topic areas: metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics.

Metaphysics is concerned with the nature of reality. Traditional metaphysical issues include the existence of God and the nature of human free will (assuming we have any). Here are a few metaphysical questions of interest to contemporary philosophers: What is a thing? How are space and time related? Does the past exist? How about the future? How many dimensions does the world have? Are there any entities beyond physical objects (like numbers, properties, and relations)? If so, how are they related to physical objects? Historically, many philosophers have proposed and defended specific metaphysical positions, often as part of systematic and comprehensive metaphysical views. But attempts to establish systematic metaphysical worldviews have been notoriously unsuccessful.

Since the 19th century, many philosophers and scientists have been understandably suspicious of metaphysics, and it has frequently been dismissed as a waste of time, or worse, as meaningless. But in just the past few decades, metaphysics has returned to vitality. As difficult as they are to resolve, metaphysical issues are also difficult to ignore for long. Contemporary analytic metaphysics is typically taken to have more modest aims than definitively settling on the final and complete truth about the underlying nature of reality. A better way to understand metaphysics as it is currently practiced is as aiming at better understanding how various claims about reality logically hang together or conflict. Metaphysicians analyze metaphysical puzzles and problems with the goal of better understanding how things could or could not be. Metaphysicians are in the business of exploring the realm of possibility and necessity. They are explorers of logical space.

Epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge and justified belief. What is knowledge? Can we have any knowledge at all? Can we have knowledge about the laws of nature, the laws of morality, or the existence of other minds? The view that we can't have knowledge is called **skepticism**. An extreme form of skepticism denies that we can have any knowledge whatsoever. But we might grant that we can have knowledge about some things and remain skeptical concerning other issues. Many people, for instance, are not skeptics

about scientific knowledge but are skeptics when it comes to knowledge of morality. Later in this course, we will entertain some skeptical worries about science, and we will consider whether ethics is really in a more precarious position. Some critical attention reveals that scientific knowledge and moral knowledge face many of the same skeptical challenges and share some similar resources in addressing those challenges. Many of the popular reasons for being more skeptical about morality than science turn on philosophical confusions we will address and attempt to clear up.

Even if we lack absolute and certain knowledge of many things, our beliefs about those things might yet be more or less reasonable or more or less likely to be true given the limited evidence we have. Epistemology is also concerned with what it is for a belief to be rationally justified. Even if we can't have a certain knowledge of anything (or much), questions about what we ought to believe remain relevant.

While epistemology is concerned with what we ought to believe and how we ought to reason, **Ethics** is concerned with what we ought to do, how we ought to live, and how we ought to organize our communities. Sadly, it comes as a surprise to many new philosophy students that you can reason about such things. Religiously inspired views about morality often take right and wrong to be simply a matter of what is commanded by a divine being. **Moral Relativism**, perhaps the most popular opinion among people who have rejected faith, simply substitutes the commands of society for the commands of God. Commands are simply to be obeyed; they are not to be inquired into, assessed for reasonableness, or tested against the evidence. Thinking of morality in terms of whose commands are authoritative leaves no room for rational inquiry into how we ought to live, how we ought to treat others, or how we ought to structure our communities. Philosophy, on the other hand, takes seriously the possibility of rational inquiry into these matters. If philosophy has not succeeded in coming up with absolutely certain and definitive answers in ethics, this is in part because philosophers take the answers to moral questions to be things we need to discover, not simply matters of somebody's saying so. The long and difficult history of science should give us some humble recognition of how difficult and frustrating careful inquiry and investigation can be. So we don't know for certain what the laws of morality are. We also don't have a unified field theory in physics. Why expect morality to be any easier?

So we might think of metaphysics as concerned with "What is it?" questions, epistemology as concerned with "How do we know?" questions, and ethics as concerned with "What should we do about it?" questions. Many interesting lines of inquiry cut across these three kinds of questions. The philosophy of science, for instance, is concerned with metaphysical issues about what science is, but also with epistemological questions about how we can know scientific truths. The philosophy of love is similarly concerned with metaphysical questions about what love is. But it is also concerned with questions about the value of love that are more ethical in character.

Assorted tangled vines of inquiry branch off from the three major trunks of philosophy, intermingle between them, and ultimately intermingle with scientific issues as well. The notion that some branches of human inquiry can proceed entirely independently of others ultimately becomes difficult to sustain. The scientist who neglects philosophy runs the same risk of ignorance as the philosopher who neglects science.

What is the Value of Philosophy

Philosophy is a branch of human inquiry and as such it aims at knowledge and understanding. We might expect that the value of philosophy lies in the value of the ends that it seeks, the knowledge and understanding it reveals. But philosophy is rather notorious for failing to establish definitive knowledge on the matters it investigates. I'm not so sure this reputation is well deserved. We do learn much from doing philosophy. Philosophy often clearly reveals why some initially attractive answers to big philosophical questions are deeply problematic, for instance. But granted, philosophy often frustrates our craving for straightforward convictions.

Bertrand Russell on the Value of Philosophy

Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) argues that there is great value in doing philosophy precisely because it frustrates our desire for quick easy answers. In denying us easy answers to big questions and undermining complacent convictions, philosophy liberates us from narrow-minded conventional thinking and opens our minds to new possibilities. Philosophy often provides an antidote to prejudice not by settling big questions, but by revealing just how hard it is to settle those questions. It can lead us to question our comfortably complacent conventional opinions.

We humans are very prone to suffer from a psychological predicament we might call "the security blanket paradox." We know the world is full of hazards, and like passengers after a shipwreck, we tend to latch on to something for a sense of safety. We might cling to a possession, another person, our cherished beliefs, or any combination of these. The American pragmatist philosopher **Charles Sanders Peirce** (1839-1914) speaks of doubt and uncertainty as uncomfortable anxiety-producing states. This would help explain why we tend to cling, even desperately, to beliefs we find comforting. This clinging strategy, however, leads us into a predicament that becomes clear once we notice that having a security blanket just gives us one more thing to worry about. In addition to worrying about our own safety, we now are anxious about our security blanket getting lost or damaged. The asset becomes a liability. The clinging strategy for dealing with uncertainty and fear becomes counterproductive.

While not calling it by this name, Russell describes the intellectual consequences of the **security blanket paradox** vividly:

> *The man who has no tincture of philosophy goes through life imprisoned in the prejudices derived from common sense, from the habitual beliefs of his age or his nation, and from convictions which have grown up in his mind without the cooperation or consent of his deliberate reason. . . The life of the instinctive man is shut up within the circle of his private interests. . . In such a life there is something feverish and confined, in comparison with which the philosophic life is calm and free. The private world of instinctive interests is a small one, set in the midst of a great and powerful world which must, sooner or later, lay our private world in ruins.*

The primary value of philosophy according to Russell is that it loosens the grip of uncritically held opinion and opens the mind to a liberating range of new possibilities to explore.

> *The value of philosophy is, in fact, to be sought largely in its very uncertainty. . . Philosophy, though unable to tell us with certainty what is the true answer to the doubts which it raises, is able to suggest many possibilities which enlarge our thoughts and free them from the tyranny of custom. Thus, while diminishing our feeling of certainty as to what things are, it greatly increases our knowledge as to what they may be; it removes the somewhat arrogant dogmatism of those who have never traveled into the region of liberating doubt, and it keeps alive our sense of wonder by showing familiar things in an unfamiliar aspect.*

Here we are faced with a stark choice between the feeling of safety we might derive from clinging to opinions we are accustomed to and the liberation that comes with loosening our grip on these in order to explore new ideas. The paradox of the security blanket should make it clear what choice we should consider rational. Russell, of course, compellingly affirms choosing the liberty of free and open inquiry.

Must we remain forever uncertain about philosophical matters? Russell does hold that some philosophical questions appear to be unanswerable (at least by us). But he doesn't say this about every philosophical issue. In fact, he gives credit to philosophical successes for the birth of various branches of the sciences. Many of the philosophical questions we care most deeply about, however – like whether our lives are significant, whether there is an objective value that transcends our subjective interests – sometimes seem to be unsolvable and so remain perennial philosophical concerns. But we shouldn't be too certain about this either. Russell is hardly the final authority on what in philosophy is or isn't resolvable. Keep in mind that Russell was writing 100 years ago and a lot has happened in philosophy in the meantime (not in small part thanks to Russell's own definitive contributions). Problems that looked unsolvable to the best experts a hundred years ago often look quite solvable by current experts. The sciences are no different in this regard. The structure of DNA would not have been considered knowable fairly recently. That there was such a structure to discover could not even have been conceivable prior to Mendel and Darwin (and here we are only talking 150 years ago).

Further, it is often possible to make real progress in understanding issues even when they can't be definitively settled. We can often rule out many potential answers to philosophical questions even when we can't narrow things down to a single correct answer. And we can learn a great deal about the implications of and challenges for the possible answers that remain.

Even where philosophy can't settle an issue, it's not quite correct to conclude that there is no right answer. When we can't settle an issue this usually just tells us something about our own limitations. There may still be a specific right answer; we just can't tell conclusively what it is. It's easy to appreciate this point with a non-philosophical issue. Perhaps we can't know whether or not there is intelligent life on other planets. But surely there is or there isn't intelligent life on other planets. Similarly, we may never establish that humans do or don't have free will, but it still seems that there must be some fact of the matter. It would be intellectually arrogant of us to think that a question has no right answer just because we aren't able to figure out what that answer is.

("An Introduction to Philosophy," Second Edition 2020, Marc Skuster)

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Chapter 2 Prompt

What is Philosophy? Can I be your friend?

In reading Marc Skuster's chapter on what philosophy is, he describes three main areas of philosophical inquiry: metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics.

Consider the following philosophical questions that cut across all three areas in relation to the concept of friendship: What does "friendship" mean to you? Is it okay to lie to a friend? Are your friends much different from who you are? (E.g., different culture, class, ethnicity, etc.) How do you know someone is a good friend? Which is most important to you: the metaphysical, epistemological, or ethical question, as it relates to friendship?

PART III

CHAPTER 3 - THE MIND: SUBSTANCE DUALISM OF DESCARTES

The French philosopher René Descartes is widely known as one of the most influential figures in modern philosophy. He is famous for his theory of substance dualism, which posits that the mind and the body are two distinct substances. According to Descartes, the body is material, while the mind is immaterial. This perspective allows for the existence of immaterial human souls. Descartes' arguments on the immaterial nature of the mind and soul have had a lasting impact, shaping the discourse on the philosophy of mind, and continue to be debated in contemporary theories.

Descartes' philosophy of mind was a response to the decline of the traditional Aristotelian concept of substance. He addressed the Aristotelian view, which held that every substance is composed of matter determined by its form. In the case of living things, the soul was seen as what made a body alive and gave it its essence. Descartes questioned whether the soul, particularly the human mind, exists independently of the body.

The traditional Aristotelian approach viewed the form of a plant or an animal as their soul, and their destruction meant the loss of that form. However, the unique case of human beings presented the possibility that the mind may survive the death of the body. This idea of the immortality of the human mind has been a topic of philosophical and religious discussion throughout history.

Descartes' theory of substances departs from the traditional Aristotelian approach. While he acknowledges the concept of substantial forms, he considers them unnecessary in his explanations. Instead, Descartes proposes that any material thing is merely an aggregate of qualities and properties. This departure from traditional views stirred debate and influenced subsequent philosophical discourses.

In response to Descartes' substance dualism, philosopher Gilbert Ryle critiqued the idea of the mind and body being distinct entities that communicate with each other. Ryle argued that if Descartes' theory were accurate, the mind would be separate from the body, rendering it incapable of causing actions in the physical world. Ryle's criticism, along with other contemporary perspectives, illustrates the ongoing debate regarding Descartes' views on substance dualism.

Overall, Descartes' arguments for substance dualism and the immaterial nature of the mind have played a crucial role in the development of the philosophy of mind. His departure from traditional Aristotelian concepts and the ensuing debates it sparked have significantly influenced philosophical discourse, making Descartes a pivotal figure in the history of philosophy.

René Descartes (1596-1650) was a French philosopher who is often studied as the first great philosopher in the era of "modern philosophy." He is the most famous proponent of a view called "substance dualism," which states that the mind and the body are two different substances. While the body is material (corporeal), the mind is immaterial (incorporeal). This view leaves room for human souls, which are usually understood as immaterial. Descartes argued on the basis of the Christian views that souls are immaterial and can exist separate from the body, but he emphasized that the mind alone is immaterial, whereas the other traditional functions of the soul can be explained as corporeal operations. His view and arguments were so influential that after him many philosophers referred to substance dualism under Descartes' name as "Cartesian dualism." In his explanation of the mind, the soul, and the ability of humans to understand the world around them through the powers of their minds, Descartes remains one of the most influential figures not just in modern philosophy but also throughout the history of philosophy. Even in the contemporary era, philosophers such as Gilbert Ryle (1900-1976) found worth in writing about and arguing against Descartes' views to set up their own theories. Ryle questioned whether the mind and body are in fact distinct and argued that they would not communicate with each other if they were. Ryle states:

> Body and mind are ordinarily harnessed together....[T]he things and events which belong to the physical world...are external, while the workings of [a person's] own mind are internal....[This results in the] partly metaphorical representation of the bifurcation of a person's two lives. (1945, 11-16)

Ryle stated that, if Descartes' theory were correct, the mind would be a mere "ghost in a machine," inactive and unable to cause actions in the body (the machine). Ryle did not term Decartes' theory "substance dualism" but "Descartes' myth." Descartes' arguments for substance dualism and the immaterial nature of the mind and soul are therefore paramount to any investigation of the philosophy of mind and are still being debated in present-day theories. On the other hand, with his interpretation of what he calls passions (most operations of a living body), he also provides incentives for a non-dualistic physicalism of the mind.

The Traditional Concept of Substance

Descartes' philosophy of mind was a response to the erosion of the traditional Aristotelian concept of substance after the Middle Ages. According to the Aristotelian view, any substance is composed of matter that is determined by the form that is its essence. So every living thing is a body conjoined with its soul (namely,

what makes it alive as such or such thing). In other words, an animal is an animate body. The soul of a dog makes that bundle of flesh and bones a dog. The peculiar case of human beings is that this soul is also an intellect: the rational mind. In that case, then, the soul (and certainly the mind) is something other than the body; it is non-material (or incorporeal) because it forms and enlivens the material body. So the question arises: is the soul (or at least the human mind) something that exists on its own?

In the traditional Aristotelian approach, the form of a ship (what makes it look like a ship and makes the ship body float on water) is nothing separate from the ship, except that we can have a concept of it even if there is no ship around. But what about the form of a plant or an animal? The form of plants and animals is their soul. When they are destroyed, the form that makes them alive (with growth, movement, and senses) is gone. With human beings, that might be different: the mind may survive the death of the body. Some ancient thinkers argued that the mind or the soul survives death and enters another body, be that a person or a beast: the transmigration of souls or reincarnation. The Christian theory of humans teaches that the soul of an individual is created at the same time as the person; however, it lives on after the death of the person: the human intellect is immaterial and immortal. This is why some Christians venerate saints and why some occultists invoke deceased persons for conversation.

The essence of things (whether an artifact like a ship or the souls of plants, animals, and humans) was termed the thing's "substantial form." Forms make and express the substance of things. The thing's substantial form makes a thing what it is and makes it possible to conceive of it and to know it.

This is where Descartes starts his theory of substances. In a letter to Henricus Regius (1598-1679), Descartes states that he does not reject substantial forms but finds them "unnecessary in setting out my explanations" (AT III492, CSM III 205)[1]. He clearly sees them as a mere explanatory tool that may be replaced by a better one. Instead, Descartes suggests any material thing is only an aggregate of qualities and properties. He argues, in the same letter, against the habit to apply "substantial form" when defining the human being. He warns that to speak of substantial form both for humans and material things carries the risk to misunderstand the soul as something corporeal and material. Instead, he suggests limiting the term "substantial form" to the immaterial human soul alone in order to emphasize that the soul's nature is "quite different" from the essence of things that "emerge from the potentiality of matter." He says that "[T]his difference in nature opens the easiest route to demonstrating [the soul's] non-materiality and immortality" (AT III 503, 505; CSM III 208). In order to elevate the soul to a level above bodily things, he downplays non-human things as mere upshots of matter. This letter shows that Descartes' primary concerns are with method more than with facts and that he aims at separating material fields of knowledge from the soul.

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1. Descartes' works are cited by the standard French edition C. Adam and P. Tannery (eds.), *Oeuvres de Descartes*. Paris: Vrin, 1964-1976, "AT" with volume and page number; the standard English translation J. G. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, D. Murdoch, and A. Kenny (trs.), *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, 3 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985-1991, "CSM" with volume and page number.

Immaterial Nature of the Soul

Descartes attempts to reconcile having an immaterial soul within a largely scientific (and physicalist) framework. This leads to some surprising turns within his theory that are quite different from previous theories on substances. Ultimately, Descartes' view is dualist because, although he renders all earthly substances material (and understandable to science), one thing remains that is a true immaterial substance with an essence: the human soul. Animals and human bodies, because they are parts of the physical world, are not strictly substances with essences; they are more properly aggregates. He argues from what we can know (epistemology) instead of what there is (metaphysics), and this method directs his views on substances.

From the very beginning of his research, Descartes aimed at exploring the competence of thought in ascertaining knowledge, and in doing so he wrote *Rules for the Direction of the Mind* in search for assurance in science. This view would later be called "rationalism" because he prioritized the functions of intellect, imagination, sense perception, and memory. Rationalism influenced a long line of philosophers from the modern era throughout the contemporary era in philosophy. He later recommended a reduction of human knowledge from simple concepts and propositions. This method, as expounded in Rule XII, relies on the human mind as a "power." He states: As for the objects of knowledge, it is enough if we examine the following three questions: What presents itself to us spontaneously? How can one thing be known on the basis of something else? What conclusions can be drawn from each of these?

