Lecture 10
Business, Science and Religion in the 21st C.:
One Dimensional Post-Modern Existentialism

Reading:

Downloadable Notes; Beck; Featherstone; Selections from LS 829

Topics

- Hegel and the Conception of Modernity
- Kierkegaard and the 'Leap of Faith'
- Phenomenology and the Origins of Post-Modernity
- Sartre and Existential Angst
- Marcuse and One Dimensional Thought
- Arendt, Stace and the Zionist Illusion
- Science, Business and Life in the 21st C.

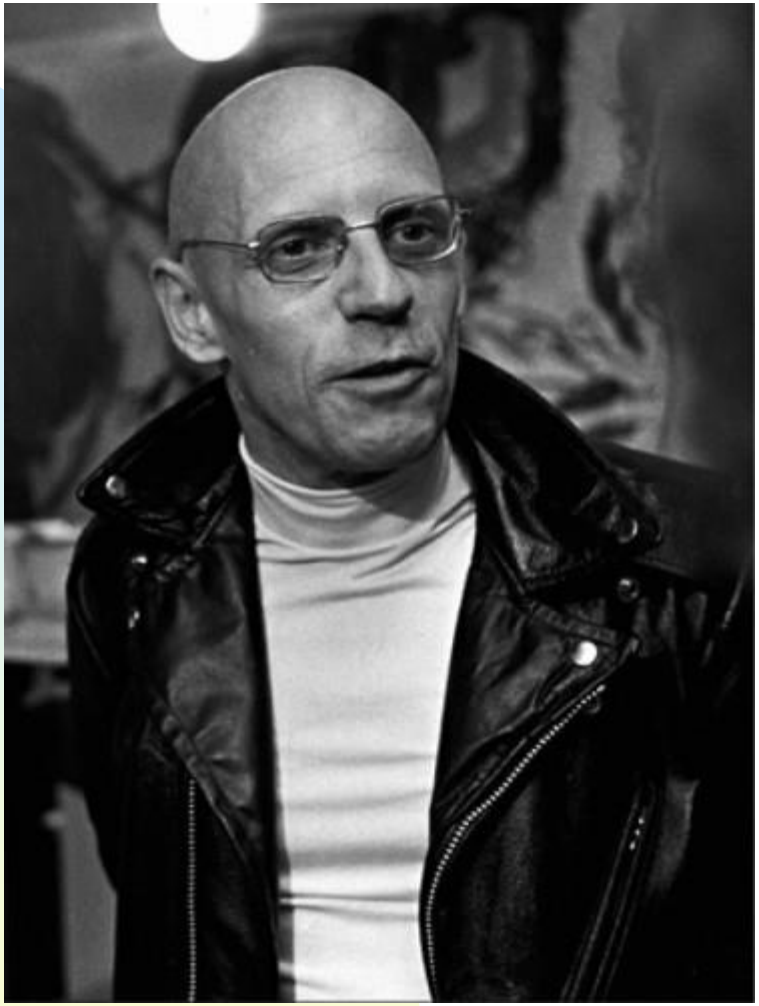
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What is Modernity?

- Basic features of '**Modernity**' are described by Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (1977):
  - questioning or rejection of tradition
  - prioritization of individualism and freedom
  - belief in inevitability of social, scientific and technological progress
  - reliance on rationalization and professionalization
  - the acceptance of capitalism and the use of markets and the associated phenomenon of industrialization, urbanization and secularization
- To these features could be added acceptance of globalization
- Critical theorists of the Frankfurt school view Modernity as evolving out of the Enlightenment, heightening the process of alienation and commodity fetishism, with rationalization and progress for the sake of progress leading to dehumanization

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Michel Foucault
(1926-1984)

French philosopher

Histoire de la folie **(1960)**
(History of Madness)

Les Mots et les choses
(1966) (The Order of Things)

L'Histoire de la sexualité
The History of Sexuality
(1980) 4 vols.

