

THE ABSURDITY OF LIFE AND RECONCILIATION BY DIVINE TELOS

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PRESENTED TO DR. THOMAS PROVENZOLA
LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
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MAX LEWIS EDWARD ANDREWS
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INTRODUCTION AND ALIENATION

Man is alienated from himself, from other persons, and from God, and as a result man has been burdened with absurdity. Absurdity ought to be understood in a dichotomous manner. Absurdity is experienced subjectively, such that the individual experiences it in an autonomous manner. The objective absurdity is the metanarratives of life. This would include a lack of ultimate meaning, incentive, value, and purpose.

Overcoming this alienation and the notion of absurdity, primarily objective absurdity, can only be done so by a divine *telos*.¹ It does seem that man lives his life as if he *does* have an ultimate meaning, incentive, value, and purpose. However, if God does not exist, then the absurdity is not only subjective but it *really* is objectively absurd. The existence of a divine *telos* enables man to live a consistent life of meaning, incentive, value, and purpose. There is a reconciliation of man to himself, others, and God by overcoming this absurdity.

Man exists in a state of alienation. He is alienated from himself, from others, and from God. Alienation from the self creates a subjective absurdity (this will be explicated later). Because of his own nature man cannot stand in agreeable terms with himself. His epistemic warrant is not always at ease. He doubts. He questions and is lacks sufficiency in his capacity to function in an ideal manner.

His alienation from others is subjective and experienced by the individual as well. It too is a result of man's nature and state of being. It is at this level of alienation where man often

¹ When I refer to *telos* I mean meaning, value, and purpose. This will be thoroughly elaborated and explained at a later point.

attempts to create his own teleology. He will construct an artificial and arbitrary teleology based on other alienated persons. Man's alienation from God is irreconcilable by man's initiative. Man cannot act outside of his closed system; thus, he requires an outside agency to overcome this alienation.

ABSURDITY

Absurdity is an understanding or a concept in which the individual is superfluous. This superfluity of *being* is due to having no allotted place in any necessary scheme of things. Some people invent teleologies in an attempt to lend things a place in overarching schemes but it is an illusion.² According to Albert Camus, man has a *longing for reason*. In this world people have understood that there is "irrationality" to reality thus a "despair of true knowledge." There still remains a longing for reason despite the recognition of absurdity. From this, absurdity is born.³ Camus recognized that man needs to understand this despair and come to terms with it. His teleology was simply to live life together with others and love one another.

Absurdity is the denial of teleology. It is a result of alienation. If there is a connection or intimacy within the self, a lack of angst, it is difficult for absurdity to follow. The same is true for an alienation between others and God. Teleology is the only savior to absurdity. The problem at hand is identifying what can provide such teleology, and if that provision is made, does it actually work? Is it a binding teleology?

Every man lives his life as if he really matters. The every day circumstances he finds himself in gives himself an epistemic awareness that what he does in those circumstances has

² As understood and advocated by Jean Paul Sartre, *Nausea*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Penguin, 1986), 184.

³ Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, trans. Justin O'Brien (New York: Penguin, 1986), 22.

meaning. The situations he is presented with allows him to set goals. In setting goals he produces an incentive to that purposeful goal, he lives and functions knowing that the means and the ends are just as important. Man will live as though he genuinely values certain attributes like justice, love, and brotherhood. Absurdity ought to be understood in a dichotomous concept: subjective and objective absurdity.

Subjective Absurdity

Subjective absurdity is when something appears to be absurd or pointless when it is in some way irrational or incongruous. The basic cases of absurdity are activities and attitudes, and that the absurdity of a life is built up out of the absurdity of the various activities and attitudes of the individual whose life it is.⁴ This is often an epistemic problem rather than a metaphysical problem. The epistemic problem is how one obtains the knowledge of the teleology and how one responds in accordance to that knowledge obtained. A metaphysical problem with absurdism will manifest itself as an objective absurdity.

In a state of life-affirming becoming (will be discussed later) those things, which are acted out, as a result of man's alienation, are absurdly trivial activities. Even as an aggregate of activities the agent cannot reduce the disproportion of their means. They are inherently burdensome activities with no vindicating purpose. They are absurdly futile activities when it would be plainly evident to an [outside] observer that they are hopelessly inefficacious.⁵

⁴ See Joel Feinberg, *Freedom and Fulfillment: Philosophical Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 299-315.

⁵ Joel Feinberg, *Freedom and Fulfillment: Philosophical Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 304-305.