Notice his emphasis on the understanding of objective knowledge. The question is not "What *is* it?" but "How does it *appear* to me?" and "How does it connect with what I know?" Investigating the nature of the mind is of primary importance. Knowledge of objects themselves takes a back seat to the inner workings of the mind.

Descartes describes the intellect as "the power through which we know things in the strict sense [that] is purely spiritual, and is … distinct from the whole body." To explain this power is difficult; Descartes explains that "nothing quite like this power is to be found in corporeal things." It is the intellect that applies itself to seeing, touching, and so on; and only it can "act on its own," that is, to understand. Although it may appear to be a trifle, Descartes does not make positive claims here but buffers everything with "it is said" (*dicitur*): the mind "is said" to see, touch, imagine, or understand. What counts is that this mental power can both receive sense data and refer to themes that have nothing corporeal at all (AT X 410-417, CSM I 39-43).

In his last work, *The Passions of the Soul*, Descartes focuses on those activities that are not thoughts in the abstract sense but "passions": "those perceptions, sensations or emotions of the soul which we refer particularly to it" (AT XI 349, CSM I 338f., art. 27). The body has a number of functions (movement, for instance); and the soul has two basic functions that are kinds of thought, namely, volition and perceptions. Volitions are activities, whereas perceptions are passive motions that do not originate from the soul itself (AT XI 349, CSM I 338f., art. 17). If a person desires something or resolves to do something, that is an activity of the soul; if a person sees or hears something, that impression does not come from inside but from outside—the soul is affected rather than active. This soul is not a member of the body; therefore, it has the surprising

property of not having any location in the body, but being "really joined to the whole body" precisely for being non-local, not extended, and immaterial. On the one hand, Descartes is reiterating the traditional Aristotelian understanding of ensoulment (the soul as shorthand for the life of animated things); on the other hand, he is enforcing the concept of the body as a whole organism: since the soul is conjoined with the body as a whole, body and soul together appear to be an organism. The organism is an ensemble ("assemblage") of material function (AT XI 351, CSM I 339, art. 30). A strictly physicalist and non-dualist explanation of sensations and passions is lurking in the background. Under a physicalist (i.e. materialist) view, everything (including the mind) can be explained physically; there is no need to refer to anything outside physics. The stakes are high for a philosophy of mind because conceiving of the body as an organism might lead to explaining all psychical movements as mere functioning of body parts. Descartes moves boldly in this direction.

The questions he answers in this treatise, *The Passions of the Soul*, before classifying and explaining the six basic passions, are: How are these corporeal passions conveyed to the mind and how does the mind impact bodily functions due to emotions? To answer these questions, Descartes employs the Stoic concept of animal spirits. According to the Stoic theory, a tenuous body, located in the brain, links the mind with corporeal operations. This view was *en vogue* in the early seventeenth century, for instance in Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639) (1999). Descartes' animal spirits are "a certain very fine air or wind" that shuttle between the brain and the body parts (AT XI 332, CSM I 330, art. 7; Sepper 2016, 26-28). They must be like little messengers that travel between body parts and mind and seem to understand both languages of the body and mind. They are called "spirits" but are expressly described as very fine bodies coming from the blood. In order to make that plausible, an example Descartes gives will help.

> *Wonder is a sudden surprise of the soul....It has two causes: first, an impression in the brain, which represents the object as something unusual and consequently worthy of special consideration; and secondly, a movement of the spirits, which the impression disposes of both to flow with great force to the place in the brain where it is located so as to strengthen and preserve it there, and also to pass into the muscles which serve to keep the sense organs fixed in the same orientation so that they will continue to maintain the impression in the way in which they formed it.* (AT XI 380f., CSM I 353, art. 70)

But how do those minute spirits work to communicate with the mind? Descartes points to the pineal gland, which was the only part of the brain that he knew of that did not come in pairs. This gland, however, is not where Descartes claims the soul resides; the soul itself has no location at all and is tied to the body as a whole. Rather, the fine spirits that fill the cavities of the brain use the gland to unite images and other sense impressions; and it is here where the mind "exercises its functions more particularly than in the other parts of the body" (AT XI 353f., CSM I 339f., art. 30f). The animal spirits mediate between body and mind.

We are left with an apparently strictly physicalist explanation of a great deal of mental activity in a strongly

dualist conception of mind.[2] The soul is a substance and it is of a totally different nature from the body. Moreover, the traditionally so-termed "lower faculties" of the soul (growth, movement, and sensations), which are equally present in animals, are removed from the definition of the human soul and ascribed to the body as an organism. Thinking (beyond the corporeal) is now the only activity of the soul. Traditionally, thinking had been the privilege of the intellectual part of the soul. In Descartes, the soul now means "rational mind." In his work on the *Passions*, Descartes explicitly refers back to his anatomy and physiology of blood circulation in his earlier *Discourse on Method*, where he also relies on animal spirits when presenting his research project of natural science (AT VI 54, CSM I 138, part 5). Hence *The Passions of the Soul* does not in principle deviate from the program of the *Discourse*.

In Part 5 of the *Discourse*, Descartes explicitly separates functions that are commonly attributed to the mind from the soul proper. Even speech can be found in animals as long as it is nothing but an indicator of some passions and, hence, can be imitated by machines.[3] While these functions can be compared with clockwork, the soul cannot be reduced to matter (AT VI 58f., CSM I 140f). The human and the animal bodies are like robots that perform activities, including sense perception and communication. The mind comes in addition to that machine. Hence Gilbert Ryle's criticism that the mind is a mere "ghost in the machine."

What we find in the *Discourse* is the encounter of Descartes the scientist with Descartes the philosopher of knowledge. The early *Rules* had investigated the order of thinking for the sake of reliable interpretations of reality; the late *Passions* executed that in a paradigmatic way and showed to what extent methodical thinking can achieve scientific knowledge of one of the most insecure areas of research, human emotions. The *Discourse* links both efforts. It stresses the method.

On the Way to Substance Dualism

Descartes entertained a notion of body, and of matter in general, that escapes the traditional terminology of substances. Descartes' famous *cogito ergo sum*, often translated as "I think; therefore I am," identifies thinking as the essence of everything that thinks. What is important for the notion of substance is that the content of what that thing is deliberately remains open. In a letter, Descartes claims that nothing material can be assuredly known to exist, whereas "the soul is a being or substance which is not at all corporeal, whose nature is solely to think" (AT I 353, CSM III 55). Descartes wavers between using terms such as "being," "substance," and "nature" (*estre, substance, nature*), which indicates that he is not committed to the professional philosophical terminology and concepts of his time. There is an incorporeal substance that exists by way of performing the thinking and that is all that the mind can know. Descartes' method approaches something like substance

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2. Cf. the "Fifth Responses" in the *Meditations*, AT VII 230, CSM II 161.

3. It sounds like an anticipation of John Searle's "Chinese Room": exchanging signs does not entail thinking.

dualism in the further development of his theories. In the *Meditations on First Philosophy,* he elaborates on the mental experiment of reducing the soul to mere thought. The major purpose of this text is to prove that the soul is immaterial (if not immortal). The reduction of the soul to mind yields the certainty of "I am, I exist," which is necessarily true, whenever it is mentally conceived (AT VII 25, CSM II 17; 2nd med.). Once again we see the mind guaranteeing its own existence. After contrasting this existence with that of corporeal particulars and objects, Descartes pronounces that "I am, then, in the strict sense only a thing that thinks" (AT VII 27, CSM II 18). In the sixth meditation, Descartes distinguishes material objects from mind and stresses:

> I have a clear and distinct idea of myself, in so far as I am simply a thinking, non-extended thing (*res cogitans, non extensa*); and on the other hand, I have a distinct idea of body, in so far as this is simply an extended, non-thinking thing (*res extensa, non cogitans*). (AT VII 78, CSM II 54)

This talk of thinking thing vs. extended thing (*res cogitans* vs. *res extensa*) suggests a clear dualism of mind and body. They are mutually exclusive substances that appear to make up the world. At this point, the fourth objection in the *Meditations*, raised by Antoine Arnauld (1612-1694), should be taken into account. Arnauld surmises that Descartes is either siding with Platonists who hold that the soul is the only constituent of a human being and that uses the body as a tool, or he is offering a traditional abstraction as geometers do who abstract figures from complex reality (AT VII 203f., CSM II 143). Platonists tend to deny the dignity of material things and see all reality as results of spirit; geometers deal with mere abstractions (as anyone knows who tries to draw a perfect circle). In both cases, the dualism would be dissolved. In reply, Descartes admits that this interpretation is possible but insists that the real distinction of mind from body is the result of attentive meditation (AT VII 228f., CSM II 160f.).

Reshaping the Concept of Substance

As pointed out repeatedly, Descartes is working with and around traditional philosophical terminology while trying to escape it. Therefore, it is worth seeing how he defines "substance" in his *Principles of Philosophy*. One interpretation is that substance means "independent existence" and hence applies only to God, who is defined as perfect and not dependent on anything. However, in the material world, we learn about substances through the properties that appear to us. We don't see a lake as a substance; what we see is the shiny surface of the water, surrounded by a shore, which leads us to perceive the lake. The "principal attributes" of body and mind are notably extension and thinking, respectively (AT VIII 24f., CSM I 210f., sections 51-53). Descartes was careful not to jump to conclusions about the actual existence of material substances separate from their attributes. Hence he uses the imprecise word "thing" when referring to himself as essentially a thinking thing. The Latin term is *res*. Like "thing" in modern English, *res* has no ontological claim whatsoever; that is, when

we say "thing," we avoid explaining what we mean and whether it is real. It is the "something" that language can point out without saying what it is.[4]

We may conclude that Descartes was aware of the temptation to present mind and body as competing and cooperating substances and he tried to escape the dualism, not only because any dualism is in need of some mediation, as the involvement of animal spirits proves, but also and foremost because of its explanatory deficits. On the one hand, his view appears to embrace the dualism that comes with inherited language (for instance from Platonism and Aristotelianism). On the other hand, if the philosophical problem of the mind is that of understanding human knowledge, then understanding must be accessible to material beings and not within the realm of the immaterial. Therefore, Ryle was right to believe that Descartes fundamentally missed the task of understanding the mind.

To summarize the main points of the role of Descartes at the origin of modern philosophy of mind and specifically of substance dualism: Descartes aimed initially at proving that the human soul is immaterial (as Christian doctrine teaches); for that purpose, he emphasized the certainty of rational thinking and its independence from body and material objects. This led him to the (still debated) question of how the mind can work with the body in the process of sense perceptions, feelings, etc. His response engaged the theory of "animal spirits," tenuous bodies that shuttle between the mind and the organs. As a consequence, he explained a great deal of intellectual functions (perceptions, emotions, etc.) in purely physical terms. At the same time, he underlined the immateriality of thinking. In traditional philosophical terminology, this amounted to the theory of two totally distinct substances: mind and body. However, it should be noted that Descartes undermined the concept of substance and reduced it to something deliberately vague. Therefore, philosophers who cling to the notion of substance as a reality will find substance dualism in Descartes; others, who focus on his attempts at explaining mental operations like perceptions and feelings in corporeal terms, will find him to be a proponent of physicalism.

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4. It is worth noting, perhaps, that the Latin version of the famous statement in the *Discourse* "From this I knew I was a substance ..." modified "substance" by adding "any some thing or substance." Thus the author signaled that he was departing from traditional understanding of substance to a generic "something" (AT VI 558: "rem quondam sive substantiam").

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Chapter 3 Prompt

The Mind of Descartes or The Mind of AI

"I think, therefore I am." Also known as Cogito Ergo Sum, and usually referred to as Cartesian Dualism. The Mind-Body Problem.

This epistemological question is one that everyone has asked themselves at some point: How do I know what I know? How do I know I exist? As you've read this chapter, Descartes developed this revolutionary 17th-century philosophical thinking from a time when the concept of "God" was the sole explanation for our existence. Think about the world today. How have our explanations for our existence changed since Descartes?

Now, think about AI in relation to Descartes's "I think, therefore I am." When you think about artificial intelligence, what happens when AI asks this epistemological question? Can AI ask this question of itself? Or are we as human beings simply using AI to hide behind?

PART IV

CHAPTER 4 - RELIGION: THE INTERTWINING OF PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION IN WESTERN TRADITION

In this chapter, the intertwining of philosophy and religion in the Western tradition is discussed. It is noted that philosophers have often been associated with atheism, but the reality is quite different. Throughout history, philosophy and religion have been closely intertwined, with many philosophers having religious beliefs central to their philosophy. Both philosophy and religion share similar goals in seeking answers to life's "Big Questions" and have sometimes been hard to distinguish from one another.

The chapter delves into the historical relationship between philosophy and religion, highlighting the connection between the two before the Enlightenment. It emphasizes that philosophers and religious believers both engage in discussions about how to live.

Various influential philosophers from different periods are introduced, shedding light on their interactions with religion. The philosophy of Plato is discussed, with a focus on the idea of becoming like God as a way of life. Plato's dialogues are referenced to illustrate how his descriptions of philosophy and wisdom resemble out-of-body experiences, with a long tradition of interpreting his work as discussing mystical knowledge about reality and God.

Aristotle's "metaphysics" is mentioned, noting that he referred to it as "theology." Prior to Plato and Aristotle, the pre-Socratic philosophers speculated about the nature of God or the gods, with examples such as Thales claiming that "all things are full of gods" and Pythagoras teaching his followers to believe in reincarnation and engage in mystical practices.

The Stoics' belief in a universe guided by divine Logos is also highlighted, with a note on the Greek equivalent of the divine "Word" of God. The chapter discusses how the division between philosophy and religion in Western culture sharpened following the Enlightenment, contrasting with the more intertwined relationship in other cultures.

Overall, the chapter offers a comprehensive overview of the historical interplay between philosophy and religion, demonstrating how these two fields have historically influenced and intertwined. It provides insight into the religious beliefs and philosophical perspectives of influential figures, highlighting the complex and evolving relationship between philosophy and religion in the Western tradition.

Jesus and Angels,
Adams, MA

Philosophers have gotten something of a bad reputation for widespread—and perhaps closed-minded—atheism. The reality, however, is quite otherwise. We will address the reputation of closed-mindedness towards the end of this chapter. But first, we'll address the historical point. For most of their history, philosophy and religion have almost always been intertwined in one way or another, and the vast majority of philosophers have had *some* kind of religious beliefs, oftentimes central to their philosophy, whether or not they have made the links explicit. And this is not without good reason. Though their methods (sometimes) differ, philosophy and religion have always shared a number of similar goals in terms of seeking answers to life's "Big Questions," questions about the ultimate nature of reality, our purpose or place in the world, the meaning of life and how we should live it. In Plato's *Republic*, Socrates famously says, "It is no small matter we are discussing but the very question of how we are to live our lives" (Book I, 352d). Many religious believers would say the same thing when discussing their religious beliefs.

Indeed, outside of Western culture, where a sharp division has developed between philosophy and religion as a result of the Enlightenment, it is sometimes hard to tell the difference between the two. Scholars agonize over whether Confucianism is "really" a religion or "only" a philosophy—or maybe neither one (Taylor 1990; Adler

2006; Sun 2015). Likewise, whether Buddhism fits neatly into either category or maybe into both at the same time (Prebish et al. 2019). But even in the Western tradition, the division between philosophy and religion was not always so sharp prior to the Enlightenment, as we will see.

If you are new to philosophy, many of the philosophers discussed below may be unfamiliar to you. That's OK! The point here is not to memorize names and dates, but to get a feel for how a representative sample of many of the "heavyweights" in the history of philosophy have interacted with religion and how the two have, historically, not always been at odds with one another but have rather been intertwined, mutually influencing one another.

Ancient Greek Philosophers

Ancient Platonists, if asked to summarize the essence of the philosophy of Plato (c. 429-347 BCE), would answer that it was a way of life directed towards *homoiosis theou*—becoming like God (Annas 1999, 52 ff.). At various points in Plato's dialogues, his descriptions of philosophy and of wisdom sound much more like descriptions of out-of-body experiences than like today's notion of "thinking deeply about important questions." For example, in *Phaedo*, Socrates says, "I am afraid that other people do not realize that the one aim of those who practice philosophy in the proper manner is to practice for dying and death…" and then defines death as "the separation of the soul from the body" *(Phaedo 64a).* He goes on to discuss how the true philosopher is not concerned with things connected to the body (including sense perception), but with the soul and trying to get the soul to be "by itself, taking leave of the body and as far as possible having no contact or association with it [the body] in its search for reality… the soul of the philosopher most disdains the body, flees from it and seeks to be by itself." Later Socrates continues, "if we are ever to have pure knowledge, we must escape from the body and observe things in themselves with the soul by itself" *(Phaedo 66d-e).* While there are other ways to interpret such passages, there is a long tradition of reading Plato as talking about something like an out-of-body experience that opens up some sort of mystical knowledge about reality and even God. Certainly, something along those lines is how he was read by the so-called neoplatonists like Plotinus and Porphyry.

What we today call the "metaphysics" of Aristotle (382-322 BCE), he himself famously called "theology" (*Metaphysics* XI.7, 1064b1). Prior to Plato and Aristotle, the writings of the pre-Socratics (Greek philosophers prior to roughly 400 BCE) were filled with speculations about the nature of God, or the gods. For example, Thales (624-546 BCE) claimed that "all things are full of gods" (Kirk et al. 1983, 95). We know very little about Pythagoras (570-490 BCE); it's doubtful he actually discovered the theorem named after him. But one thing we do know about him is that he taught his followers to believe in reincarnation and engage in various mystical practices (Kirk et al. 1983, 214 ff.). And Parmenides (515-450 BCE) presented his philosophy in the form of a long poem about a spiritual vision he had, in which secret truths were revealed to him by divine beings (Kirk et al. 1983, 239 ff.).