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Modernity and the Post-Modern Critique

Modernism (or Enlightenment Humanism)	Postmodernism
Reason and science provide accurate, objective, reliable foundation of "knowledge"	Reason and science are Ideologies in the Nietzschean or Marxist sense: simply myths created by man.
Reason transcends and exists independently of our existential, historical, cultural contexts; it is universal and "true".	There is no universal, objective means of judging any given concept as "true"; ALL judgments of truth exist within a cultural context (cultural relativism).
Reason and human independence/freedom are inherently linked; just laws conform to the dictates of Reason. *We hold these truths to be self evident…*	The application of pure Reason (predicated Cartesian Radical Skepticism) disproves the universal nature of *a priori* human freedom. Independence/Freedom are Western Ideologies (just like reason and science) used to colonize foreign cultures (ie Belgian Congo, Viet Nam, Iraq, Afghanistan) or subjugate women.

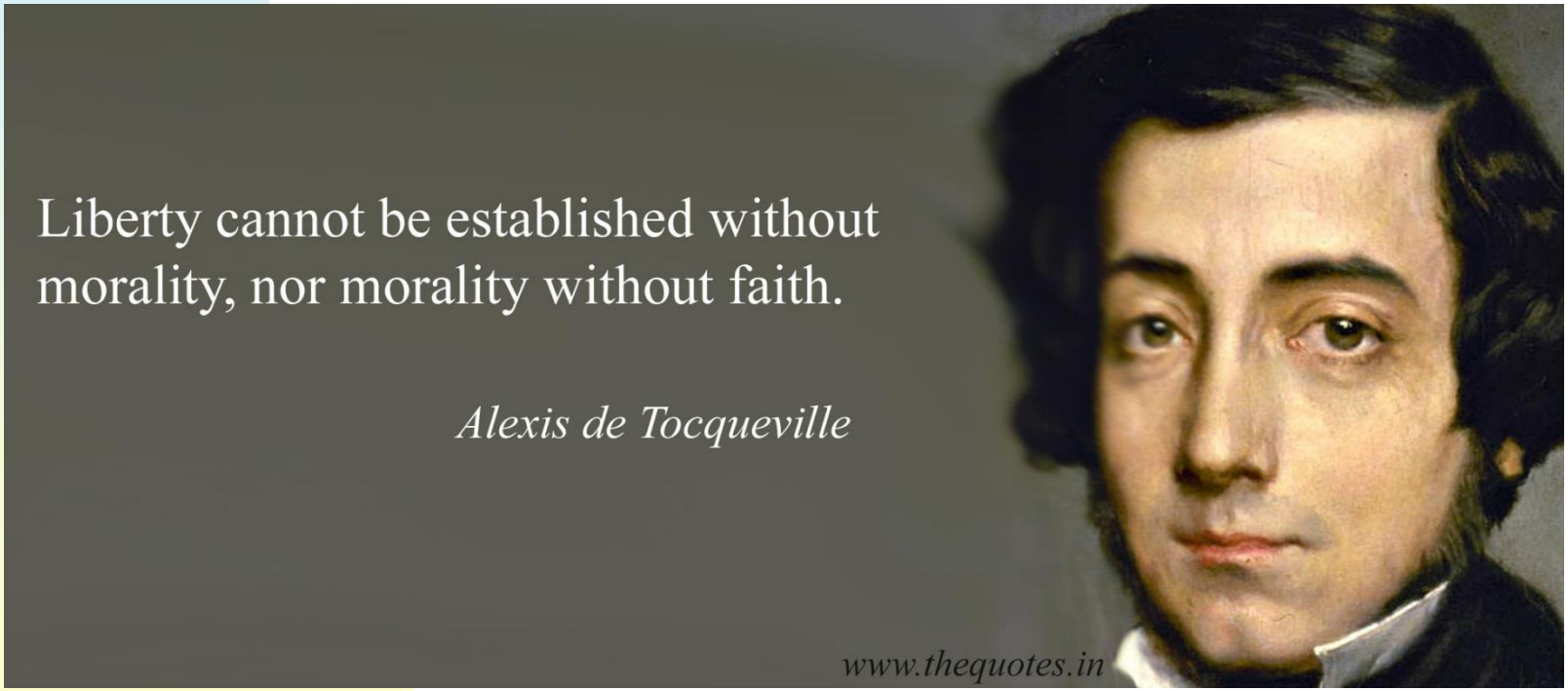
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Early Modernity and the Paranoid American Utopia