Objective Absurdity

Objective absurdity would apply to the metanarrative of the individual. This would be applicable to the overall orchestration of every state of affairs. Not only does this encompass subjective absurdity but it obtains in every state of affairs regardless of whether or not it is epistemically warranted.

When one attempts to construct his own teleology to relieve himself of this alienation from others he tends to do so by relying on others. He will attempt to create a goal or value from other people's goals or values. The attempt to follow suit with this teleology is not necessarily bad since there can be good that follows from this. This reach for teleology usually looks like *good* actions or deeds. This would include giving one's time or resources to another person, volunteering, providing for a family, and succeeding in a career.

Since man is free, according to Sartre, it depends on what he makes of himself. The existence of any objective values, if there were any, would have to be chosen by the individual to adhere to. Sartre would see no way to get around this. A man of action is a man who participates in the world and this participation is contingent upon the individual's decision.

Is there any serious warrant to the secularist's teleological construct? Can a world without God still provide meaning, value, and purpose? Kai Nielsen claims that questions of value cannot be constituted by their being commanded or ordained by God. Certain [teleological] values would remain just as intact in a godless world as in a world with God.⁶

The question then is, must teleology ontologically depend of God? If objective teleology can obtain in a possible world in which God does not exist it would have to be true that a sense of meaning, value, and purpose, according to Nielsen, is a necessary truth (it is necessary that

⁶ Kai Nielsen, "One the Choice Between Secular Morality and Religious Morality." *University of Toronto Quarterly* 53: 128.

teleology is intuitively sensed). These two necessary truths (God exists and teleology obtains) can obtain independent of each other in as long as they are both necessary. The same would be true if God were contingent since teleology is still necessary; thus, relinquishing a foundation for teleology because of its independent necessary existence. For the proposition, “If God does not exist, then teleology obtains” ($\sim E_g \supset O_t$) the consequent is necessarily true, by supposition, which, according to the standard semantic of counterfactuals, has the same effect as a necessarily false antecedent, namely, that the conditional is trivially true.⁷ However, consider the proposition “If an Anselmian God does not exist, then teleological facts obtain” ($\sim E_a \supset O_t$). If the use of standard semantics apply, and the consequent is necessarily true, then to render $\sim E_a$ as true would be highly problematic. The Anselmian notion of God bases all reality in his existence. To affirm $\sim E_a$, or simply but, to affirm the nonexistence of all reality, and to consequently affirm that teleological facts obtain would be metaphysically incoherent or even a contradiction. Metaphysically and logically, the only things that cannot obtain are contradictions. Thus, $\sim E_a \supset O_t$ is nontrivially false. For the secularist to suggest O_t obtains would be equivocation (of any other necessary truth) and misunderstanding the metaphysical and ontological connection between an Anselmian God and necessary truths (like that of teleological truths). A world in which $\sim E_a \supset O_t$ is true would be a nonsensical world. Thus, Nielsen’s attempt to suggest that values (teleology) can obtain in a world in which [an Anselmian] God does not exist is incoherent.

The one who attempts to be the architect of his own teleology is merely adhering to an illusion of meaning, value, and purpose in his life. For this agent, he ultimately cares about his

⁷ As similarly used by David Baggett and Jerry L. Walls, *Good God*, unpublished, when discussing the use of nonstandard semantics.

career, family, friends, and others because it enables him to have a certain quality of life, which thereby ensures that he can spend quality time with these people (or at least he seems to *ultimately* care). It seems that this response to alienation from others is only instrumentally valued by the agent to derive some type of meaning.⁸

This agent may *believe* that he is valuing brotherhood with his friends, charity in giving of his time and goods, and love with his family, but he cannot construct the meaning behind these concepts nor can he apply meaning to an aggregate of other alienated persons. He may *think* that he has incentive or motivation to act on these values, but its meaning, value, and purpose is self-referential. When he attempts to apply meaning, value, and purpose to *anything* he applies only as he has arbitrarily defined it as being. It would not matter whether the aggregate of alienated persons thought the same or whether he was the only individual who thought of meaning, value and purpose as such, it would still be arbitrary.

Man seeks a concrete underpinning of the most fundamental values that make up life. If these values are indeed just arbitrary, and hence not really valuable at all, then one's life is rendered devoid of the meaning that is ascribed to it in virtue of it exhibiting such [apparently genuine] values.⁹ If this is the case it follows that no value exists and absurdity renders true.