The Stoics believed the universe was guided by divine *Logos*. While "*Logos*" in Greek Philosophy often just means human reason or an argument, the word is also the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew "*Davar*" or Aramaic "*Memra*," (the divine "Word" of God) which, in the latter parts of the Hebrew Bible and in the Targums (Aramaic translations or paraphrases of books of the Hebrew Bible), began taking on many of the characteristics associated with God. (For example, in the Targums, it is the *Memra* who delivers the Israelites from Egypt and makes a covenant with them, and so forth.) And although the Stoics are considered a school of Greek Philosophy, the first Stoics happened to be Semitic immigrants from the East (Lightfoot 1894, 273, 299), so their view that the world is governed by a divine "Word" is especially noteworthy for its connection to Jewish thought.

This term "*Logos*" later shows up in the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 BCE-50 CE), who describes the *Logos* as a kind of "second god," the "first-born Son of God," and the "eldest angel" (archangel) (Philo 1993, 834; 247). Philo's thoughts about the *Logos* show deep familiarity with both Plato and the Stoics. Traces of this "*Logos* Theology" are to be found in Jewish **Midrash** as well (American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, n.d.). It's perhaps unsurprising that Philo shows familiarity with the philosophy of his day, being from Alexandria, Egypt, one of the greatest centers of philosophical learning in the ancient world. The Gospel of Matthew claims that Jesus also spent time in Egypt as a boy (Matthew 2:13-21), which, if true, would almost certainly have been in Alexandria, where the vast majority of Jews living in Egypt at that time resided. This would place Jesus in the same city as Philo at just the time Philo's career there was flourishing. We also see Philo of Alexandria's term "*Logos*" playing an explicit, central role in a number of New Testament works, the most famous being the prologue to the Gospel of John (1:1): "In the beginning was the *Logos*, and the *Logos* was with God, and the *Logos* was God." The term "*Logos*" has been described as a kind of bridge between Jewish and Hellenistic thinking (Boyarin 2011, 546-549).

Numerous individual passages in the New Testament, as well as the entire epistle to the Hebrews, also show influence on a number of points either directly from Philo or else some common source from which Philo and the New Testament authors must both have been drawing (Siegert 2009, 175-209 *passim*; Runia 1993, 83, *passim*). For example, the author of Hebrews famously downplays the importance of the earthly temple in Jerusalem in favor of a heavenly temple, of which the earthly temple is merely a "copy and shadow":

> *[They] serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."* (Hebrews 8:5)

The talk about "copy and shadow" recalls Plato's famous Analogy of the Cave in Book VII of the *Republic*, where prisoners are chained up, facing a wall, unable to see anything except "the shadows of copies of things," which they mistake for the truth (514a-c ff.). The talk about making all things "according to the pattern" recalls Plato's discussion of the "craftsman" or "demiurge" (creator of the universe) in *Timaeus* (28a6). Likewise, Hebrews 11:10 describes Abraham as searching for "the city having the foundations, whose artificer and constructor [is] God," where "constructor" is Plato's term "demiurge" used for the creator in the *Timaeus*.

Plato also famously divides all of "being" into two realms: (1) the "visible" (particular, concrete things like people, trees, animals, etc.), which is temporary and perishable, and (2) the "invisible" (the abstract ideas or "Forms" or essences of things), which is eternal and unchanging (e.g., *Phaedo* 79a-b). St. Paul seems to explicitly make use of this framework in 2 Cor. 4:18: "For the things which are visible are temporal, but the things which are invisible are eternal." Again in *Timaeus*, Plato describes his highest principle, the "Form of the Good" as "the Creator and Father of all" and thus, in a sense, even higher than both of these visible and invisible realms *(Timaeus* 28c*).* Again, St. Paul also speaks of God creating "all things, visible and invisible" (Col. 1:16) in Christ. And famously, along with St. Paul and other New Testament authors, even Jesus himself is recorded as referring to God as "Father," a title very rarely used for God in the Hebrew Bible or the Jewish tradition more generally, but appearing in Plato and repeated constantly in the New Testament. Another Platonic theme found in the New Testament relates to Plato's saying that to "find" God is difficult, and "to declare him to everyone is impossible" (*Timaeus* 28c). Elsewhere he repeats that the highest principle is too difficult to grasp, so we must reason instead about His / Its "Offspring" instead (e.g., *Republic* 506e-507 and 508b-509). We then find in multiple New Testament authors this familiar Platonic idea that we cannot have direct knowledge of God ("the Father") but must have recourse to His "Offspring" or "Son" for any knowledge we would have of Him, the Son being an "image" of the Father. (John 1:18; John 14:9; Col. 1:15; 1 Timothy 6:16; Hebrews 1:3; 1 John 4:12).

Does all this mean Plato was the *source* of these ideas in the New Testament? As we've seen, it would be difficult to deny that several New Testament authors *make use* (apparently intentionally) both of Plato's thoughts and his vocabulary. As to whether Plato was the source of any of the New Testament authors' thoughts, however, it's hard to say, and scholarly debate continues. Of course, there are also deep differences that must be acknowledged as well. But while questions about *sources* and *directions* of influence may be debated, one thing is for certain: there was no *separation* into two distinct compartments of "philosophy" versus "religion" at this point in history. Thinkers at this time did not see two categories here, but one.

Modern Philosophy

After the armies of the Fourth Crusade sacked the Eastern Christian city of New Rome/Constantinople in the 1200s and brought back precious ancient manuscripts, Western Europe saw the Renaissance blossom in the following century (1300s). After the eventual fall of Constantinople in 1453 (which led many Greek scholars to flee west and bring more knowledge and manuscripts with them), the arrival of Europeans in the Americas in 1492, the rise of Protestantism beginning in 1517, and the Scientific Revolution (perhaps datable to Copernicus' publication of *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres* in 1543), we come to the Modern Period. The rapid pace of discovery of new knowledge and the overturning or questioning of previously-held beliefs from the mid-1400s to mid-1500s led to a period in which Classical learning began to be questioned, doubted, and interrogated to a growing degree. Not surprisingly, and despite being in many

ways revolutionary compared to Ancient and Medieval thought, Early Modern Philosophy was still deeply concerned with religious questions.

The philosophies of the great Rationalists—René Descartes (1596-1650), Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716)—were all bound up in many ways with their respective Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant theologies. Descartes' famous *Meditations* are largely concerned with proving the existence of God and the distinction of the body and soul. Spinoza's *Ethics* argues for his version of pantheism. Leibniz wrote versions of both the **Cosmological** and **Ontological** arguments

Turning from the Rationalists to the British Empiricists, John Locke (1632-1704) was a deeply religious man and authored arguments for God's existence. Even his political philosophy begins from the premise that we are all God's property (which he seems to have meant quite seriously), for example, in the *Second Treatise on Government* 2.6 (Locke [1689] 1980, 9). George Berkeley (1685-1753) was actually a bishop in the Church of England, and a key aspect of his philosophy of "idealism" was the idea that, since matter doesn't really exist, only minds and ideas do, there has to be one very powerful mind (God) that constantly perceives all things and holds them in existence. Last among the three great British Empiricists, only David Hume (1711-1776) could reasonably be called an atheist though this label was more of an accusation by his opponents. His views on religion have been more accurately described as "attenuated deism." In other words, he seems to have held something like the belief that there is *some* kind of Creator, who may possibly be something like a Great Mind, but who is not likely to be directly concerned about anything that happens in the world, at least as far as anyone would have any way of knowing (Gaskin 1987, 223 ff.).

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), whose "critical" philosophy was largely a response to Hume's skepticism, described his project in *The Critique of Pure Reason* (B xxxi) as a way to "deny knowledge, in order to make room for faith" (Kant [1781] 1998, 117). While the philosophy of Hegel (1770-1831) is today often summarized in the triadic phrase, "thesis-antithesis-synthesis," Hegel's own conceptualization of his philosophy had much more to do with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity (as he interpreted it), which he explicitly stated he was trying to revive, since the *theologians* of his day had, in his view, abandoned it (Schlitt 2012; Schlitt 2016).

Finally, although there had been atheist philosophers before, it is only really in the 1800s, with Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), that atheistic philosophies begin to gain what will turn out to be a more solid and lasting foothold in the intellectual history of the West. But of course, it would be completely wrong to say that Marx or Nietzsche were *not concerned* with religious questions. Rather, they were both *deeply* concerned with questions about religion—they simply came down on the negative side of those questions.

Medieval Philosophy

After the rise of Christianity, the neo-Platonist philosopher Plotinus (c. 203-270 CE) asks, "What can it be that

has brought the souls to forget the father, God, and, though members of the Divine and entirely of that world, to ignore at once themselves and It?" *(Ennead V.1.1).* Here Plotinus refers to his interpretation of Plato's highest principle—The One, or The Good—with the particularly Christian-sounding terms, "Father," and "God" (*Ennead* V.1.1). Plotinus' greatest influence, the middle-Platonist Numenius of Apamea (c. 150-200 CE), created a new school of Platonism with the explicit purpose of demonstrating the overlap between Platonism and ancient near-Eastern religions, like Judaism (which he mentions by name). Indeed, he was the author of the much-quoted saying, "What else is Plato than a Moses who speaks Greek?" (Guthrie 1917, 2). And Plotinus, probably the most famous neo-Platonist in antiquity, saw Platonism not as a merely theoretical study, but as a *spiritual path*. He describes his own mystical experiences, inspired by Plato's teachings:

> *Many times it has happened: lifted out of the body into myself; becoming external to all other things and self-centered; beholding a marvelous beauty; then, more-than ever, assured of community with the loftiest order; enacting the noblest life, acquiring identity with the divine....* (*Ennead* IV.8.1)

At points he even gives guidance on how to achieve such mystical states, drawn from Plato's writings, and referring again to God as "Father":

> *The Fatherland to us is There whence we have come, and There is The Father. What then is our course, what the manner of our flight? ... all this order of things you must set aside and refuse to see: you must close the eyes and call instead upon another vision which is to be waked within you, a vision, the birth-right of all, which few turn to use.* (*Ennead* I.6.8)

This again shows us that in antiquity, what was called "philosophy" was not simply the modern-day concept of a kind of deep, critical thinking about important subjects, but was instead an attempt at what might be called a kind of "spiritual science." A spiritual path *supported by* a deep theoretical underpinning, but more than *merely* theoretical.

In this light, it makes much more sense that early Christians were often critical of "philosophy" (by which they meant Platonism), even when they were themselves engaged in something that—in *today's* terms—we would call "philosophy." They were opposed to it, not because they were opposed to critical thinking, but because Christianity and "philosophy" (i.e., Platonism) essentially constituted rival schools of spirituality, with teachings about the spiritual path that, while frequently overlapping, were often at odds. Indeed, Porphyry (c. 234-305 CE), Plotinus' star pupil, saw Christianity (as well as **Gnosticism**) not as something simply unrelated to "philosophy," but as schools of thought competing with "philosophy" and posing a major threat to Platonism–so much of a threat, in fact, that he wrote a 15-volume work *Against the Christians* to attack it! Later Platonists (like Iamblichus, c. 245-325 CE) took a different approach and began incorporating aspects of **theurgy** (a kind of ritualistic "white magic") into their philosophical systems partly in an effort to compete with popular Christian rituals and liturgical (worship) practices.

After the emperor Justinian discontinued public funding for pagan schools of philosophy in 529 CE, those schools began to fade out for lack of financial support, although classical learning itself was kept alive

by Christian scholars in the (Eastern) Roman Empire (usually erroneously referred to as the "Byzantine" Empire) for the next thousand years.[1] From the Christianization of the Roman Empire until its fall in 1453, most philosophical thinking was done in the context of theological thinking, whether by Greek-speaking Christians,[2] Latin-speaking Christians,[3] Muslims,[4] or Jews.[5] Although such thinkers gave intense scrutiny to many philosophical questions, they always did so with one eye toward the religious or theological implications of those philosophical questions.

Modern Philosophy

After the armies of the Fourth Crusade sacked the Eastern Christian city of New Rome/Constantinople in the 1200s and brought back precious ancient manuscripts, Western Europe saw the Renaissance blossom in the following century (1300s). After the eventual fall of Constantinople in 1453 (which led many Greek scholars to flee west and bring more knowledge and manuscripts with them), the arrival of Europeans in the Americas in 1492, the rise of Protestantism beginning in 1517, and the Scientific Revolution (perhaps datable to Copernicus' publication of *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres* in 1543), we come to the Modern Period. The rapid pace of discovery of new knowledge and the overturning or questioning of previously-held beliefs from the mid-1400s to mid-1500s led to a period in which Classical learning began to

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1. The reason this label is erroneous is that it was only the western territory of the Roman Empire that was taken over by Germanic "barbarians" and fell into the dark ages in the 400s. But by that time, the capital of the empire had already been moved East to the city of "New Rome" (which was referred to as "Constantinople," but only as a nickname), and had been so for about a century. Latin continued to be the official state language in New Rome/Constantinople for centuries, even though most people actually spoke Greek. The Germanic tribes that took over the West then began referring to themselves as "Romans" and to the Easterners as "Byzantines" in an effort to legitimize their rule and to drive a cultural wedge between the Western Christian subjects they had conquered in Rome, and their Eastern Christian (and equally "Roman") allies. This eventually culminated in the myth of the "Holy Roman Empire," which was famously neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire. Unfortunately, a certain Euro-centric agenda has led, and sometimes continues to lead, some Western scholars to perpetuate this mythology, referring to the Empire's loss of the Western territories as though the Roman Empire itself had actually ceased to exist, or had "fallen." In reality, life in the remaining territory of the Roman Empire continued on mostly as normal for another thousand years, until the gradual encroachment of Islamic armies, and eventual betrayal by Western Christians, led to the fall of New Rome/Constantinople in 1453. For a good (as well as fascinating and well-written) corrective to many common misconceptions about this history see Brownworth (2009).

2. Such as Basil the Great (c. 330-379), Gregory Nazianzen (c. 330-390), Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335-399), John Philoponus (c. 490-570), Leontius of Byzantium (480-543), Maximus the Confessor (580-662), John of Damascus (c. 655 – c.750), Photios (810-891), Gregory Palamas (1296-1359), and Gennadios Scholarios (1400-1473).

3. Such as Augustine (353-430), Boethius (480-524), Anselm (1033-1109), Aquinas (1225-1274), Scotus (1266-1308), or Ockham (1287-1347).

4. Such as Al-Kindi (801–873), Al-Farabi (c. 870-950), Ibn Sina (980-1037), Al-Ghazali (1056-1111), or Ibn Rushd (1126-1198).

5. Such as Saadia Ben Gaon (882-942), Maimonides (1135-1204), or Gersonides (1288-1344).

be questioned, doubted, and interrogated to a growing degree. Not surprisingly, and despite being in many ways revolutionary compared to Ancient and Medieval thought, Early Modern Philosophy was still deeply concerned with religious questions.

The philosophies of the great Rationalists—René Descartes (1596-1650), Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716)—were all bound up in many ways with their respective Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant theologies. Descartes' famous *Meditations* are largely concerned with proving the existence of God and the distinction of the body and soul. Spinoza's *Ethics* argues for his version of pantheism. Leibniz wrote versions of both the **Cosmological** and **Ontological** arguments.

Turning from the Rationalists to the British Empiricists, John Locke (1632-1704) was a deeply religious man and authored arguments for God's existence. Even his political philosophy begins from the premise that we are all God's property (which he seems to have meant quite seriously), for example, in the *Second Treatise on Government* 2.6 (Locke [1689] 1980, 9). George Berkeley (1685-1753) was actually a bishop in the Church of England, and a key aspect of his philosophy of "idealism" was the idea that, since matter doesn't really exist, only minds and ideas do, there has to be one very powerful mind (God) that constantly perceives all things and holds them in existence. Last, among the three great British Empiricists, only David Hume (1711-1776) could reasonably be called an atheist, though this label was more of an accusation by his opponents. His views on religion have been more accurately described as "attenuated deism." In other words, he seems to have held something like the belief that there is *some* kind of Creator, who may possibly be something like a Great Mind, but who is not likely to be directly concerned about anything that happens in the world, at least as far as anyone would have any way of knowing (Gaskin 1987, 223 ff.).

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), whose "critical" philosophy was largely a response to Hume's skepticism, described his project in *The Critique of Pure Reason* (B xxxi) as a way to "deny knowledge, in order to make room for faith" (Kant [1781] 1998, 117). While the philosophy of Hegel (1770-1831) is today often summarized in the triadic phrase, "thesis-antithesis-synthesis," Hegel's own conceptualization of his philosophy had much more to do with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity (as he interpreted it), which he explicitly stated he was trying to revive, since the *theologians* of his day had, in his view, abandoned it (Schlitt 2012; Schlitt 2016).[6]

Finally, although there had been atheist philosophers before, it is only really in the 1800s, with Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), that atheistic philosophies begin to gain what will turn out to be a more solid and lasting foothold in the intellectual history of the West. But of course, it would be completely wrong to say that Marx or Nietzsche were *not concerned* with religious questions. Rather, they were both *deeply* concerned with questions about religion—they simply came down on the negative side of those questions.

We stand now at an interesting point in history. We saw a decline in religious belief among philosophers

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6. See Schlitt (2012) for the key role of the doctrine of the Trinity in Hegel, and Schlitt (2016) for the doctrine of the Trinity in other German Idealists.

beginning in the 1800s but are seeing something of a resurgence today. Is the long interconnection between philosophy and religion from antiquity to the late Modern period an historical accident? Or is it the result of a deep, natural affinity between the two? Does the decline of religious belief among philosophers from the 1800s to the 1900s mean that philosophy finally managed to rid itself of an irrational relic of a bygone age, and will the recent resurgence of the philosophy of religion turn out to be nothing but a blip on the radar? Or will the prevalence of atheism for a century or so turn out to have been the blip on the radar, which we are now seeing the end of? History has yet to yield a final verdict.

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Chapter 4: Prompt

Whether you are personally religious or not, one of the biggest questions philosophy attempts to answer is the existence of God. Many philosophers have tried to tackle the question of God's nature and existence for millennia without conclusive evidence, contributing to our present-day search for answers.