- What is Tocqueville's virus? (p.5)
  - "According to Tocqueville the problem with America was that society and economy had started to take precedence over politics. **Men were less interested in freedom through association than they were in their own personal position relative to those of other men**. In order to better explain this process Tocqueville coined the term ***individualism***, by which he meant that men were no longer interested in public issues, but instead obsessed about their own private concerns … The abdication of public space and the rise of individualism led to the anxiety of identity and **the paranoid need to reconstitute American identity through various attacks on enemy others.** At the bottom of this will to America lay the wish to reconstitute the original Puritan utopia, the city of God, which has driven American's into the future since John Winthrop …"

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Alexis (Viscount) de Tocqueville (1805-1859), remembered for *Democracy in America* (two volumes 1835,1840 in French) published after travels in America in 1831 – which included a trip to French Canada. Was an advocate of segregation of Arabs and European colonists in Algeria. Participated in the suppression associated with the Second Revolution of 1848 and served as Minister of Foreign Affairs for a brief period in 1849. His personal experiences were a sharp contrast with his writings which identified virtues of democracy and individual freedoms.



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G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831) and the conception of Modernity

- Essential notions, concepts and persons:
  - Identification of Hegel with the commencement of modernity is from Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1985, from the German)
    - Kant is the precursor of modernity, separating **Reason** into theoretical, practical and aesthetic spheres
    - Habermas associated Hegel with recognizing the problem of modernity as: **the need 'to create its normativity out of itself'** (*Discourse,* p.7) --> idealist application of Reason
    - Hegel recognizes that in modernity normativity could no longer be derived from 'the dogma of transcendental faith'
  - Habermas relates the beginning of post-modernism with F. Nietzsche, e.g., 'God is dead'

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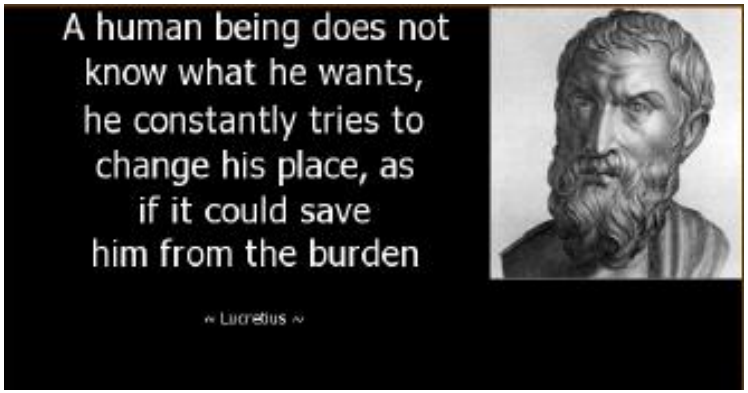
Hegel and Absolute Idealism

- There is still modern debate over precisely what the absolute idealism of Hegelian philosophy proposes
  - The attribution of thesis-antithesis-synthesis seems misplaced though absolute idealism employs dialectical interpretation
  - Substantive linguistic and interpretation problems arise with the German sources that are essential to much of 19th century Continental philosophy
    - An important example appears with *Phenomenology of the Spirit* (1807) which has the German title *Phänomenologie des Geistes* – the translation of *Geistes* is complicated, has been translated as *Mind –> Spirit* is the more recent translation
- For Hegel, Kant was the first to fully articulate the modern principle of "subjectivity" founded on individualism, criticism of tradition, autonomy from external moral authority, and idealism derived from the omnipresence of reason.