ABSURDITY IN THE SCIENCES

Given the natural order of universe and its cause and effect network, perhaps redemption and reconciliation from absurdity can be found in biology or physics. For example, consider an adult salmon's biologically given capacity to swim upstream and mate. In this case the end at which the adult salmon's activity aims is not, or anyway need not be, valuable, it is simply the

⁸ Contra. Duncan Pritchard, "Absurdity, Angst, and the Meaning of Life," *Monist* 93 (January 2010): 8.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

end with which it was endowed by nature.¹⁰ The same may be true with human life. The notion may not be too far-gone since many philosophers and scientists find their meaning, value, and purpose in nature. Friedrich Nietzsche based his teleology and understanding of truth in biology. If this universe [or multiverse] is all that exists it seems that this scientific driven teleology may not be sufficient.

Nobel prize winning physicist Steven Weinberg provided a self-comforting dialogue in *The First Three Minutes* suggesting that his own research in the field of physics has provided himself with meaning, value, and purpose. Paradoxically, he believes that the more he learns about the universe, the lesser of an ultimate meaning it has.¹¹

Physicist Victor Stenger seems to agree with Weinberg's understanding of the purpose as it relates to reality. In his book, *God the Failed Hypothesis*, he displays a rather existential reflection when he ponders the universe and reality. He believes that if God created matter with humanity in mind, then it was not done so for a purpose.¹² The universe is so vast and hostile to life and the parameters for existence of humanity are incredibly slim. Earth is a rarity. This notion of absurdity is not as introspective as the philosophers may see it; rather, it is an inference based on his observation on the physical realm. What is similar between the philosopher's inference and Stenger's is that they encounter a breakdown of rationality, Camus' alienation and disappearance of reason. Like Camus, he becomes aware of the sheer absurdity of his existence.

In contrast to Weinberg and Stenger, it should be understood that *because* the universe is meaningful could any meaning or rationality be derived thereof. The glory of mathematics and

¹⁰ Michael Smith, "Is That All There Is?" *Journal of Ethics* 10 (January 2006): 83.

¹¹ Steven Weinberg, *The First Three Minutes* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1977), 154-155.

¹² Victor Stenger, *God the Failed Hypothesis* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2008), 137-164.

human art manifests a genius. Just as Albert Einstein pondered the striking fact that the universe is comprehensible, that mathematics illuminates nature by mapping forms of order as small as particles and strings and as broad as universe [or multiverse] itself. On secularized grounds, why should nature make sense? Why should there be any connection whatsoever between the highly abstract, formal relationships of numbers and figures and the order of nature? Why is nature amenable to mathematical analysis?¹³ By all human experience, it would be irrational to infer that, in a continual state of *becoming*, there is no meaning behind the order observed in nature.

It would serve well for one to be reminded that humanity did not construct the order behind the abstract and the physical. The order of the universe is prior to and independent of man's attempts to understand it. That is why theories must be tested against nature. Man is not the creator of order, but at best, discerners of order—not only for humanity's own *existence* but also for the perfection of understanding.¹⁴

NIETZSCHE'S PARADOX

It would be an appropriate evaluation of Nietzsche to state that his mere *calling* for the *übermensch* is a teleological claim. To call for redemption of something and to set a standard model is a purposeful and meaningful proclamation. The desire appears to be motivated by the very thing Nietzsche is often accused of, nihilism. Nietzsche was in despair over the implications of Christianity with no God—that was nihilism, which was a catalyst to his philosophizing with a hammer.

Nietzsche never denied there being any meaning or purpose. His qualm was that if Christianity continues without God, which would be meaningless and purposeless. He

¹³ Benjamin Wiker and Jonathan Witt, *A Meaningful World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 27.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 244.

understood that there *had to be* meaning and purpose. The teleology, for Nietzsche, was a pursuit to overcome those things, which were life denying. Christianity, God, idols, and false ideas were all life denying and life prohibiting concepts. Nietzsche recognized the human nature and *need* for a teleology, but how? In his pursuit for meaning and purpose he calls for the *übermensch* to do just that.

In Charles Darwin's *Descent of Man*, he argued that human nature is not the result of God but the fact of it having risen by evolution instead of having been placed there by God may give hope for a still higher destiny in the distant future. The parallel as outlined in *The Will to Power* is that an aspect of truth was the will-to-power: "Let us admit to ourselves... how every higher culture on earth so far has begun. Human beings whose nature was still natural... were still in possession of unbroken strength of will and lust for power." The *übermensch* was the higher state of being. Darwin attempted to account for teleology by natural means, Nietzsche merely capitalized on that and spiritualized it into a secular teleology.