For this discussion, consider the following: Is religion important to you? If so, how might prayer help someone (whether daily or in a jam)? Can one pray even if not especially religious? From what or to whom do you draw strength when challenges arise in one's life? How might you think of "spirituality" compared to "religion"? Lastly, do you believe in an afterlife? What do you believe happens after this life is over? You can choose any or all of the above prompts to share your thoughts and feelings about religion.

PART V

CHAPTER 5 - AESTHETICS: ENGAGING WITH INDIGENOUS ART

The chapter "Aesthetics: Engaging with Indigenous Art" explores Western societies' historical treatment of Indigenous art and how it has evolved to be recognized as fine art. It examines the re-evaluation of Indigenous arts as art forms and the unique traditions and assumptions surrounding them. The chapter discusses the opening of the Quai Branly Museum in Paris in 2006 and its significance in recognizing Indigenous arts as equal to any other art form. It also delves into the debate surrounding the museum's establishment and the patronization and categorization of Indigenous art objects, raising questions about aesthetic appreciation and valuation.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section delves into the history of Western societies' recognition and appreciation of Indigenous art, shedding light on its evolution from being perceived as curiosities to being esteemed as an art form. The second section discusses the opening of the Quai Branly Museum and its political statement about the equality of all cultures and their artistic expressions. It also addresses the issues regarding presenting and appreciating Indigenous art within the museum.

The third section of the chapter focuses on categorizing Indigenous art objects and the implications of such categorizations for their evaluation and aesthetic appreciation. It raises questions about the differences between appreciating an object as a household item, a ceremonial piece, or a work of art and the need to consider its cultural, religious, and social significance.

Overall, the chapter illuminates the complex history and evolving recognition of Indigenous arts as fine art while highlighting the ongoing debates and challenges surrounding the appreciation and valuation of Indigenous art objects within Western art institutions.

Anthony Melting Tallow, What is Your Wound? exhibition at the Amy H. Carberry Fine Arts Gallery (link https://www.stcc.edu/campus-life/arts-culture/amyhcarberrygallery) at Springfield Technical Community College, (link: www.stcc.edu) Springfield, MA, Fall 2023.

Historically, artworks created by Indigenous peoples have been treated by Western non-Indigenous artists and art critics as "primitive art" and belonging to ethnographic museums rather than in art galleries. This chapter traces how Indigenous arts have come to be re-evaluated as arts and explores how the art forms of Indigenous peoples may be appreciated while recognizing that these art forms are often created in artistic traditions quite different from those associated with the Western institution of fine arts. These traditions may not separate art from everyday life or ceremony and may involve quite different assumptions about the metaphysical nature of representation and the nature of beauty. Finally, it explores important ways to understand and appreciate the dynamic developments of Indigenous art beyond the idea that "traditional" means without change.

In 2006, the Quai Branly Museum opened in Paris to great fanfare. In the museum, Indigenous arts were to be appreciated *as arts,* as opposed to being studied as curios or presented anthropologically as representative of vanishing cultures. While the claim that all people have art might sound obvious to a current audience, at the time it was not. The museum represented an important political claim—that all people were equal because all cultures had art. Historically, the claim that Indigenous peoples did not have art was a reason given for thinking they were "uncivilized" and "savages," one of the justifications for colonization. As recently as the 1990s, anthropologists and philosophers were debating whether Indigenous arts were "arts" and whether "aesthetic appreciation" of Indigenous arts was merely the projection of European concepts and values onto alien cultures.

Histories of the "discovery" and appreciation of Indigenous art from around the world have a very similar structure. As the philosopher Thomas Leddy has written:

> [F]irst, the art of X was treated as a collection of curiosities; then it was seen as art paradoxically created by people without any aesthetic sensitivity; then it was treated as art which has formal qualities strangely similar to those of Western masterpieces; then it was treated as art, but only when it is "authentic," which is to say, precolonial; then it was treated as art, but only properly so when seen in its actual historical and performance context (for example the tribal mask in the context of ritual practice); then it was treated as art best seen in terms of aesthetic concepts coming out of the culture in which it was produced. (Leddy 2017)

This short account of the history of the acceptance of Indigenous arts as arts is largely correct. To say that something is an art is to give it a special status, a recognition of the creators as civilized. Yet, it does not follow from this that aesthetic appreciation of it follows from its display in a gallery, or that its aesthetic appreciation is easy, or that questions about how it should be appreciated cross-culturally do not remain.

The debate surrounding the establishment of the Quai Branly focussed on two issues. One was on whether the museum "patronizes the cultures it wishes to invest with lustre," a problem James Harding thinks may have been ameliorated if the exhibition were not presented in "significant dimness," which, in combination with the plant motif printed on the windows, may be considered "dangerously close to a fantasy of pre-contact worlds adrift in benign and fertile obscurity" (Harding 2007). The second issue focused on how one should appreciate an object, "whether a Tuareg tent cushion, for instance, is an extremely pretty household object, a ceremonial device or a work of art" (Harding 2007). This catalog suggests that different kinds of aesthetic appreciation and valuation might apply depending on how we categorize objects. The question of categorization assumes that whether something is decorative art (a pretty household object) involves different aesthetic standards for appreciation from ceremonial objects which have deeper religious and social connotations (consider the symbolism of the Orb carried by Queen Elizabeth on her coronation), to "a work of art" (which might mean a fine art object produced by an artist). In the *New York Times*, Michael Kimmelman explained, "The familiar aesthetics-versus-ethnology question came up: 'Will religious, ceremonial and practical objects, never intended as art in the modern, Western sense, be showcased like baubles, with no context?'" (Kimmelman 2006). Such a question assumes that appreciating something aesthetically as art is quite different from appreciating it as an artifact.

How something is categorized as an art object is directly relevant to its evaluation and whether or how it is appropriate to appreciate it aesthetically. To understand these issues, we need to delve deeper into the history of how Indigenous arts have been appreciated by non-Indigenous members of the Western art world.[1] Initially, it was believed that hunters and gatherers were closer to nature and therefore did not produce art (Morphy 1998, 13). For example, in 1837, when Sir George Grey had come across the Wadjina rock paintings in the Kimberly Ranges in Australia, he thought they could not possibly have been painted by Australian Aboriginal peoples: "It is scarcely probable that they could have been painted by self-taught savages," he wrote (Morphy 1998, 20). And, when Aboriginal carvings of animals were found at Lake Eyre in 1906, many commentators felt they could only be some kind of hoax (Sutton, Jones, and Hemming 1988, 196). Similarly, some people thought the First Nations peoples of the Americas did not have music (Coleman and Coombe 2009). If Indigenous peoples

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1. To present the issue this way suggests a monolithic "Western" culture and contrasts it with a similarly monolithic "Indigenous" culture. The oversimplification overrides multiple differences within Western cultures, and within Indigenous cultures. Indigenous societies and arts may be considered as varied and diverse as those of Western societies. The English, French, Greeks, and Italians all have different cultures, languages, and artistic traditions. Similarly, Indigenous societies are distinct, with their own languages, lifestyles, and artistic traditions. Nevertheless, some generalisations hold, even if they do not capture all Western or Indigenous artistic practices or modes of appreciation./footnote]

This chapter is broken into three sections. The first section explores the history of the "discovery" of Indigenous arts by people in Western societies. Artworks created by Indigenous peoples were re-evaluated from "hoaxes" to "primitive" art to "masterpieces" as formalist approaches to art developed. The second section focuses on the debates related to the philosopher Arthur Danto's reinterpretation of Indigenous arts as being primarily related to their relationship with discourse within the society of production and criticisms of his theory. The objections to this theory provide valuable points to consider in relation to contemporary Indigenous art. Finally, in the last section, I explore what a fusion of horizons in relation to Indigenous aesthetics might look like and sketch how Indigenous works might be engaged with aesthetically through the paradigms of comparative aesthetics and etiquette.

Discovery of "Primitive Art"

Naturally, Indigenous arts had no need to be "discovered" within their own societies. The discovery occurred among European colonialists and anthropologists, and later, by artists and art theorists. Discovery in this sense simply means that something was formerly unknown from a particular perspective. Yet, Indigenous peoples with histories of colonial invasion are rightly disturbed by the idea that Europeans "discovered" lands or species that they have lived on and known about for thousands of years. What follows shortly after is dispossession. The same is true of art. In this section, I explore the historical relationship between theories of art and the appreciation of African art, which enabled Indigenous arts to be valued differently. They also enabled their appropriation. The remainder of the chapter will draw out these philosophical connections between Western theories of art and how Indigenous art is appreciated in the context of Western societies more explicitly.

A popular theory of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in colonial societies was that Indigenous peoples lived in "primitive" cultures, and as such, were living at an earlier evolutionary stage.[2] The use of the term "primitive" in this context stems from the evolutionary theory of society, the idea that some cultures and people were less evolved, more primitive, than others. This contrast between "more" and "less" evolved was applied to different societies, the people who lived in them, and the material culture that they produced. European cultures were considered the most highly evolved and European people were considered more "civilised," in contrast to "primitive people" whom Europeans considered "savages."

2.

did not have art (along with other institutions such as law), then it was possible to justify their colonization by a presumed superior (European) civilization.

However, some anthropologists and art historians thought that the artifacts Indigenous peoples produced were art, albeit "primitive art."[3] The establishment of museums in the late 18th century and the development of art history and cultural anthropology as academic disciplines played an important role in shifting ideas about whether Indigenous societies produced art. These emerging disciplines enabled the first studies of Indigenous art. Alois Riegl (1858-1905), a curator at the k.k. Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie in Austria and one of the major figures associated with the establishment of art history as a discipline developed formalism as a method for the scientific study of the evolution of pattern in his 1893 book, *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament*. Inspired by this, another curator, German-born American Franz Boas (1858–1942) drew attention to the evolution of design and the creativity of Indigenous artists in his essays "The Decorative Art of the North American Indians" and "Decorative Designs of Alaskan Needlecases," before completing his groundbreaking work that established a place for the study of art in anthropology, *Primitive Art*. Inspired by Kantian ideas, Riegl and Boas postulated a human will to create beauty and postulated this drive as the basis for how we should understand the universality of artistic forms in human cultures.

Nevertheless, the concept of primitive art remained mired in elitist thinking and presumptions of European superiority. Primitive art was considered by many to be less sophisticated than the art produced by European artists. At the turn of the nineteenth century, the dominant theory of art was expressivism, the idea that a work of art expresses an artist's thoughts and feelings. As Susan McCulloch has observed, expressivism is "the *raison d'être* of much Western art—the artist's desire to communicate thoughts or emotions, to present the world through his or her eyes, or to comment in a highly individual way on imaginary or real life" does not generally apply to Indigenous art (McCulloch 2001, 23). The lack of emphasis on individualism and creativity led Europeans to think of Indigenous arts as repetitious and based on tradition. The objects produced by Indigenous peoples were artifacts rather than "fine art," and so, the thinking went, they belonged in ethnographic museums, not art galleries. That they were "traditional" rather than the work of individual "creative artists" justified their appropriation.

In the early twentieth century, primitive art was "discovered" a third time, by European artists. This was the first re-evaluation of Indigenous arts as having something particularly valuable to offer. Primitive art was reinterpreted as the direct expression of an aesthetic emotion lacking in Western civilization (Köpping and Köpping 1998). At first, the imagery and motifs of Indigenous peoples began appearing in an art style known as "primitivism," such as in the Tahitian paintings of Paul Gauguin. Primitivism became a trend among the expressivist French and German avant-garde. African masks brought back from French colonies were

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3. The term "primitive art" was used to categorise material culture of sub-Sahara Africa, Oceania (the Pacific Islands), Americas, and Southeast Asia. It was not generally associated with the artefacts of Egyptian, Chinese, Indian, or Greek or Roman civilisations, which Europeans considered major cultures, or cultures that existed before the stone age (prehistoric).

particularly influential for Parisian artists and the evolution of modernism. Henri Matisse and André Derain were influenced by Gambon and Congolese (Babangi) masks. Yet, the revolutionary change in attitude towards the masks occurred one day in 1907. During a visit to the ethnographic museum Palais du Trocadero, Pablo Picasso experienced a "revelation" (Fluegel 1980, 87). According to Arthur Danto's account of Picasso's visit:

> *There, amongst the emblems of imperial conquest or scientific curiosity, amidst what must have been taken as palpable evidence of the artistic superiority of European civilization and therein palpable justificatory grounds for cultural intervention, Picasso perceived absolute masterpieces of sculptural art, on a level of achievement attained only at their best by the acknowledged masterpieces of the Western sculptural tradition.* (Danto 1988, 18)

Danto suggests that what enabled this discovery were changes to the practice of art that enabled the values of African art to become visible to those who had previously not recognized them: "In liberating himself from his own representational traditions, Picasso liberated the art of Africa from those same traditions, in the light of which they could not be seen for what they were" (Danto 1988, 19). The influence of what was called "Negro art" on art practice became apparent in Paris in 1907, and by 1912 had spread through Berlin, Dresden, and London art scenes (Encyclopedia of Art, n.d.).

These developments quickly influenced art theorists and critics as well. What distinguished the artifacts made in Indigenous cultures, it was thought, was their lack of representational naturalism, their "savagery" and "emotional rawness." In 1914, the formalist theorist Clive Bell argued that "As a rule primitive art is good. ... In primitive art, you will find no accurate representation; you will find only significant form" (Bell [1914] 1931, 22). For Bell, what was so impressive about primitive art, all primitive art, he thought, was the absence of representation and of technical swagger he associated with the fine arts (23). In 1920 Roger Fry, another formalist critic, was to write of an exhibition of African sculpture at the Chelsea Book Club that "some of these things are great sculpture—greater I think than anything we produced even in the Middle Ages," adding that "it seems unfair to be forced to admit that certain nameless savages have possessed this power [to create expressive plastic form] not only in a higher degree than we do at this moment, but than we as a nation have ever possessed it" (Danto 1988, 19). The idea that "nameless savages" produced the work underscores an attitude of the superiority of European civilization. It does not suggest that there was a re-evaluation of their status as primitive, nor that the makers of the works were creative artists, regardless of the quality of their work. If anything, the focus on form encouraged people to ignore the ceremonial and religious meanings of Indigenous arts because, on a formalist understanding of art, this was what it meant for arts to be appreciated aesthetically.

The admiration of Indigenous arts by Western artists was accompanied by a hierarchy of values that, in their minds, legitimized using their forms in any way they liked. The highly stylized figures of African sculptures became influential in Cubism, and later, Surrealism. By the 1930s, Oceanic, First Nation Indian, and Eskimo art also became sources of inspiration (Encyclopedia of Art, n.d.).

For instance, in Australia, the modernist painter Margaret Preston saw Aboriginal painting as the well-spring for an "Indigenous art of Australia." According to Preston, for this "Indigenous" *Australian* fine art to

be invented, all it needed was an "all-seeing eye of the Western Artist to adapt it [Aboriginal art] to the 20th century" (Angel 1999, 33). The relationship of Indigenous art with tradition is precisely what enabled it to be reinterpreted by Western artists in the service of creating their own "great art." This practice is embedded in contemporary Western legal systems in copyright law (Coleman 2005), and aesthetic appreciation and the value of self-expression remains used as justifications for cultural appropriation.

As widely observed, there are significant differences between Western and Indigenous art practices. First, in some Indigenous cultures, there may be no lexical terms for "art" or "aesthetics." Second, art production in Indigenous societies is not an autonomous realm, and the Indigenous products the Western art world calls art are often used in ceremonial or other socially significant contexts and were not produced as objects for sale (Davies 2010; Dutton 2000). It was highly controversial when, in the 1950s, Australian art galleries first started adding Aboriginal art to their collections. These controversies did not focus on the quality of the artifacts so much as the issue of whether or not they were art and should be displayed in galleries (Morphy 1998, 23–29). Debates about these issues became especially prominent as museum practices changed and Indigenous arts started to be displayed as art in the second half of the twentieth century, especially from the 1980s. One of the most influential accounts of why aesthetic appreciation (understood in terms of disinterested contemplation) cannot be thought of as a cross-cultural concept was presented by Pierre Bourdieu in his article "The Historical Genesis of a Pure Aesthetic" (1987). Bourdieu argued that the aesthetic attitude is not shared by all humanity, or even by all people at all times in Western societies. He argued that art is not defined by a type of creation, but a kind of social institution, and that it follows from this that the aesthetic attitude is also historically produced. In 1988, when the Center for African Art in New York mounted the exhibition Art/Artifact, it explicitly explored the question, "How do art museums deal with art made by people who do not call it art? How do we decide what objects to select, and how do we determine quality among objects of a similar type? How should our museums present art made for purposes unfamiliar to the audience and remote from the museum's own purposes?" (Vogel 1988, 10).

The issue of whether Indigenous arts were art and whether anthropologists should explore aesthetics was still being debated as late as 1996 (Coleman 2011). One of the arguments against the position that aesthetics was a cross-cultural concept was that the fact that the term "aesthetics" was created by the philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten in 1735 shows that its meaning is intrinsically historical and not universal. Joanna Overing suggested that the study of aesthetics simply means the study of fine art, and she defines fine art as art that does not have a purpose. Overing suggests that the Piaroa notion of beauty "cannot be removed from productive use," and that the conception of beauty is different because "beautification empowers" (Overing 1996, 265). Yet such an account of aesthetics cannot explain why we find stories, songs, performances, and paintings, items we consider to be aesthetically important, in every culture. Moreover, one can concede that Indigenous peoples did not have an "institution of fine art" involving galleries, critics, and fine artists without accepting that they did not have artistic practices. Further, if such an account of art and aesthetics were true, one would need to accept that music, performances, and paintings produced for religious purposes in Western societies were also not art. As many people do think that it makes sense to speak of ancient Greek art or icon

painting and hymns as art, a better response is simply to reject the claim as too narrow. If ancient Greek statues and icons can be shown as art in art galleries, then so can Indigenous artworks. However, often such objects are held to different standards than works produced in European traditions. As the anthropologist James Clifford has shown, Indigenous arts become appreciated as masterpieces in galleries primarily through their relationship between being "traditional" and "authentic" (Clifford 1988, 251-252).