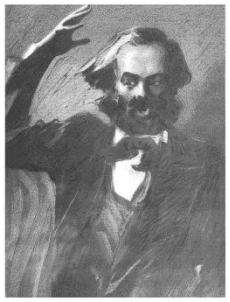
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Idealism versus Materialism



Karl Marx -
Historical Materialism



Materialism versus Idealism

2 opposite philosophical approaches, underlying 2 corresponding opposed theoretical tendencies in anthropological theory

MATERIALISTS -- social and cultural phenomena analyzed broadly as natural systems and in terms of their material conditions:

- **e.g. how particular social and cultural systems relate to their environment — i.e. how they transform it, extract energy from it, distribute the captured energy among their members,**
- **in this analysis, the members' own mental concepts and ideas are treated as dependent variables — that is, they are passive reflections in human consciousness of material processes, and not autonomous causal forces in their own right**

IDEALISTS --- human cultures are shaped primarily by processes of shared human consciousness, ideation, and imagination — processes which cannot be reduced to purely material causes

Materialism vs. Idealism

- **Materialism->Opposite of Idealism**
- **Idealism: Subjective reality**
- **Matter dependent on mind or spirit**
- **Mind or Spirit**
  - **Exists independently of matter**
  - **"I think, therefore I am"**

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Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) and the 'Leap of Faith'

- "I believe because it is absurd" – this situates truth outside the realm of reason and provides an *existential* basis for religious knowledge – albeit highly unusual – placing the belief of the individual above reason
  - For Kierkegaard, faith is paradoxical, a passionate belief in something that is intrinsically against reason, absurd, self-contradictory → this provides the first clear statement of existential philosophy that was later developed by Sartre (but not in a religious context)
  - The implication is that the 'leap of faith' transcends the universal and places the individual as the ultimate source of values that determine whether actions are moral
    - This **transcendental** approach adapts features of absolute idealism that are advanced by Hegel
    - There are elements in this paradoxical situation confronting the individual that can be found in Greek tragedy

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Post-Hegelian Philosophy: Extending Modernism

- The evolution of Western philosophy beyond Hegelian idealism contributed to emergence of the important schools of philosophy in the 20th century – some strains have reinforced modernity
  - These developments can be roughly divided into Anglo/American and Continental European tracks
    - The American tradition of **pragmatism** of William James (1842-1910) and John Dewey (1859-1952)
      - Pragmatism has experienced a recent revival after decades
    - **Transcendentalism** was another important American philosophical school associated with Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) and Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)
      - The works of Thoreau are important early contributions to the environmental movement; Transcendentalism has close affiliation with Unitarianism
    - The Anglo tradition of **analytic philosophy** and **logical positivism** of Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) and A.J. Ayer (1910-1989);
      - There was also a Continental variation associated with the Vienna circle of Rudolph Carnap (1891-1970)

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From Transcendentalism to Pragmatism

- Transcendentalism was an American, primarily N. England begun by Thoreau, philosophical movement that adopted many features of Unitarianism with two important features:
  - Transcendentalists extended the notion of Kantian idealism that the human mind “forms” experience to a stronger form where the mind has ‘vision’; such mental operations are a counter to empirical skepticism
    - “Transcendental” as opposed to “transcendent” (beyond human experience) implies that ‘Reason’ makes human experience possible
  - Transcendentalists, e.g., Emerson, took strong positions on important social and political issues of the day encouraged non-violent actions
    - These include the brutal treatment of the Cherokees; the extension of the slave system to the North and the ‘criminal’ recognition of slavery in general; the poll tax and the Mexican war
- With the emergence of pragmatism, starting in 1870 with Charles Peirce (pron. ‘Purse’)search for resolution of the conflict between science and religious morality → ultimately pragmatism is a form empiricism
  - This is reflected in the ‘pragmatist maxim’
  - The social and political are jettisoned and replaced by scientific inquiry