By combining the empirical warrant (Darwin) and the spiritual or philosophical warrant, Nietzsche's teleology is complete. Each contribution would have been inadequate if left alone. Hardship, suffering, and sacrifice on a scientific level promotes a natural advancement of the animal whereas if hardship, suffering, and sacrifice is combined with a purposive and conscious goal there is an appearance of meaning to the process.

There is an alienation that man possesses within himself and others that Nietzsche does not explicate but is there by implication. Despite this, man is capable of transcending himself but he needs motivation, goal, a path, and a sense of direction—the *übermensch*. Science a nature cannot and will not provide what is needed for this transcendence. Without the transcendence there is no teleology, there is no purpose or meaning in a closed system. In his

writings, Nietzsche affirms Darwin's scientific account for the biological advancement of man. In *The Will to Power* Nietzsche takes the scientific account and capitalizes on it by stating that philosophy should set itself with ruthless courage to the task of improving that aspect of the world which has been recognized as susceptible to being changed." In the same work, Nietzsche states that man is a rope between animal and the *übermensch*—a rope over an abyss.

The abyss is where Nietzsche's paradox can be found. He recognizes that he *needs* meaning, value, and purpose. Nietzsche dreads the notion of nihilism and he recognizes that it is imminent; it is an abyss that must be avoided. God *could* provide that meaning, value, and purpose that is needed. Nietzsche understands the abyss to be just that. Nietzsche's *übermensch* is what provides the necessary teleology he needs.

THE DIVINE TELOS

Meaning does not stand in independent abstract relations. Meaning is entirely dependent on something else. Abstract ideas do not qualify since they stand in no causal relationship to any subject. For every deontic value and ethic there must be a *personal* source that requires obligation and adherence.

The line of reasoning that will be followed is similar to Blaise Pascal's *Apology*. Pascal argued that there are two divisions to absurdity and teleology: in the first part he would display the misery of man without God (that man's nature is corrupt) and in the second part the happiness of man with God (that there is a being to make reconciliation and redemption).¹⁵ The first division is the understanding that given man's self-inflicted [subjective] absurdity he is paradoxically trapped in a state of alienation. From the first division it also follows that if there

¹⁵ Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* 29.

is no God then life *is* objectively absurd. The second division purports that if God does exist then there is a teleology, which allows man to live a consistent life-affirming life.

Dostoevsky's Understanding of the Divine Telos

In Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* (1821-1881), a story of four brothers in Russia is a grim description of the reality of what the world would look like if God were not to exist. One brother, Ivan, an atheist, tells another brother that there are no objective truths, specifically that there are no moral absolutes. Ivan's brother then kills his father, an act that obtains no condemnation if God does not exist.

This can be understood as $\Box(\sim Eg \supset \forall \phi \sim W\phi)$,¹⁶ also known as Karamazov's Theorem. It is necessarily true that if God does not exist then any action cannot be wrong. It may also be true if a conjunct of *rightness* is inserted into the theorem. This ultimately leads to moral nihilism—a nonexistence of value. Without God, everything is permitted. Nothing can be praised and nothing can be condemned. This world, as Dostoevsky understands it, is a world of nothingness.

Dostoevsky, like Camus, Nietzsche, and Sartre, acknowledges the absurdity that arises. Every man must face the anxiety an absurdity that obtains in a world without God. Dostoevsky's response is that every man must face this reality and overcome this absurdity by trusting in and putting his faith in Christ. Christ is the only one who can overcome the absurdities and relieve man's anxiety.

Dostoevsky is Christianity's Nietzsche. Dostoevsky realizes the despair, guilt, anxiety, and absolute absurdity of a life without God, like Nietzsche; however, he does not self-construct his own teleology. There is no higher state of being in a world of absurdity. There would be no incentive to attain *any* state of being. There could not be any differentiation between a higher

¹⁶ Let Eg represent the existence of God, ϕ for any action, and W for wrong.

and lower state of being since one would need an objective referent to make such a determination. The only rational act a man could make in an unreasonable world would be to trust in the reconciling ability of God. There would be no hope for any reconciliation in a closed system of absurdity—from absurdity only comes absurdity.