In the space of 150 years, ideas about whether Indigenous peoples had art and whether their arts were aesthetically valuable, changed dramatically. This history shows that the history of colonization is woven throughout the collection, display, and appropriation of art, and this history relates to dominant ideas about aesthetic appreciation and the nature of art. Aesthetic appreciation is important in several respects in this cross-cultural history. First, it is what enabled the recognition that Indigenous peoples have art across cultures—that is, aesthetic appreciation has an epistemic function. Second, it has an explanatory function in terms of why we might consider some attributes, such as the capacity to create art, to be particularly human capacities in terms of how they interpret the world. But third, a theory of aesthetic appreciation enables and even justifies the appropriation of Indigenous arts as if such appropriation was a sign of respect for the culture of other people. However, history is not a philosophy. To explore the philosophical debates regarding the appreciation of Indigenous arts, I contrast formalist accounts of art with Arthur Danto's institutional theory and explore some of the criticisms that have been raised in this context.

Re-evaluations of Indigenous Art

In addition to being a method for the study of art history, formalism is the philosophical theory of art that defines art in terms of those objects created by an artist that has "significant form." For theorists such as Bell, significant form is the apprehension of the world in terms of arrangements and combinations that elicit an aesthetic emotion, the sense of beauty. This kind of apprehension of the world, Bell thought, is beyond mundane usefulness, and moral or political considerations. The focus of form is lost when the emphasis of an artist is on naturalism and the demonstration of skill. Bell wrote, "formal significance loses itself in preoccupation with exact representation and ostentatious cunning" ([1914] 1931, 23):

> Naturally, it is said that if there is little representation and less saltimbancery in primitive art, that is because the primitives were unable to catch a likeness or cut intellectual capers. The contention is beside the point. ... Very often, I fear, the misrepresentation of the primitives must be attributed to what the critics call, "wilful distortion." Be that as it may, the point is that, either from want of skill or want of will, primitives neither create illusions nor make displays of extravagant accomplishment, but concentrate their energies on the one thing needful—the creation of form. Thus, have they created the finest works of art that we possess. (23)

As noted above, this enabled a re-evaluation of Indigenous arts by Western, non-Indigenous artists and critics in that what had previously been considered a "failure" or lack of representation was reconceptualized as a

virtue. While the re-evaluation was important in recognizing the beauty of the work, it denied the religious significance or meaning of those forms as important.

In the introduction to the catalog of the Art/Artifact exhibition, Arthur Danto presents a very different theory of Indigenous art from that of Bell. If what was important to Bell was the lack of representation and the focus on form, for Danto, what makes Indigenous art "art" is how the art embodies meaning. For Danto, all art is created by artists within a social and historical context that has an interpretive discourse about those objects. This discourse sets these objects apart from everyday life. His theory addresses the question with which I began this chapter, "whether a Tuareg tent cushion … is an extremely pretty household object, a ceremonial device or a work of art" (Harding 2007). For Danto, there is always a clear line between art and artifact, or art and a household object. While something may be both a useful object and a work of art, a work of art cannot be a mere tool. This distinction is drawn on the nature of how an object is related to a discourse of meaning and evaluation. It allows us to distinguish between otherwise identical objects, between an actual Brillo box and Andy Warhol's Brillo Box. An actual Brillo box is something used and discarded. It is not something created for contemplation. In contrast, Andy Warhol's Brillo Box contributes to debate within the artworld about the nature of art and its relationship to modes of production. For Danto, "An artifact implies a system of means; to extract it from the system in which it has a function and display it for itself is to treat a means as though it were an end. The use of an artifact is always its meaning" (Danto 1988, 29). In contrast, art is an end. Its meaning, and the discourse that sets it apart is what gives it a special status or value. This implies a difference in value that determines whether something belongs in an art gallery or a museum.

Danto applies this argument to African art by using an imaginary example of two African tribes of the same region, separated by a geographical feature that enabled their cultures to evolve in different ways. He calls these tribes the Pot People and the Basket Folk. Both tribes produce pots and baskets, and the features of the pots and baskets are indiscernible to an outsider, yet the pots of the Pot People belong in an art gallery, while their baskets do not, while the baskets of the Basket Folk belong in a gallery while their pots do not. The reason for this is the special role that pots play for the Pot People and the baskets play for the Basket Folk. The Basket Folk consider the baskets to have great meaning and special power. They express the idea that we carry youth within ourselves through their capacity to retain the scent of freshly cut grasses, which is released when the baskets are left in the rain. The Basket Folk view the world as a basket made by the great basket weaver God, and the basket-makers imitate God in their creativity. Pots, on the other hand, are "a piece with fishnets and arrowheads, textiles of bark and flax, or the armatures of wood that give shape to their dwellings" (Danto 1988, 23). In contrast, the pots of the Pot People are thick with signification, especially with the capacity to hold seeds for the next year's harvest. Human beings and especially women are like pots for their ability to carry the seeds of the next generation. Baskets, for the Pot People, however, are simply baskets (Danto 1988, 24). In this explanation, it is the religious interpretative framework applied to the pots by the Pot People and baskets by the Basket Folk that sets them apart from being merely utilitarian objects.

For Danto, such meaning is a part of the work: "An artwork is a compound of thought and matter" (Danto 1988, 31), and the form of an artwork is given by its content. An artwork embodies its meaning (Danto

2000, 133). Borrowing from Martin Heidegger, Danto suggests that art embodies the "lifeworld" of a culture (Heidegger 1971). For example, an ancient Greek temple embodies the cosmology and ideology of the people who created it. Accordingly, Danto writes, statues of ancient Greek Gods "express the powers they personify" (1988, 31). Accordingly, if African art is not representational, it is because resemblance is not a consideration for the artists; they invent forms that best embody the forces they intend to express (1988, 31).[4] The form of African art is powerful because the forms of African art are about the powers central to human life. Danto suggests that non-members of African Indigenous cultures are severely limited in their understanding and appreciation of this art. If someone cannot see the philosophical content, then possibly they are unable to appreciate the work at all: "[W]e may … be unable to perceive them at all. If we do not know the powers, if we do not understand how those powers are lived in the forms of life they penetrate, and especially if we ourselves do not live those forms of life, we probably can see them only in our terms" (Danto 1988, 37).

Despite this change of focus from the form of the art to its meaning and the discourse that surrounds it, this theory also presents problems. First, as Danto acknowledges elsewhere, this theory excludes something that does not embody its meaning as art and specifically excludes what might be termed "symbolic art," "the meaning of which, as in a name, is external to it" (Danto 2000, 133). However, this excludes some Indigenous creations we would intuitively consider art from being so. Secondly, his argument about the indiscernibility of the pots and baskets of the Pot People and Basket Folk does not correspond with our intuitions or what we know about the care with which ceremonial objects are created in most Indigenous societies. And thirdly, Danto's argument has the unfortunate consequences of excluding the objects that Indigenous societies produce for aesthetic reasons *as* art, on the grounds that such objects are untraditional and therefore inauthentic.

Danto's theory suggests a direct relationship between form and meaning. However, this relationship is more complex than he suggests when, as in the case of Aboriginal painting in Australia, the meaning is encoded through polysemic iconicity,[5] and a particular meaning is expressed within a ceremonial context. In such a case, the form of the object does not determine its meaning. For example, the foremost authority on Yolngu painting, Howard Morphy, shows how its iconicity has multiple meanings. Yolngu paintings have two main elements: figurative representations and geometric forms. The geometric shapes represent the form of sand sculptures used in ceremonies or other ceremonial objects. The painting is divided into different segments involving *rarrk* (cross-hatching) and different diamond structures that are clan designs. The clan designs

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4. Danto might be interpreted as essentialising African art here, as though there were only one Indigenous culture in Africa. However, the "essence" here concerns a theory of art rather than indigenous cultures. His critique of the 1984 Primitivism exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York suggests that the habit of designating cultures as primitive is a form of colonialism on par with Orientalism. He was particularly critical of a room showcasing figures from New Guinea, Zambia, Zaire, Nigeria together, asking, "what do they have in common, really, with one another, or with objects from Easter Island or the American Southwest or Papua or New Ireland or the Arctic?" (Danto 2006, 148).

5. The term "polysemic" means that there may be more than one meaning or interpretation.

are multi-referential. The diamonds and *rarrk* in a single painting "can represent the turbulent floodwaters, the ancestral fire, the marks on a crocodile's back, the cells of a beehive; its colors can represent flames or burnt wood, smoke and sparks, honey or foaming waters; and the distinctive variants of the design belong to different social groups and are part of the clan's identity" (Morphy 2008, 103). The meaning in any given context is enacted separately in specific ceremonial contexts, say, through the words of a song or the expressive movements of a dance (Morphy 2008, 97). Danto might accommodate this by pointing out that the forms still embody the forces an artist means to express, yet the point is that the meaning expressed in the painting is not determined by the artist, but by the ceremonial context and other participants in it.

Another criticism of Danto's distinction between art and artifact is that it is simply improbable as a distinction between art and non-art. It is highly unlikely that the Pot People and the Basket Folk would produce identical objects, where one produced art and the other produced mere things. Denis Dutton argues convincingly that this is simply unlikely to be true—the difference between the sacred and the mundane is expressed in care and attention to detail. Dutton argues, "If the pots and their associated mythology have the place Danto describes for them as having among Pot People, and if the making of pots among them has developed into their most treasured art—then it is hard to suppose Pot Peoples being anything but meticulous about the construction of their pots" (1993, 17). They would worry about finding the perfect clay and the process of firing the pots for the perfect finish. This is just what people do when they care deeply about a product they are making. Moreover, when an art form develops, presumably over generations, it develops a canon of excellence and requirements for good pot design and decoration. Aesthetic attention to form and material is perceptible in the making and the final product of an object made in another culture, even though the purpose of making the object does not involve making fine art. Whatever the purpose of making the object may be, it is possible to recognize that these objects, or products, involve skill, care, sensitivity, and intelligence.

Dutton's example is convincing in that it is intuitive in terms of the patterns of use of objects from other cultures. However, an epistemological problem with Dutton's objection is that care and attention to detail are not always apparent cross-culturally. An example of such a situation concerns Rembrannga digeridoos. Like the didgeridoos produced by their near neighbours, the Yolngu in Arnhem Land, Rembrannga didgeridoos are created with great care and attention to detail, however, they are not similarly popular with art collectors as the application of ochre to the object is messy rather than the neat application of *rarrk* found elsewhere in Arnhem Land. This messiness does not mean that the objects are not valued. Rather, what is important is the depth of color of the ochre, which may be gathered from special sites and saved for particular purposes or works (Coleman and Keller 2006). This objection does not undermine Dutton's point that special care and attention have been paid to the creation of something intended for ceremonial purposes, rather it suggests that only people with an understanding of the aesthetic values of the Rembrangga and their techniques of production may be able to perceive those differences.

A more telling objection might be that the difference between sacred and profane objects in some cultures does not follow the patterns that Danto suggests. For Danto, it is the theory or religious discourse that distinguishes art from non-art. A contemporary example of Danto's conception of art might be objects such

as dilly bags (woven baskets used to collect food) and fish traps produced by Aboriginal artists from Northern Territory, Australia.[6] Dilly bags and fish traps may be totemic objects associated with specific parts of the landscape. According to the Aboriginal arts organization Maningrida Arts and Culture, "the conical fish trap has become the ritual focus of certain clan ceremonies and often appears as a design motif painted on bark. Sacred sites for the fish trap are scattered across western and north-central Arnhem Land, and certain creation beings are said to have imparted the knowledge of fish-trap technology to human beings" (Bawininga Aboriginal Corporation. n.d.).

Thus, as Danto suggests, fish-traps may be artifacts used for fishing, ceremonial objects, or created as objects of beauty for galleries and are connected with ancestral stories. However, this also undermines Danto's account of the difference between art and non-art in terms of the value of objects, as these are not exclusive disjunctions as he suggests. For Danto, it would be wrong to treat a fish-trap as an artwork if it did not have a religious or ceremonial purpose. But fish-traps may be all these things. It is not that the category "fish-trap" has a special status, rather, the objects in that category are valued differently in different contexts. As such, the distinction between artifact and art breaks down. Spirit infuses all of life, as opposed to certain kinds of objects.

A further point of criticism concerning Danto's use of the spiritual discourse surrounding the objects as the feature that makes something a work of art is made by Larry Shiner on the basis that it excludes objects produced primarily for aesthetic reasons (Shiner 1994, 52). Shiner points out that on this theory, the insistence that an African Indigenous carving be authentic, that is, used in ceremony, creates a restriction on Indigenous art that devalues the works produced for aesthetic appreciation. Further, the sculptural works that are made by African Indigenous artisans for sale for their aesthetic features are demoted to "tourist artifacts" or fakes. This is a common feature of Indigenous work produced for Western art markets. Similarly, Navajo sand paintings are created as part of a healing ritual and are not preserved after the conclusion of the ritual, nor replicated. In respect of this tradition, artists producing for the market will intentionally alter the design from ritual-specific counterparts according to Navajo design principles. However, many collectors feel that this art involves a loss of "cultural authenticity" (Gracyk 2009, 156–159). A distinct problem for Aboriginal painting according to Danto's theory is that Australian Aboriginal peoples also had a tradition of painting that was non-ceremonial and was used locally for their aesthetic functions. Such works might appear on the walls of a bark hut, for instance, just as European paintings are used. They could not be important secret-sacred representations in such a context (Morphy 2008, 24). According to Danto, however, such paintings produced and used locally for aesthetic purposes, but without a deep discourse, would not be art.

The problem of the cultural authenticity of works produced for aesthetic purposes is emphasized when, according to an Indigenous culture's standards of authenticity, a work produced for sale as art may be considered authentic even though it departs from historic forms. A similar problem arose with Australian

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6. See, for example, Kunmandj (Dilly bags), by Elizabeth Kala Kala, and Mandjabu (Fish Trap) by Susan Marawarr, on the Bábarra Women's Centre website.

Aboriginal paintings, as these became produced for sale as art objects (Coleman 2001). Critics were concerned that the paintings, produced in acrylics, could not be authentic given that they were not produced for ceremonial purposes or with traditional media. However, what cannot be "seen" in the artworks is their ontological structure.[7] We might discuss artworks as either "allographic," that is, as having a symbolic structure like words, which can be repeated and produced in different media and yet always remain the same word, or "autographic," meaning a single system produced by a specific author, like a painting. So, for example, the notation system of symbols and words means that any book with the same sequence of letters is an instance of the same book. There can be any number of instances of a performance of a play, and each interpretation can be quite different and have different aesthetic qualities while remaining the same play. However, a painting of sunflowers by Vincent Van Gogh is always a single and distinct painting, even though Van Gogh painted sunflowers many times. Aboriginal paintings are different from Western paintings in that they have instructions for correct performance, like plays or music. Accordingly, an Aboriginal painting can be reinterpreted in different contexts, and different mediums, because it is not autographic. Different interpretations are instances of the same work, regardless of the medium in which they are produced.

Those unfamiliar with the culture should not assume that they can always identify the skill or the aesthetic properties that make a work valuable or good from the perspective of an Indigenous person from that culture. Some properties, such as the messiness of paint, may be less important than the density of the color, and the sensory qualities of value may differ even in closely related societies. The meaning of the object we are attempting to appreciate may only be given in ceremonial contexts. Nor can non-Indigenous peoples assume that only certain kinds of work are authentic. Indigenous arts may have a very different ontological structure, and this ontology will make a difference between what counts as an authentic instance of an artwork produced within a tradition. However, it is important to avoid essentializing Indigenous arts to those artifacts produced for ceremonial or religious contexts. Indigenous peoples may also produce artifacts for purely aesthetic reasons to be used domestically or sold within a cross-cultural arts market. Developments within those traditions make it possible for artists to modify works within cultural protocols, retaining cultural authenticity, as objects created within those traditions.

European tastes and current aesthetic standards potentially blind them to an acknowledgment of the achievements of other people. If Europeans attempt to understand works of art from their own perspective, they impose their own standards of taste and learn nothing. As with the Rembrannga didgeridoo, they cannot see the quality of color because they are looking at the messiness. Similarly, the music of the Kaluli tribe of Papua New Guinea was dismissed as unmusical by missionaries because it was structured to involve overlapping voices rather than harmony. People cannot make relevant aesthetic judgments based solely on what they perceive—that is, how an artwork looks or sounds (Higgins 2005, 2). They need information and categories that make the art's properties relevant as points of comparison (Walton 1970). If the Quai Branly

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7. By "ontological structure," I refer to the structure of something that makes it an instance of that thing.

were to take its mission seriously, it needs to help viewers direct their attention to the qualities the artists saw as particularly valuable. Yet this is not a simple lesson in "how other people think." To appreciate the art of another culture, there needs to be a willingness to allow differences between traditions to emerge, to accept that traditions evolve, and to explore different ways in which cross-cultural appreciation may occur.

Appreciating Art

Throughout the 1990s, as academic debates about the arts of other cultures and whether they should be considered part of the canon taught in universities raged, the philosopher Charles Taylor suggested that the validity of a claim to significant cultural value (and hence to be worthy of being taught at university) must be demonstrated from within the standards of the culture. "To approach a raga with the presumptions of value implicit in the well-tempered clavier would be forever to miss the point," he wrote; "what needs to happen is what Gadamer has called a 'fusion of horizons,'" which "operates through our developing new vocabularies of comparison, by means of which we can articulate these concepts" (Taylor 1994, 67). People who attempt such a fusion arrive at an "understanding of what constitutes worth that [they] couldn't possibly have had at the beginning. [They] have reached the judgment partly through transforming [their] standards" (Taylor 1994, 67).