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Peirce on Pragmatism:



C.S. Peirce, who coined the term Pragmatism, saw it as more a technique to help us find solutions than a philosophy or solution to problems. He wrote: *"Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object."*

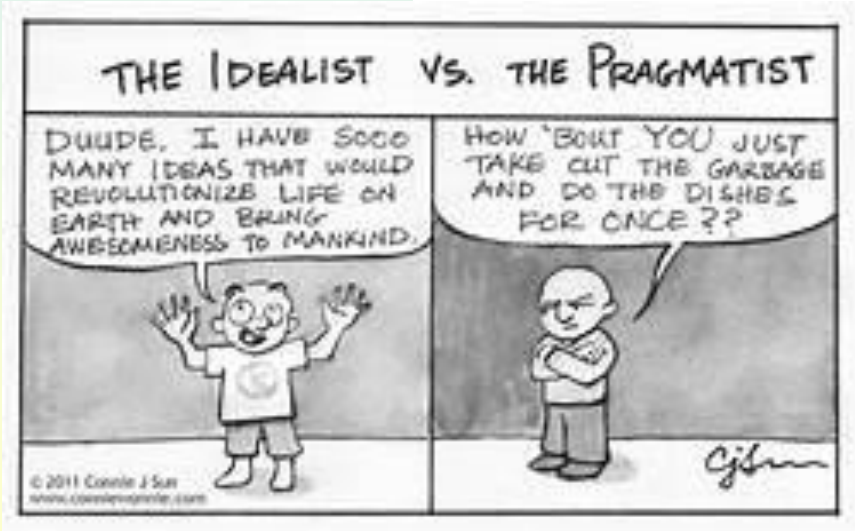
PRAGMATISM

PROPONENTS OF PRAGMATISM



John Dewey (1859 – 1952)

- Democracy in Education
- Students need to learn practical, pragmatic daily-life skills in order to build a better society.
- He wanted students to learn through experience, and to think and reflect critically on their experience.



Pragmatism – Instrumentalism

- Dewey did not consider himself a pragmatist, but rather referred to his philosophy as **Instrumentalism.**
- **Instrumentalism:** concepts and theories are measured as useful, not by whether they are true or false, but by how effective they are in explaining and predicting phenomena

Wikipedia (2009)

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The Logical Positivists

- Positivism is a philosophy (primarily epistemological) that extends empiricism and is closely connected to science
  - The basic notion is that certain ("positive") knowledge is derived using reasoning from sensory experience about natural phenomena to determine general properties and relations.
  - Truth ('positive knowledge') is derived *a posteriori* – *a priori* knowledge is denied
- There are two distinct historical phases
  - An earlier phase that includes contributions by Hume, Comte, J.S. Mill and culminating with the contributions of Ernst Mach
  - The second phase is highlighted by the rise of logic and the subsequent 'mathematization' of reasoning about sensory experience → logical positivism (logic empiricism) of Ayer, Russell and Carnap
- Positivism rejects knowledge claims based on introspection or intuition, especially theology and metaphysics

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Post-Hegelian Philosophies leading to Post-modernism

The emergence and evolution of important post-Hegelian Continental philosophies provided the foundations for the emergence of post-modernism

- (*) The post-Nietzche tradition of **phenomenology** led by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)
  - Phenomenology evolved in a number of directions inspiring existentialism and the hermeneutic phenomenology of H-G Gadamer (*Truth and Method,* 1860)
- (*)The Heidegger-inspired evolution of **existentialism** led by Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) and the feminist Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986)
  - The essential feature adapted from Heidegger that the disparate strains of existentialism share is the anti-universal proposition that philosophy begins with the Being of the individual – which includes not just rational though but feelings and other forms of possibly irrational thought.
- The Marxian influenced critical theory of the Frankfurt school, e.g., Herbert Marcuse and Habermas

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Phenomenology and the Origins of Post-Modernity