Kierkegaard's Understanding of the Divine Telos

Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) believed that man lived on three different stages: the aesthetic level, ethical level, and the religious level. The self-centered aesthetic man finds no ultimate meaning in life and no true satisfaction, which leads finally to boredom and a sickness with life. Kierkegaard recognized the objective standards of good and realized that one cannot live up to what the standard demands. This results in a sickness, unhappiness, and despair.¹⁷ The religious stage is where reconciliation can be found. He finds forgiveness of sins and a personal relationship with God, an overcoming of alienation, and a restoration of the two previous stages.

The *choice* to believe, according to Kierkegaard, has no criteria and is completely irrational. This decision to trust in God to provide this meaning is completely fideistic. Here is where one is posed with the choice a leap of faith.¹⁸ It seems like it would ultimately come down to one's epistemic warrant for a divine *telos*. If one is not justified in knowing the reality of the divine *telos* then it would seem that a leap of faith is [ironically] rational. If a divine *telos* exists then one ought to be justified in trusting in that *telos* as being objective and genuine, no blind leap of faith is necessary.

¹⁷ As cited in William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith ed. 3* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 69-70.

¹⁸ See Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, Translated by D.F. Swenson and L. M. Swenson.

Kierkegaard constructs a negative case for belief in God, which is similar to Dostoevsky. Dostoevsky has no reservations when he realizes that God is the only source and the only option for absolute meaning, value, and purpose. Kierkegaard's response to the divine *telos* seems like he has certain reservations. If teleological facts are absolute then it would be obligatory for one to adhere to them when they are epistemically warranted. It seems that Kierkegaard's personal subjective absurdity has interfered with his response to a divine *telos*. As previously mentioned, it is impossible to relinquish all of the subjective absurdities but to consistently apply a subjectively absurd response to the divine *telos* is not necessarily warranted.¹⁹

PERSONAL BECOMING

Duncan Pritchard believes that absurdism is essentially conditional.²⁰ Rather than holding life as absurd, what should be understood is that if the fundamental goals of life lack final value then our lives are absurd. He does this with hopes to relieve a necessary appeal to divine teleology for one to live a life of purpose. Pritchard's idea is only plausible if it is the case that final value can be known and if an individual's life determines any such objectivity. Pritchard's proposal seems inconclusive. For an individual's life to be the measure of objectivity would be problematic and, ironically, absurd. An alienated being cannot seek or be any measure of teleological objectivity. The teleology would have to transcend the closed system of alienated beings. Secondly, there would be no way of determining whether the goals of one's life obtain final value. The value of one's life is not *necessarily* constrained to that individual's

¹⁹ I am sympathetic to Kierkegaard and how he responds to the divine *telos*. I would really be contingent upon his epistemic warrant for the divine *telos*. If he has doubt about his justification and continues to choose respond to the divine *telos* anyways then Kierkegaard may actually be commended by the outside observer for leaping through absurdity and doubt.

²⁰ Duncan Pritchard, "Absurdity, Angst, and the Meaning of Life," *Monist* 93 (January 2010): 11.

spatiotemporal occupancy. This would also assume that the individual is aware of the ultimate value for his life. This seems to be inapplicable to those who do not know or are unaware of their goal's final value. In the end, this provides no compensation and inevitably creates a subjective teleological construct.

Even in those cases in which some individuals might engage in such activities as fulfilling in its own right, notwithstanding the fact that it is pointless (i.e. giving one's time or resources to another person, volunteering, providing for a family, and succeeding in a career). This is the notion of *absurd self-fulfillment*.²¹ Can it then be argued that such *absurd self-fulfillment* be constructive since acting and participating in such circumstances saves the individual from tragedy despite their absurdity? It seems that participating in such actions is necessary for man.

Camus believed that the world was not rational and there were three ways absurdity could obtain: the perception of indifference to man's values, recognizing the finality of death, and the perception of life's pointlessness. Camus' deepest issue that anyone could consider was the issue of suicide. What about Camus' idea that what counts is not the *best* of living but the *most* of living? Camus felt that suicide was a concession to the absurd; it was viewed as a cessation of action. Camus is inconsistent with his response to suicide's beckon.