One way to begin to interpret this claim is by thinking about how categories of art and structures of expectation inform our judgments. Formalist engagement with Indigenous cultures was historically important for the recognition of Indigenous arts as arts, as Boas' interpretation of design showed. Formalist principles also enabled musical form to be reinterpreted. When the Canadian musicologist Ida Halpern began studying the music of the First Nations peoples in Canada, it was widely believed that they did not have music. Halpern was among the first researchers to recognize that what some considered nonsense syllables in native songs had an important role and religious meaning (Chen 1995, 52). The problem of interpretation was not merely that no one believed First Nations peoples had art (though that applied as well), it was that it could not be "heard": there was no means to appreciate it. Melody and accompaniment were independent of each other; the vocalization included sounds considered to be nonsense or meaningless syllables. To understand the music, Halpern had to free herself from the standard concepts and structures of Western music. Western concepts, such as notational scales, did not work. "Tonality seems to exist," she wrote, "but in no direct relation to any specific existing system" (Cole and Mullins 1993, 30). Her model for understanding the music was the medieval chant, where finally the structure became apparent. Yet, understanding the music in this form is different from appreciating it aesthetically using the value structures of the society from which it originates. Such a reinterpretation does involve a re-evaluation because the music was recognized as music and as art. However, it is not yet the fusion of horizons that is necessary to determine whether it is *good* art.

Facts about the history of production play an essential role in the development of aesthetic judgments in that they determine what aesthetic properties something has. This includes the kind of broad categories

that are established in the society in which it was produced, as well as the category in which the artist that produced the work expected it to be understood or interpreted. This process of categorization involves coming to understand how society categorizes and values artifacts as well as the specific properties of those objects. We cannot generalize these categorizations across the broader classifications of societies, such as the categories African or Aboriginal, or First Nations. For instance, the Navajo understand beauty as a property that affects things in the world, rather than a state of mind. Beauty is associated with harmony and goodness and "does" something in the world. Whereas beauty in Western culture is contrasted with ugliness, the Zuni people contrast beauty with danger. While, for Zuni, beauty might be used to describe flower bouquets, jewelry, songs, decoration, and other things that can be shared, the danger is associated with shaggy, dark matted hair, ogres, and certain crudely naturalistic designs painted on ceremonial pottery. War Gods, for instance, are dangerous, and should not be shared or looked upon. Yet another people, the Kuna, have artistic practices involving the production of beautiful chants and speeches by creative individuals. These are structured in an esoteric language full of metaphors, yet speeches are accompanied by a practice of interpretation, while chants are not (Webster 2005). We, therefore, need to be wary of overgeneralizing and acknowledge that there will often be counterexamples to cultural claims. We also need to know how the features of art forms are assessed within society. For instance, art historian Robert Faris Thompson showed that the application of realism in form was not a relevant category through which to appreciate Yoruba sculpture. It was not that the artists did not have the skills to produce naturalistic forms. Rather they aimed for an aesthetic criterion of *ofjioa*, a term meaning "mimesis at the midpoint" between verisimilitude and abstraction (Higgins 2005). Similarly, my example of Rembrannga didgeridoos showed that what made them good was the depth of the color of the ochre.

Another aspect of this valuation from an Indigenous perspective involves recognition of a different metaphysical structure or the social role an art form plays. Many societies do not make distinctions such as fine arts and crafts, and arts are integrated into everyday life. Arts may show status or identity; they may also encode law or history (Coleman and Coombe 2009). A song may have the purpose of healing the sick or a mask of transforming a person into a spirit (Higgins 2005). The Zuni have sought the return of War Gods from museums because they are dangerous. These metaphysical aspects of aesthetics, as well as the different social roles art may play, suggest that to appreciate the significance of the work, and how people relate or respond to it, is to treat the object and the people who created it, respectfully.

There are norms of behavior relating to religious objects, and these norms express the relationship people have with them (Coleman 2008). For instance, an icon in the Orthodox Church is a sacred image used in devotion. The most common subjects are Christ, Mary, saints, and angels. The icon does not merely represent its subject, the image and the subject are considered inseparable. The acknowledgment of this relationship within a ritual or religious context is physical. A priest may kiss the icon in recognition. Other devotional responses to art include people lighting candles before them, crossing themselves, and genuflection. Similarly, there are norms of responses to Indigenous religious objects. The Maori may greet certain objects. Other objects, such as the False Masks of the Iroquois, should not be viewed except within certain contexts. The Zuni

do not want the War Gods gazed upon. These norms of behavior establish culturally specific protocols for how people should relate to those objects.

It follows that another aspect of appreciation in cross-cultural settings is an acknowledgment of the normative aspects of behavior that follow from the metaphysical aspects of the symbol, as religious traditions involve norms about how an object may be produced, as well as how the symbol should be treated. This involves the imaginative interpretation of the metaphysics of art (Coleman 2008). For example, in the tradition of icon painting, Europeans understand that the Platonic background to these ideas informs how it is engaged with. There are some aspects of many Indigenous claims and Platonic thought that appear to be similar. One is the association of the object with what it represents in such a way that it makes little sense to say that something is "a representation." Similarly, when some Maori see images of their ancestors, they do not view or respond to the image as a representation but respond to the image by greeting the ancestors. In making such imaginative connections between metaphysical systems, non-Indigenous people may stretch their boundaries, expanding their categories of art, as well as how they engage with it.

The philosopher Thomas Heyd suggests that etiquette is a first step in the creation of a cross-cultural ethic that establishes a mode of approach that respects other cultural values (Heyd 2007). Heyd develops his idea of cross-cultural appreciation from the concept of civility in conversation. Civility involves distancing oneself from one's own concerns to appreciate things from other points of view. Moreover, civility displays goodwill in the participants of an interaction even in the absence of agreement about other values, as well as a respectful attitude towards differences. In relation to the aesthetic appreciation of those goods, etiquette implies "seeking out the aesthetic and artistic perspectives that may have contributed to the manifestations in question, and at the same time taking note that ... we need to be cautious in our judgment as to the significance of the values found" (Heyd 2007, 196). Such an approach, he thinks, would have the consequence that the value of cultural goods would be more likely to be understood, and they would be less likely to be misappropriated.

This idea of etiquette may be developed in terms of the observance of the protocols surrounding an object's use (Coleman 2018). The first and most important aspect of this engagement involves attention to the protocols that accompany an object in the society that produced it. This may involve changing how we approach works in a gallery setting. For instance, in the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki in New Zealand, one of the first exhibits on entering is a Maori meeting house with carvings of the spiritual Ancestors. Visitors are required to remove their shoes before entering the space as a gesture of respect. Yet note, this is not a simple engagement as though participants were visitors to new lands in past times. Rather, it is an active negotiation between contemporary participants. The meaning of the ritual, and the way in which respect is interpreted, are negotiated within a new context.

The expansion of boundaries and categories in a fusion of horizons is not a one-way process. Remote Indigenous artists often travel to cities for exhibitions and have some sense of what galleries are and how they function. They produce work specifically for the gallery. Indeed, the Indigenous people's negotiation with the secret sacred in the gallery context has been a spur to the creation of works of great beauty. Howard Morphy points out that the emphasis on dotting in Central Desert art occurs as part of a second wave of painting:

"Early paintings showed an enormous diversity of form, technique, and composition. ... Although the acrylic paintings were soon to be popularised as 'dot painting,' many of the early works had no dotted infill, or had dotting restricted to certain areas" (Morphy 1998, 293-4).

According to the evidence, dots became an important element of Indigenous art after communities began enforcing secrecy restrictions on displaying sacred motifs. Vivien Johnson writes, "When it began, Papunya painting was perceived within most Central Australian Aboriginal societies as profoundly anti-establishment. The Papunya painters were generally regarded as a group of free-thinking radicals attacking what had hitherto been considered core cultural values" (Johnson 1994, 35). The radicalism of the movement was the context in which the paintings later appeared—a public gallery—which, according to Johnson, "tested the strict laws of Western Desert Society concerning the disclosure of secret/sacred knowledge" (Johnson 1994, 34). Widespread disapproval of this disclosure forced the painters to adapt their paintings if they wanted to be able to sell them. The painters began progressively attenuating the references to the sacred in order to protect their secrecy, "leaving out the offending images from the ceremonial context, reducing the design elements to essentials and filling in the background with dots" (Johnson 1994, 36). Such reinterpretations of traditions are not inauthentic; rather, we need to see the restrictions as spurs of creativity and innovation that make the traditions dynamic artistic forms.

The artist's use of religious designs may also be personalized as self-expression. For instance, Tjungkaya Napaltjarri (later known as Linda Syddick), was the first Pintupi modernist painter. Napaltjarri appeared to have turned her back on Aboriginal traditions, however. After her adopted father's death, she painted two images using Aboriginal iconography, which she described as "her story." One of the paintings showed Emu Men, ancestral beings whose representation is part of the Tingarri song cycle, which is usually painted by men. In doing so, she claimed an inheritance from her adopted father as being in control of these stories, insisting that she had inherited these rights. Her use of the cycle not only represented her life story but made a political claim against Pintubi tradition. The emergence of artists with a self-conception of themselves as creative artists, the creation of new forms of art produced with no other function than to be appreciated as art, and the level of self-expression of artists provide good reasons for considering the art they are producing to be fine art in the Western sense of the term. At the same time, such works remain traditional Aboriginal art in that they operate within and respond to Aboriginal values and practices (Coleman and Keller 2006).

Indigenous peoples may also appropriate the space of museums and galleries for their own purposes. In a recent collaboration between the peoples of Martu, Aṉangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara, and Ngaanyatjarra lands, the Australian National University and the National Museum of Australia, The "Songlines: Tracking the Seven Sisters" exhibition enabled Aboriginal peoples to represent the story of Ancestral beings who traveled from one end of Australia to the other in their efforts to evade a lustful figure in the guise of a man. This representation was important to the elders, and a response to their needs. "You mob gotta help us ... those songlines they have been all broken up now ... you can help us put them together again" was the request by Aṉangu elder David Miller to curator Margot Neale (Neale 2017, 14). The representation in the gallery context enabled Aboriginal peoples to represent an epic story, recovering and piecing together a jigsaw puzzle

of narrative, and for non-Aboriginal Australians to grasp something of the deep relationship between country, culture, and cosmology, and at the same time to discover an *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, an elemental tale of "intrigue, desire, drama, passion, and beauty that connect[s] people and distinctive places across the desert lands" (Trinca 2017, 11).

A *fusion* of horizons is more than an attempt to understand something from the maker's perspective or according to their values. The fusion of horizons is a result of negotiation and reimagination from both perspectives. Non-Indigenous peoples not only come to understand another culture's forms but also how to relate to them, changing the modes through which they engage with works and changing their ideas about art. Indigenous peoples, for their part, have reinterpreted their cultural forms as fine art with new audiences. Artistic traditions have been reinterpreted and developed to create new cultural forms for the gallery context and new artistic modes of expression. Moreover, Indigenous peoples have begun to appropriate gallery spaces for Indigenous cultural purposes.

Conclusion

To accept that Indigenous peoples produce art is quite different from being able to appreciate the work produced by those cultures. This chapter has shown how this acceptance has followed theoretical changes to the concept of art, which allowed it to be re-evaluated. This process is not necessarily a celebration of enlightenment, as the discovery of art is also associated with its appropriation. To appreciate a work of art requires more than an admiration of form. Formalism, which focuses on the forms of the Indigenous arts rather than their meanings, though encouraging appreciation, is also associated with the widespread (mis)use of Indigenous motifs in Primitivism. This process at once acknowledged the visual power of Indigenous art forms while re-affirming the non-Indigenous artist's "right" to artistic self-expression. Danto's institutional theory, which focussed on the religious meaning of much Indigenous art, devalued works deemed to be utilitarian objects, and those produced and sold for aesthetic purposes. Such a theory raises a series of questions about the difference between utilitarian objects, ceremonial objects, and works of art raised by the opening of the Quai Branly Museum. However, it cannot tell us how to appreciate different works of the same kind. This is because aesthetic appreciation requires us to have an understanding of the aesthetic values of the culture of production, the ontology of the works, and the traditions within which the objects are created. What is involved is a fusion of horizons.

A fusion of horizons may involve the creation of new theories and new ways of thinking about art and aesthetics. The engagement with the arts of other cultures leads to the development of what is now known as comparative aesthetics (the study of beauty in different cultures) as well as everyday aesthetics (the study of how we engage aesthetically beyond the domains of art). The creation of new forms of Indigenous art for gallery contexts shows that the idea of a fusion of horizons may also be expanded beyond the appreciation of the art of another culture to the creation of new cultural objects, and finally, it seems, to new forms of

engagement and appreciation. Non-Indigenous peoples have slowly expanded their ideas about art and begun to (re)learn different ways of engaging with it. Meanwhile, Indigenous peoples are beginning to transform the Western "sacred" space of the art gallery.

Anthony Melting Tallow, What is Your Wound? exhibition at the Amy H. Carberry Fine Arts Gallery (link https://www.stcc.edu/campus-life/arts-culture/amyhcarberrygallery) at Springfield Technical Community College, (link: www.stcc.edu) Springfield, MA, Fall 2023.

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Chapter 5 Prompt

This reading should be completed first; then, you must view photographs from Springfield Technical Community College's Amy H. Carberry Fine Arts Gallery. Images from Canadian-born, Chicopee-based digital artist Anthony Melting Tallow's exhibition, which was on view October 19 through November 17, 2023, show a local Indigenous artist's work.

In this exhibition, 'What is Your Wound?" Melting Tallow's work confronts the wounds of the past and the immediate challenges of the present through a deep act of witnessing into the heart of contemporary Indigenous experience. His work includes aspects of Indigenous history, culture, and identity through contemporary and vintage photographs, digital imagery, and complex art installations reflecting a vibrant and enduring Indigenous culture.

As you view Anthony Melting Tallow's exhibition, note one feature specially made for this exhibition, a monochromatic red bustle of eagle feathers, which was created on-site by Melting Tallow and is traditionally worn during a powwow on the lower back as part of an elaborate Indigenous men's regalia. These feathers are considered sacred religious objects by Indigenous people.

Do you think the red bustle can be a sacred indigenous object AND a work of art simultaneously? Why or why not? What is the difference between object and artwork?

Anthony Melting Tallow is a member of the Blackfoot Nation of Siksika, in Alberta, Canada, a visual artist, public speaker, and Indigenous social justice advocate. Melting Tallow's work addresses land dispossession, residential school inter-generational trauma, reframing Indigenous voices, misappropriation of native imagery, and violence against Indigenous women.

PART VI

CHAPTER 6 - ETHICS: HOW CAN I BE A BETTER PERSON?

In this chapter, the authors discuss virtue ethics and various ethical systems centered on virtue. They explore four specific ethical systems: Aristotle's virtue ethics, Aquinas's Christian version of Aristotelian virtue ethics, Buddhist virtue ethics, and Daoist and Confucian virtue ethics. Each system presents a different perspective on what it means to live as a good person.

Virtue ethics, unlike other ethical approaches that emphasize following rules or considering consequences, focuses on the development of oneself as a good person. Rather than simply following ethical rules or considering the consequences of actions, virtue ethicists prioritize cultivating ethical values and becoming a virtuous person. They emphasize qualities such as honesty, trustworthiness, and generosity as essential to living a good life.

Virtue ethics also emphasizes the role of wisdom in making ethical decisions, as ethical actions depend on individual situations. Virtue ethicists advocate for cultivating wisdom and character to make ethical decisions based on internalized ethical principles rather than following a set of universal ethical rules. They believe that ethical principles are inherent in the world and discoverable through rational reflection and disciplined living.

This essay delves into Aristotle's perspective on excellence and flourishing. According to Aristotle, everything has an end or goal toward which it naturally moves, and human beings' purpose is to pursue their proper end, eudaimonia, which is best understood as human flourishing or living well. Human flourishing, in Aristotle's view, involves acting in ways that allow one's essential human nature to achieve its most excellent form of expression. Aristotle believed that a good life of lasting contentment can only be achieved through a life of virtue, practical wisdom, and excellence.

Overall, this essay is a comprehensive overview of virtue ethics, different ethical systems related to virtue, and the significance of wisdom and character in making ethical decisions. It also delves into Aristotle's perspective on human excellence and flourishing, offering valuable insights into the concept of virtue.

This chapter explores a variety of approaches to the question of moral virtue and what it means to be a good person. It examines four ethical systems that revolve around the concept of virtue: Aristotle's virtue ethics, Aquinas's Christian version of Aristotelian virtue ethics, Buddhist virtue ethics, and Daoist and Confucian virtue ethics. Each will be presented as a different way of understanding what it might mean to live as a good

person. For Aristotle, this is to be understood in terms of striving for the mean between extremes in the context of a well-ordered political community. For Aquinas, it is to be understood within the context of Christianity and natural law. For Buddhism, virtue is understood in terms of a life oriented toward the eightfold path that leads to the end of suffering. For Chinese philosophy, both Daoist and Confucian, virtue means being in harmony with the Cosmic Dao.

What is Virtue Ethics?

In philosophies of virtue ethics, rather than an emphasis on following rules, the emphasis is on developing oneself as a good person. It is not that following rules is not important; it is more the sense that being ethical means more than simply following the rules. For example, given an opportunity to donate to a charity, deontologists would consider whether there is an ethical rule that required them to donate. Utilitarians would consider whether a donation would produce better consequences if they donated than if they did not. Virtue ethicists would consider whether donating is the kind of action that a virtuous person would do. Another example would be deciding whether to lie or tell the truth. Rather than focus on rules or consequences, virtue ethicists ask what kind of person they want to be: honest or dishonest. Virtue ethicists place more importance on being a person who is honest, trustworthy, generous, and other virtues that lead to a good life, and place less importance on one's ethical duty or obligations. A common theme among virtue ethicists is stressing the importance of cultivating ethical values in order to increase human happiness. Businesses today increasingly incorporate virtue ethics in their work culture, often having a "statement of values" guiding their operations.