How ought one respond to absurdity? In a state of alienation it would be nearly impossible to relinquish any subjective absurdity. Freedom is in conjunction with nature, which sprouts alienation. This nature, contrary to Sartre, is unable to construct any binding or objective teleology. One may choose *not* to participate in the recognition of any objective teleology (like

²¹ See Joel Feinberg, *Freedom and Fulfillment: Philosophical Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 297-330.

that of Sartre's choice), but even in choosing not to participate he will still choose to live a life consistent with some form of teleology. Man is utterly incapable of living life as if it were intrinsically meaningless. This can be found in Weinberg, Stenger, Nietzsche, Camus, and Sartre. Each recognized the absurdity and meaninglessness by different methodologies. Each of their responses to the absurdity is different; however, they still construct a system of meaning, value, and purpose.

In 1991 L. D. Rue confronted the issue of absurdity and boldly advocated that man should deceive himself by means of a "Noble Lie" into believe that the universe still has value.²² By denying any objective teleology, self-fulfillment becomes radically privatized: each person chooses his own set of values and meaning. One has no choice but to embrace some Noble Lie that will inspire one to live beyond selfish interests. The Noble Lie "is one that deceives us, tricks us, and compels us beyond self-interest, beyond ego, beyond family, nation, [and] race." "Without such lies, we cannot live."²³

Rue's Noble Lie does not appear to solve the notion of absurdity. Why should one sacrifice self-interest for a fiction? The Noble Lie is the greatest placebo that accomplishes its feat of illusion. Rue's problem, as for anyone who constructs any Noble Lie, is that he values deeply personal fulfillment and wholeness. This would include objective values, which according to his philosophy do not exist. The Noble Lie option thus affirms what it denies and so refutes itself.²⁴

²² L. D. Rue, "The Saving Grace of Noble Lies," address to the American Academy for the Advancement of Science, February 1991. As cited in William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith ed. 3* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 84-85.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 87-88.

Humanity is forced to participate and act. In the very act of living the individual seeks teleology. The means to the end (teleology) are always the same, which is a life-affirming act of *becoming*. He can, and often does, perform acts and hold to ideas that are life-denying. These life-denying circumstances would be those consistent with the subjective absurdities. The reality of alienation can overcome one's senses and produce irrationality and a perception of that irrationality. It is inevitable for everyone to live a meta-life-affirming life, that is, the means to an end. These means may vary but everyone has the same intuitive end in mind (teleology).

It should be noted that this is not wishful thinking or a delusional projection onto reality. One is certainly rational in *desiring* there to be objective meaning, value, and purpose, but a desire cannot manifest a metaphysical reality. The wishful thinking delusion is similar to that of Immanuel Kant's dialectal relation to reality. One's *a priori* ideas does not conform the world to those ideas. Rather, this is the same as Gabriel Marcel's dialogical relationship where one's ideas conform to the world, to reality. It is *because* of the existence of an objective [divine] teleology does one intuitively desire meaning, value, and purpose. The metaphysical reality of the divine *telos* is the basis for one's need to conform to the dialogical subject-object (person-teleology) relationship. The divine *telos* is relationally informing the subject of its reality.

CONCLUSION

The two divisions of absurdism and teleology are, by all evidence, binding. If God does not exist then man lives in Bertrand Russell's world of scaffolding despair. Man is merely the product of pointless cause and effects with no prevision of the ends being achieved. All the labors of the age, devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vase death of the solar system. Man's achievements are destined to be buried in the debris of the universe. Only within the scaffolding of these [teleological] truths,

only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.²⁵

If there is no God to provide meaning, value, and purpose, the only consistent option for humanity is suicide.²⁶ Any *becoming* of life-affirming or life-denying acts are illusory. Absolutely *nothing* can be a positive or negative act for the individual since there is nothing to determine a differentiation. One is forced to face Nietzsche's abyss and face the reality that no rope can scale the depth of nothingness. One is only left with despair, guilt, and angst. If one can determine that despair, guilt, and angst are not preferred then his only option is to eliminate such emotions and thoughts. If there is no God, the only remedy for absurdism is to participate in Nietzsche's abyss of nothingness: suicide.

²⁵ Bertrand Russell, *Mysticism and Logic* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1917), 47-48.

²⁶ Here is where Sartre, Camus, and others disagree. Because of absurdity, man's only option is to choose suicide. Death is the only means by which it can be overcome. In a Christian context, God recognizes that death is the only way to overcome man's absurdity. The means by which God provides teleology is by means of death. God becomes incarnate and overcomes absurdity by means of his own death, which may be imputed to humanity. Here we find a paradox. In order for there to be a genuine sense of teleology and becoming there must be death. There must be death to bring about life, a life of *becoming*, relationships, and of teleological existence.

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