Because the right ethical action depends on the particularities of individual people and their particular situations, virtue ethics links goodness with wisdom because virtue is knowing *how* to make ethical decisions rather than knowing a list of general ethical rules that will not apply to every circumstance. Virtue ethicists tend to reject the view that ethical theory should provide a set of commands that dictate what we should do on all occasions. Instead, virtue ethicists advocate the cultivation of wisdom and character that people can use to internalize basic ethical principles from which they can determine the ethical course of action in particular situations. Virtue ethicists tend to see ethical principles as being inherent in the world and as being discoverable by means of rational reflection and disciplined living. The different forms of virtue ethics may or may not focus on God as the ultimate source of ethical principles. What unites the various forms of virtue ethics is the focus on moral education to cultivate moral wisdom, discernment, and character in the belief that ethical virtue will manifest in ethical actions.

Aristotle on Excellence and Flourishing

The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BCE) believed that to understand something we need to understand its nature and proper function. He also believed that everything has an end, or goal, toward which

it naturally moves. For example, a seed grows into a tree because the purpose and function of the seed is to grow into a tree. Objects fulfill their purpose, not out of conscious desire, but because it is in their nature to fulfill their functions. Aristotle believed that our purpose is to pursue our proper human end, *eudaimonia*, which is best understood as human flourishing or living well. *Eudaimonia* is not momentary pleasure but enduring contentment—not just a good day but a good life. Aristotle said that one swallow does not make a summer, and so, too, one day does not make one blessed and happy. It is human nature to move toward *eudaimonia* and this is the purpose, function, or final goal (*telos*) of all human activity. We work to make money, to make a home, and we sacrifice to improve our future, all with the ultimate aim of living well.

Human flourishing means acting in ways that cause your essential human nature to achieve its most excellent form of expression. Aristotle held that a good life of lasting contentment can be gained only by a life of virtue—a life lived with both *phrónesis*, or "practical wisdom," and *aretē*, or "excellence." Aristotle defines human good as the activity of the soul in accordance with virtue, and wrote in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that

> *"we take the characteristic activity of a human being to be a certain kind of life; and if we take this kind of life to be activity of the soul and actions in accordance with reason, and the characteristic activity of the good person to be to carry this out well and nobly, and a characteristic activity to be accomplished well when it is accomplished in accordance with the appropriate virtue; then if this is so, the human good turns out to be activity of the soul in accordance with virtue."* (1.7)[1]

The ethical demand on us is to develop our character to become a person of excellent ethical wisdom because, from that excellence, good actions will flow, leading to a good life. Virtuous actions come from a virtuous person; therefore, it is wise to focus on being a virtuous person.

For Aristotle, ethics is a science with objective rational principles that can be discovered and understood through reason. Whether a particular course of action is good or not, and whether a person is good or not, are ideas that can be understood objectively. The cultivation of virtue must be accompanied by a cultivation of rationality. Aristotle saw the human soul as having three components: the nutritive part, responsible for taking in nutrition; the sensitive and appetitive part, responsible for sensing and responding to the environment, including the desires and appetites that motivate actions; and the rational part, responsible for practical and productive intellect. All three components are essential to being human, but they exist in a clear hierarchy, with the faculties of reason at the top; these can and should control and guide the appetites into productive and ethical actions. Aristotle characterizes the desiring and emotional part of the soul as partaking of reason insofar as it complies with reason and accepts its leadership. The person of good virtue has cultivated a stable soul that is not swayed by appetites or desires but is governed by reason. Being ethical, then, is a skill that one develops. Just as you can through practice become good at math or playing a musical instrument, you can through practice become a virtuous person. When you have reached a certain level of skill in math or playing music, you no longer need a teacher to guide you, and you quickly can understand what to do. The same is true in Aristotle's conception of ethical decision-making—it becomes an ingrained habit.

How can the rational human come to understand what proper ethical actions are? Aristotle's answer is his doctrine of the mean, or the balanced course of action:

"Virtue is a state of character concerned with a choice, lying in a mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the person of practical wisdom would determine it." (*Nicomachean Ethics* 2.6)

We see here Aristotle's emphasis on a virtuous character that enables us to make a rational ethical choice. There are two important aspects of this. The first is the concept of the choice lying in a mean relative to our circumstances, and the second is that what the mean is in any particular situation can be determined by the person of practical reason. The ethical course of action is relative to our particular circumstances, meaning that there is not one rule that fits all situations, but the ethical course of action is objectively true in that any rational person looking at the situation will be able to understand the correct ethical course of action.

By the mean, Aristotle refers to something midway between two extremes. The virtuous act is one that falls between the extremes of what is deficient and what is excessive relative to the situation.

All of the moral virtues are a mean between harmful extremes (too little, too much) in our actions and emotions:

Too Little	Mean (Virtue)	Too Much
Cowardice	Bravery	Foolhardiness
Stinginess	Generosity	Profligacy
Self-ridicule	Confidence	Boastfulness
Apathy	Calmness	Short-Temperedness

Sample virtues as means between extremes.

Sometimes the mean lies closer to one extreme than the other because of the particular circumstances involved. Because situations are different, it is not sufficient to say, "Be brave" because the meaning of bravery differs from situation to situation. There are still ethical standards, but they are relative to the situation. It is always wrong to eat too much, but "too much" will be different for each individual. That is why an emphasis on virtue—the ability to discern *how* to make ethical decisions—is the key to an ethical, good, and balanced life that is worth living.

The better you are at finding and acting on the mean, the more you have *phrónesis* ("practical wisdom"). This form of practical reason helps one recognize which features of a situation are morally relevant and how one can do the right thing in practice. Practical reason is rational because it is open to rational influence. Again, virtue is a learned skill. A person who listens to and learns from the reason of others is a rational person, and the same holds for ethics. As Aristotle sees it, every thought that one has, and action that one takes, contributes to the development of either a virtue or a vice. Virtues such as temperance, courage, and truthfulness become increasingly a part of our actions the more we intend to do them and the more we practice doing them. The truly virtuous person:

- Knows what she or he is doing.
- Chooses a virtuous act for its own sake.
- Chooses as a result of a settled moral state.
- Chooses gladly and easily.

These are possible only through developing a virtuous disposition in which the soul is settled by reason. The more you practice virtue, the more you are capable of virtue because virtue becomes a way of life. Leading an objectively rational good life will produce a subjectively happy life of the kind appropriate to being human.

Thomas Aquinas on Virtue

Most of Aristotle's writings were lost to Western Europe up until the twelfth century. When Islam spread across Egypt, the Levant, and Persia in the seventh century, libraries of old Greek writings were found, including works of Aristotle lost to the Latin-speaking world. Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Ibn Rush (Averroës), and other Islamic thinkers recognized the value of Aristotle and wrote commentaries on his works and other works extending his philosophy. Those Islamic works were discovered by Christians when they conquered central Islamic Spain in the mid-twelfth century. Like their Islamic counterparts a few centuries earlier, Christian scholars knew what they had in the Islamic libraries. Works by Aristotle (who the Christian scholars knew from his logic books) were eagerly translated into Latin and distributed widely.

Aristotle's texts posed problems for Christian philosophers in reconciling them with Christian theology, which led to many arguments within the thirteenth-century Catholic Church. Enter Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), who wrote the *Summa Theologia* (The Sum of Theological Knowledge), creating a system that could, as advertised, provide answers to all questions. Aquinas's philosophy was based on the writings of Aristotle, who he reverently called "The Philosopher", and placed as a source of truth almost on the same level as the Bible. You will see similarities between Aristotle's and Aquinas's ethical systems.

Aquinas's Aristotelian idea that humans can rationally understand ethical principles had to deal with the Christian concept that humanity's sinful nature prevented such understanding. He held that sin affects our moral life but not our rational life, clearing the way for the use of our human intellect to learn ethical truths. He borrowed from Islamic philosophers the conception that intellect is both passive and active. Intellect passively takes in sense experience and ideas but actively processes them to abstract universal truths. This is a natural process that is inherent in the human mind without requiring illumination from God and that is unaffected by sin (as was commonly taught in Aquinas's time). The universals abstracted by the mind from multiple individuals (e.g., "triangle" can be abstracted from individual triangles) are tied to real features in the world, the universals created by God and first existed in the mind of God, who used them to create the objects in the world. Put simply, we use our intellect to understand the world God has created. It is an orderly and purposeful world, with all of the objects in it receiving their purpose from God. By observing the world and reflecting

on our observations, we can learn about the natural world, including God's ethical laws, which permeate the natural world. Aquinas used this conception to develop what we now know as "natural law"—the idea that ethical truths are ingrained in nature.

To be virtuous, we need to learn God's natural law that governs the motion of objects in nature and instructs us in ethical behavior. To be rational, which is central to our human ends, requires intellectual discipline, but it is the way to virtue. Through self-discipline and reflecting on the natural law, we learn and develop as ingrained habits the four cardinal virtues of temperance, courage, prudence, and justice. Virtuous persons practice the four cardinal virtues in their daily lives, and from those virtues flow ethical behaviors in all situations.

Buddhist Virtue Ethics

Buddhism is a spiritual and philosophical tradition founded by Siddhārtha Gautama in India in the fifth century BCE. There are many schools of Buddhist thought in many countries, from monasteries devoted to religious ritual devotion to solitary practitioners of meditative practices. A common thread among most Buddhist schools of thought is an emphasis on a virtue ethical system that teaches the art of becoming balanced and harmonious through humility, with the goal of being free from *dukkha*, or suffering or anguish. We can free ourselves from suffering by extinguishing hatred and ignorance, following the teaching of the founder of Buddhism, Siddhārtha Gautama, who became "Buddha," which means "the Awakened One." Siddhartha Gautama taught that what could be called evil acts are performed out of ignorance and fear; therefore, rules and threats of punishment do not curtail these acts. We learn how to act in a suitable way (*sammā*, meaning best or most effective in the circumstances) by focusing on thinking suitably because our thoughts lead to our actions. The emphasis in Buddhism is on what is suitable and unsuitable rather than on the Western sense of right and wrong or good and evil. A life of virtue is outlined by the eightfold path: suitable view, intention, mindfulness, concentration, effort, speech, bodily conduct, and livelihood. By making one's thoughts and actions suitable, one promotes positive outcomes and lessens harmful outcomes. This is especially important to Buddhists because of Gautama's teaching about karma, a concept that underlies Buddhist ethics and differs significantly from the divine command ethics found in many religions.

The idea of karma is that it is a natural phenomenon that we can think of similarly to how we think of the laws of physics. The law of karma says that thoughts and actions that intend to harm others will eventually cause harm to ourselves and that thoughts and actions that intend to benefit others will eventually benefit us. In the Buddhist conception of time, "eventually" could mean a future life that is multiple reincarnations away, so Buddhists think less in terms of immediate consequences of thoughts and actions and more in terms of their intrinsic value of them. Karma is not a strict determinism in that we still have free will and can mitigate the consequences of karma through our virtuous thoughts and actions. To avoid future suffering in this life or future lives, a Buddhist focuses on developing inner virtue to be able to think and act suitably in order to avoid negative karma and to generate positive karma. As with Aristotle's virtue ethics, the more you practice virtue,

the more you are capable of virtue. Having made a commitment to follow the eightfold path as a way of life, you are disposed to follow those rules.

Chinese Virtue Ethics

For more than two millennia, Chinese philosophy has been dominated by two great traditions, Confucianism and Daoism (Taoism), that have influenced China throughout its history and are important to Chinese culture still to this day. Both traditions are founded on their teaching of the *Dao*, which is best translated as "the way." Dao is both a noun and verb, both how the universe is and how things behave properly. The Dao cannot be described completely in words but can be sensed as the source of all things and the rhythm of Being. All things come from Dao, and all things have their own Dao, or essence, which comes from the Cosmic Dao. Adepts of both Confucianism and Daoism believe that to be in the Dao and in harmony with it is to be virtuous and at peace and that this state of enduring harmony with the Dao, similar to Aristotle's *eudaimonia*, is the proper human goal. Both Confucianist and Daoist ethical systems teach that a community flourishes when its members are in harmony with the Dao and that the state flourishes when its leaders are in harmony with the Dao. However, Confucianism and Daoism are in disagreement about how communities and governments can keep in harmony with the Dao and, thus, promulgate different ideas about how to attain virtue.

Confucianism is the social and ethical system set down by Kongzi (Master Kong) (c. 551-479 BCE), known in the West as Confucius. Kongzi saw the virtuous person as an artistic creation achieved through the diligent practice of ethical excellence by way of strict ritual practice. Ritual, or *Li*, is the art and practice of crafting one's character from the raw material of human nature. Just as a craftsperson uses tools to fashion wood or stone, a person uses ritual behaviors to carve and polish his or her character. *Li* extends to all aspects of life; Kongzi taught that our every action affects our character and our environment, so every activity needs to be performed with the proper respect and procedures. Kongzi issued hundreds of rites in sayings covering many aspects of human life: how youth should behave toward their parents, what colors of clothing one should wear and when, how one should greet another person, protocols that should be observed at the court of the ruler, and so on—all to be strictly observed in order to cultivate the comprehensive ethical virtue known as *Ren*.

Most of the rites specified by Kongzi concern human interactions, reflecting the great importance he placed on suitably respecting one's superiors. Ancient Chinese society was highly stratified, and Kongzi thought that maintaining the social hierarchy was essential to social order. Showing respect for one's superiors, such as government officials, elders, and ancestors, was more than polite; it was essential for society to function properly. Filial piety was more than respecting your family elders dead or alive; it was the fundamental building block of social harmony and justice. The more one practiced the rites, the more one developed virtue, most importantly the virtue of *Ren* or benevolence. *Ren* should be understood not as acts of kindness but as acts of propriety that create virtue in oneself and society. Practicing the rites virtuously brings each person and society in harmony with the Dao and leads to a good life for all.

The philosophy of Daoism has long provided a strong counterpoint to Confucianism. As the name implies, Daoism focuses on harmony with the Dao rather than on human teachings, the opposite of the Confucian emphasis on a system of ritual behavior. Daoist ethics centers on the fundamental virtue of *wu wei*, meaning "effortless action." Daoism rejects formal rituals and deliberately strives for virtue, emphasizing instead that virtue comes from naturalness, simplicity, and spontaneity. Daoism at times seems to be anti-civilization with its calls for us to detach from the artificiality of social traditions and rituals and to adopt instead a quiet life communing with nature. At other times, though, Daoism attempts to reform society, especially its leaders:

> If you want to be a great leader, you must learn to follow the Dao. Stop trying to control. Let go of fixed plans and concepts and the world will govern itself. The more prohibitions you have, the less virtuous people will be. (Laozi [ca. 400-250 BCE] 1991, Chapter 57)

The Daoist idea is that separating ourselves from nature is separating ourselves from the Dao and that what most contributes to this separation from the Dao are the social institutions of government, military, and other social hierarchies and power structures. The Daoist virtue of *wu wei* involves a life of walking away from the artificial trappings of human pretension and arrogance and shaping your actions according to what others think of you. Instead, a Daoist seeks oneness with the rhythms of nature, which probably requires walking away from society itself. Deliberately, Daoism does not provide a set of rules and rituals because central to Daoist philosophy is the idea that ritual does not cultivate virtue. Instead, Daoism provides guidelines on cultivating the virtues of selflessness, moderation, detachment, and humility. Accordingly, Daoist philosophers did not publish books detailing ritual practices like Confucians did. Instead, Daoists created poetry and stories that show Daoist sages teaching about and exemplifying these virtues.

Objections to Virtue Ethics

There are two main objections to virtue ethics as an ethical system: its vagueness and its relativism.

First, virtue ethics is too vague and subjective and does not produce explicit rules for moral conduct that can tell us how to act in specific circumstances. When facing ethical dilemmas, we feel better if we have a clear answer about what to do. Virtue ethics offers general ideals rather than definitive commands. We can create laws based on a definitive ethic against stealing, but we cannot make laws saying "be wise" or "be patient." Also problematic is that virtue ethics tends to hold that its virtues apply variably according to the situation. It is far easier to practice the principles of never lying or always being generous. Virtue ethics says there are times when lying is a better course of action and being generous is a worse course of action, and this variability creates uncertainty. What is more, how can I decide when the virtue applies and when it should not? Telling me to be wise and reflect on ethical virtues and the situation is offering more vagueness. Finally, we want to be able to rely on other people's behavior, and those who practice virtue ethics may vary in their behavior, so we may not know exactly where we stand with them.

To consider this objection, we need to think about the nature of ethics itself. Yes, we could say definitively, "You should not lie" and "You should not steal." But what are those prohibitions based on? A virtue ethicist could respond by arguing that both are based on the ethical principle of honesty and that if that is so, then cultivating the virtue of honesty will lead one not to lie or steal from others. A virtue ethicist would also say that virtue ethics focuses on the foundation of ethical life encapsulated in objective reason (Aristotle), God's natural law (Thomas), the law of karma (Buddhism), or the Dao (Confucianism or Daoism), and therefore virtue is not entirely variable. Virtue ethics provides us with the tools to make ethical decisions in the varying circumstances of our daily lives. The variability in the behavior of those who practice virtue ethics reflects the variability of everyday life.

Second, there are different cultural definitions of human flourishing and virtue. All human cultures have ethical values, but values vary across cultures. So how can we decide which set of virtues is right? Even within a culture, two people will have different views about what the virtues are and when and how they apply. Because virtue ethics gives us no specific commands for how to act, each person is left to himself or herself to decide how to act. Virtue ethics is too relative to be a helpful ethical theory.

Ethical relativism is a concern. If ethics means anything, it has to have some objective basis and cannot be left entirely up to arbitrary whim. Virtue ethicists are aware of this danger and would respond to it that virtue ethics is based on objective realities of the world and human nature. The virtues are manifestations of how things are or should be, outside of cultural or individual subjectivity. Different cultures differ on how ethical virtues should be applied, but every culture values fundamental virtues such as honesty, benevolence, courage, and justice. Differences in how cultures apply virtues may reflect objective differences in their circumstances. When we interact with another culture, those differences do need to be dealt with, but saying our culture is completely right and the other culture wrong is not a helpful approach. Individuals similarly face the burden of needing to determine how best to apply the virtues and needing to deal with conflicts with others over how they think is best to apply the virtues. But is this not similar to the decisions we have to make in all aspects of our lives?

Media Attributions

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Chapter 6 Prompt

"How I can be a better person?" is a question we might ask ourselves from time to time. When you say something mean to a friend, you tend to know the negative impact those words can have on people's lives. So, why do we sometimes still say hurtful things anyway? Why do we post harmful statements online? Most people know right from wrong. Right?

During the height of the pandemic, there seemed to be a moment when everyone was "being nice," empathizing with others and showed more kindness. But that kindness was short-lived and quickly replaced by a backlash of nasty language, frequently in the form of cyberbullying. This kind of speech is often reflected in our political landscape.

So, specifically, why do we tend to behave badly on social media? (saying things online we might never say in person...) How do we conduct ourselves on platforms like Facebook, X, formerly known as Twitter, and Instagram? Who is responsible for policing disinformation and offensive content or racist material on those platforms? How do we, as individuals, contribute to the ongoing issues of cyberbullying? What obligation do social media platforms give to the greater good? How can one become a better person in a world full of hate speech and cyberbullying? What would Socrates or Plato make of social media?

PART VII

CHAPTER 7 - PLATO'S "ON THE ALLEGORY OF THE CAVE

In "The Allegory of the Cave," Socrates describes a group of people who have been imprisoned in a cave since childhood, with their legs and necks chained so that they can only see the wall in front of them. Behind them, there is a fire, and between the fire and the prisoners, there is a raised way along which various objects are carried, casting shadows on the wall. The prisoners, who can only see the shadows, believe these shadows to be reality.

If one of the prisoners were to be freed and exposed to the outside world, they would initially be distressed by the brightness of the sun and struggle to see the true reality. However, with time, they would come to understand and appreciate the world outside the cave, feeling sorry for those still imprisoned. The allegory is often interpreted as a metaphor for the journey to enlightenment and the philosopher's role in guiding others to see beyond the world's illusions.

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Stoa of Attalos, in the Agora, near the Acroplis, Athens, Greece. Photo by Sondra Peron, 2006

The Project Gutenberg EBook of "The Republic," by Plato, Translator: B. Jowett. Release Date: August 27, 2008 [EBook #1497] June 22, 2016

Socrates: And now, I said, let me show in a figure how far our nature is enlightened or unenlightened: Behold! human beings living in an underground den, which has a mouth open towards the light and reaching all along the den; here they have been from their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move, and can only see before them, being prevented by the chains from turning round their heads. Above and behind them a fire is blazing at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have in front of them, over which they show the puppets.

Glaucon: I see.

Socrates: The low wall, and the moving figures of which the shadows are seen on the opposite wall of the den. And do you see, I said, men passing along the wall carrying all sorts of vessels, and statues and figures of animals made of wood and stone and various materials, which appear over the wall? Some of them are talking, others silent.

Glaucon: You have shown me a strange image, and they are strange prisoners.

Socrates: Like ourselves, I replied; and they see only their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave?

Glaucon: True, how could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their heads?

Socrates: And of the objects which are being carried in like manner they would only see the shadows?

Glaucon: Yes.

Socrates: And if they were able to converse with one another, would they not suppose that they were naming what was actually before them.

Glaucon: Very true.

Socrates: The prisoners would mistake the shadows for realities. And suppose further that the prison had an echo which came from the other side, would they not be sure to fancy when one of the passers-by spoke that the voice which they heard came from the passing shadow?

Glaucus: No question.

Socrates: To them, I said, the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images.

Glaucon: That is certain.

Socrates: And now look again, and see what will naturally follow if the prisoners are released and disabused of their error. At first, when any of them is liberated and compelled suddenly to stand up and turn his neck round and walk and look towards the light, he will suffer sharp pains; the glare will distress him, and he will be unable to see the realities of which in his former state he had seen the shadows; and then conceive someone saying to him, that what he saw before was an illusion, but that now, when he is approaching nearer to being and his eye is turned towards more real existence, he has a clearer vision,—what will be his reply? And when released, they would still persist in maintaining the superior truth of the shadows. And you may further imagine that his instructor is pointing to the objects as they pass and requiring him to name them,—will he not be perplexed? Will he not fancy that the shadows which he formerly saw are truer than the objects which are now shown to him?

Glaucon: Far truer.

Socrates: And if he is compelled to look straight at the light, will he not have a pain in his eyes which will make him turn away to take refuge in the objects of vision which he can see, and which he will conceive to be in reality clearer than the things which are now being shown to him?

Glaucon: True.

Socrates: When dragged upwards, they would be dazzled by the excess of light. And suppose once more, that he is reluctantly dragged up a steep and rugged ascent, and held fast until he is forced into the presence of the sun himself, is he not likely to be pained and irritated? When he approaches the light his eyes will be dazzled, and he will not be able to see anything at all of what are now called realities.

Glaucon: Not all in a moment.

Socrates: He will require to grow accustomed to the sight of the upper world. And first, he will see the shadows best, next the reflections of men and other objects in the water, and then the objects themselves; then he will gaze upon the light of the moon and the stars and the spangled heaven; and he will see the sky and the stars by night better than the sun or the light of the sun by day?

Glaucon: Certainly.

Socrates: Last of all he will be able to see the sun, and not mere reflections of him in the water, but he will see him in his own proper place, and not in another, and he will contemplate him as he is.

Glaucon: Certainly.

Socrates: He will then proceed to argue that this is he who gives the season and the years, and is the guardian of all that is in the visible world, and in a certain way the cause of all things which he and his fellows have been accustomed to behold?

Glaucon: Clearly, he would first see the sun and then reason about him.

Socrates: They would then pity their old companions of the den. And when he remembered his old habitation, and the wisdom of the den and his fellow-prisoners, do you not suppose that he would felicitate himself on the change, and pity them?

Glaucon: Certainly.

Socrates: And if they were in the habit of conferring honors among themselves on those who were quickest to observe the passing shadows and to remark which of them went before, and which followed after, and which were together; and who were, therefore, best able to draw conclusions as to the future, do you think that he would care for such honors and glories, or envy the possessors of them? Would he not say with Homer,

'Better to be the poor servant of a poor master,'

and to endure anything, rather than think as they do and live after their manner?

Glaucon: Yes. I think that he would rather suffer anything than entertain these false notions and live in this miserable manner.

Socrates: Imagine once more, I said, such one coming suddenly out of the sun to be replaced in his old situation; would he not be certain to have his eyes full of darkness?

Glaucon: To be sure.

Socrates: And if there were a contest, and he had to compete in measuring the shadows with the prisoners who had never moved out of the den, while his sight was still weak, and before his eyes had become steady (and the time which would be needed to acquire this new habit of sight might be very considerable), would he not be ridiculous? Men would say of him that up he went and down he came without his eyes; and that it was better not even to think of ascending; and if any one tried to loose another and lead him up to the light, let them only catch the offender, and they would put him to death.

Glaucon: No question.

Socrates: The prison is the world of sight, the light of the fire is the sun. This entire allegory, I said, you may now append, dear Glaucon, to the previous argument; the prison-house is the world of sight, the light of the fire is the sun, and you will not misapprehend me if you interpret the journey upwards to be the

ascent of the soul into the intellectual world according to my poor belief, which, at your desire, I have expressed—whether rightly or wrongly God knows. But, whether true or false, my opinion is that in the world of knowledge the idea of good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort; and, when seen, is also inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and of the lord of light in this visible world, and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual; and that this is the power upon which he who would act rationally either in public or private life must have his eye fixed.

Glaucon: I agree, as far as I am able to understand you.

Media Attributions

- [Stoa of Attalos](#)

In the 1999 futuristic and somewhat dystopian film, "The Matrix," directed by the Wachowskis, a computer hacker named Thomas Anderson discovers that reality as he knows it is a simulated illusion created by intelligent machines to subdue

The Matrix characters with Neo in the foreground and Morpheus and Trinity in the background

humanity. He learns this truth from a group of rebels led by Morpheus, who believe Neo (Anderson's hacker alias) is "The One" destined to end the war between humans and machines. A pivotal character, Cypher, chooses to betray his comrades, leave the resistance, and return to the Matrix. With the help of Morpheus and the enigmatic Trinity, Neo plays his role as "The One" and fights to free humanity from the Matrix and bring down the machines. The film is renowned for its groundbreaking special effects and action sequences, including the iconic bullet-dodging scene.

After viewing "The Matrix" and reading Plato's "On the Allegory of the Cave," how are they similar and/or different? Consider the purpose of the Matrix and the cave. Who inhabits these spaces? What is the symbolism of each place?

Next, what is Plato saying about reality? What happens when we think something is true and turns out to be false and vice versa?

Then, consider the character Cypher in The Matrix; he chooses to betray his comrades, wants to leave the resistance, and returns to the Matrix. Why? What's wrong with the Matrix if what we feel is pleasurable? Is it better in some ways to live in the Matrix than to see things as they are? This is what Cypher concludes – is he wrong? Is it true that "ignorance is bliss?" Explain the pros and cons of this statement as it relates to the Matrix and cave.

Finally, Morpheus explains to Neo, "You take the blue pill – the story ends, you wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill – you stay in Wonderland, and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes."

Explain which pill you would choose and why.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Philosophy is the rational inquiry into the fundamental nature of existence, knowledge, and ethics, typically outside the scope of scientific investigation.

Metaphysics is the branch of philosophy that deals with the fundamental nature of reality, including topics such as existence, objects, time, and space.

Epistemology is the study of knowledge, including its nature, scope, and limitations, as well as the justification of beliefs.

Ethics is the branch of philosophy that involves the study of moral principles, values, and decision-making. It addresses questions of what is right or wrong and how we ought to live.

Logical Positivists are philosophers who believe that the only meaningful statements are those that can be empirically verified or are tautological.

Skepticism is a philosophical position that questions the possibility of knowledge and claims that certain knowledge is not attainable.

Moral Relativism is the view that moral principles are not universal or absolute, but are instead relative to the individual, culture, or society.

Rational Justification is the support or reasoning behind a belief or action, demonstrating a logical and reasonable basis for its validity.

Divine Command Theory is a meta-ethical theory proposing that an action's moral value is contingent upon whether it is commanded by a divine being.

Analytic Metaphysics is the contemporary approach to metaphysics which focuses on logical analysis and conceptual clarification, rather than aiming to establish comprehensive metaphysical worldviews.

Substance Dualism is a philosophical view, often associated with René Descartes, which posits that the mind and the body are two distinct substances. According to this view, the mind is immaterial (incorporeal),

while the body is material (corporeal). This perspective allows for the existence of human souls, typically understood as immaterial entities.

Cartesian Dualism is another term for substance dualism named after René Descartes. This view emphasizes the separation of the mind and the body as two distinct substances, with the mind being immaterial and the body being material.

Descartes' Myth is a term coined by philosopher Gilbert Ryle to refer to what he sees as the fallacious nature of Descartes' substance dualism. Ryle argues against the idea of the mind as a "ghost in a machine" and challenges the notion of the mind and body as entirely separate entities.

Substantial Form is a concept derived from Aristotelian philosophy that refers to the essence or form that makes a substance what it is. This concept was central to understanding the nature of living things, including the human mind and soul.

Substantial Dualism is the Aristotelian perspective that considers the body and soul as two different substances. According to this view, the soul is an immaterial entity that animates and enlivens the material body.

The Transmigration of Souls is an ancient idea that suggests the soul survives death and enters another body, whether that of a person or an animal. This concept is sometimes associated with reincarnation and was debated by various ancient thinkers.

Substance, in philosophy, is the fundamental essence or nature of something. It refers to what makes a thing what it is and allows for its conception and understanding.

Aesthetics is the branch of philosophy that deals with the nature and appreciation of beauty, art, and taste. It involves the study of sensory or sensory-emotional values, often called judgments of sentiment and taste. More broadly, it refers to the theory of art and beauty. Aesthetics also examines how artists and audiences interact with art, beauty, and taste, and seeks to understand our emotional and intellectual responses to objects and environments that are considered aesthetically pleasing.

Indigenous Art refers to the visual, material, and performing arts created by Indigenous peoples, which include various forms such as pottery, weaving, carving, painting, and storytelling. It encompasses the traditional art forms that are deeply rooted in the cultural, spiritual, and historical heritage of Indigenous communities around the world. Indigenous art often reflects the unique perspectives, values, and experiences of these communities, contributing to the preservation and expression of their rich cultural identities.

The Western Institution of Fine Arts refers to the traditional system and organizations that have historically governed and promoted the practice, education, and appreciation of art in Western societies. This includes art academies, museums, galleries, and other cultural institutions that have played a significant role in shaping the development and recognition of Western art. The concept of fine arts encompasses various disciplines such as painting, sculpture, architecture, music, literature, and dance, and it has been influenced by specific artistic movements, styles, and standards that have evolved over time in Western cultures.

The Quai Branly Museum, officially known as the Musée du quai Branly – Jacques Chirac is a museum located in Paris, France. It is dedicated to the arts and civilizations of Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas. The museum's collection includes a wide range of artifacts, artworks, and cultural objects from various indigenous cultures around the world. The Quai Branly Museum aims to showcase and celebrate the cultural diversity and artistic expressions of different societies, fostering a better understanding and appreciation of non-Western artistic traditions and heritage.

Aesthetic Appreciation refers to the subjective and emotional response to the beauty, artistic qualities, or sensory experiences of an object, artwork, or environment. It involves the perception, interpretation, and enjoyment of the visual, auditory, or other sensory elements that evoke a sense of pleasure, harmony, or meaning. Aesthetic appreciation often involves a thoughtful and contemplative engagement with the qualities of the object or artwork, as well as an awareness of the cultural, historical, or personal context that may influence one's perception of beauty and artistic value.

Colonialism refers to the practice of acquiring political and economic control over other territories, often involving the settlement and exploitation of these territories by the colonizing power. It involves the establishment and maintenance of colonies in distant regions, typically with the aim of exerting influence, extracting resources, and imposing cultural, social, and economic dominance over the indigenous populations. Colonialism has been historically associated with European expansion and imperialism, leading to significant social, cultural, and political implications for both the colonizers and the colonized societies.

Tribal Art refers to the traditional artistic expressions, cultural artifacts, and crafts created by indigenous or tribal communities around the world. This art form encompasses a wide range of objects such as masks, sculptures, textiles, jewelry, pottery, and ceremonial items that hold cultural, spiritual, and historical significance within the respective tribal or indigenous contexts. Tribal art often reflects the unique aesthetics, beliefs, and practices of these communities, and it is valued for its authenticity, symbolism, and connection to traditional heritage and rituals.

Cultural Appreciation refers to the recognition, respect, and understanding of different cultural practices,

traditions, beliefs, and expressions. It involves a genuine and open-minded acknowledgment of the diverse ways of life, values, and customs that exist within various cultural groups. Cultural appreciation emphasizes learning about and engaging with different cultures in a manner that shows sensitivity, empathy, and a willingness to foster mutual understanding and harmony. It involves valuing and celebrating the richness and variety of human cultural expressions without appropriating or diminishing their significance.

Art Valuation refers to the process of determining the financial worth, market value, and overall assessment of an artwork or artistic object. This involves evaluating various factors such as the artist's reputation, the quality of the work, its condition, provenance, historical significance, and market demand. Art valuation is conducted by appraisers, experts, or professionals in the art industry and is crucial for purposes such as buying, selling, insuring, or donating artworks. It helps establish fair market value and ensures transparency and credibility in art transactions and investments.

Virtue Ethics is a philosophical approach that emphasizes the development of virtuous qualities and character traits as essential to ethical living, in contrast to rule-based or consequence-based ethical theories.

Aristotle's Virtue Ethics is based on the teachings of the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, it focuses on living a good life through the cultivation of virtues and practical wisdom.

Eudaimonia is Aristotle's ethical theory referring to human flourishing or living well, achieved through virtuous actions and the fulfillment of one's potential.

Daoist and Confucian Virtue Ethics are rooted in Chinese philosophy. These ethical systems focus on harmony with the cosmic Dao and moral education to cultivate character and wisdom.

Christian Virtue Ethics is a version of Aristotelian virtue ethics articulated within the context of Christianity and natural law, emphasizing moral virtues derived from Christian teachings.

The Eightfold Path is central to Buddhist virtue ethics, it represents the path to the cessation of suffering and the achievement of enlightenment through ethical conduct, meditation, and wisdom.

Practical Wisdom (Phrónesis) is an important concept in virtue ethics, it refers to the ability to make practical and morally sound decisions based on cultivated wisdom and experience.

Aretē (Excellence) is a fundamental concept in Aristotle's virtue ethics, it refers to the cultivation of excellence and virtuous character traits that lead to human flourishing.

Telos, in Aristotelian philosophy, signifies the end, goal, or purpose toward which everything naturally moves, including human activities guided by the pursuit of eudaimonia.

Moral Education is the process of cultivating moral wisdom, discernment, and character traits to develop virtuous behavior and ethical decision-making skills, which is emphasized in virtue ethics.

The Allegory of the Cave is a symbol of the journey from ignorance to enlightenment. Plato presented this allegory in his work The Republic. It depicts prisoners in a cave who perceive shadows as reality.

Socrates was a classical Greek philosopher and one of the founders of Western philosophy. He is known for his influential contributions to the field of ethics and his role as a teacher to Plato.

Glaucon is a philosopher in Plato's dialogues, known for his participation in discussions with Socrates and for his contributions to the exploration of justice and morality.

Enlightenment is the state of understanding and awareness, particularly in a philosophical or spiritual context, emphasizing the pursuit of knowledge and self-realization.

Illusion is a false or misleading perception of reality, often contrasted with genuine or true understanding.

Reality is the state of things as they actually exist, as opposed to an idealized or deceptive representation of them.

A **Philosopher** is a scholar or thinker who seeks wisdom, knowledge, and truth, often through critical examination and contemplation of fundamental questions about existence, ethics, and the nature of reality.