- Phenomenology is a diverse philosophical approach. The basic common theme in phenomenology is to understand the meaning that 'things' have in the experience of 'Being', i.e., objects, events, tools, the flow of time, the self, and other beings, as things arise and are experienced in our "life-world".
  - Heidegger makes the following statement: "phenomena, as understood phenomenologically, are never anything but what goes to make up Being, while being is in every case the being of some entity, we must first bring forth the entities themselves if it is our aim that Being should be laid bare; and we must do this in the right way".
    - Put differently, phenomenology "expresses the maxim which can be formulated as 'To the things themselves!'"
- Husserl and Heidegger recognize the Greeks and Scholastics finding **the progress of 'science' has produced "an indifferent turning away from the questions which are decisive for a genuine humanity"** . . .

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Phenomenology: Husserl versus Heidegger and Beyond

- Husserl asks ‘Do not questions of the meaning or meaningfulness of the whole of human existence, universal and necessary for all ... demand universal reflections and answers based on rational insight?”
  - This referencing of ‘rational insight’ situates Husserl within the stream of transcendental idealism descended from Kant and Hegel
- Heidegger made a radical departure from Husserl – focusing on the question of Being of being – fundamental humanism
  - In seeking to provide a radical phenomenology of Being, Heidegger developed a new ‘language’ (see Glossary on webpage)
  - For Heidegger: “everything we talk about, everything we have in view, everything towards which in any way, everything to which we comport ourselves in any way is being”

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Understanding Heidegger



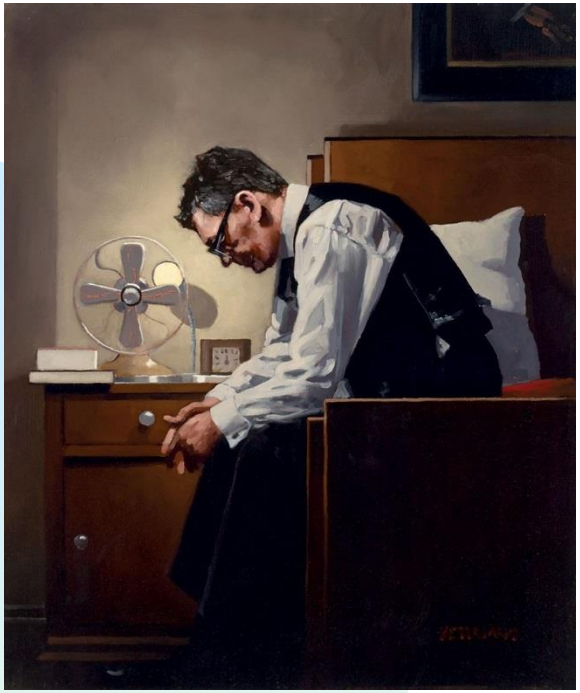
- To understand Heidegger it is helpful to work by example
- An important work by Heidegger “The Origin of the Work of Art” (1935) that examines Van Gogh, A Pair of Shoes
- Another example is to contrast the phenomenological approach to unemployment (interviews with general questions) with the ‘scientific’ approach used in economics, estimating regressions.

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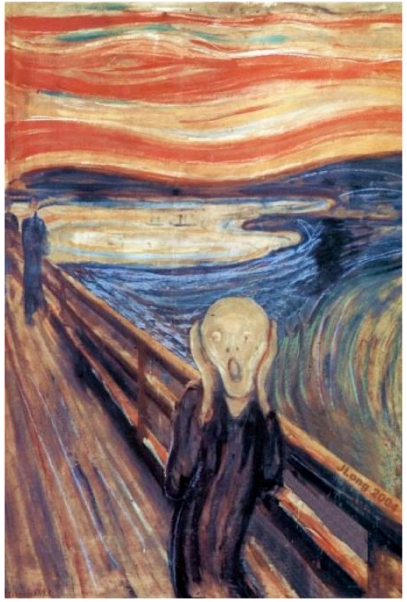
The Continental Tradition of Existentialism

- There are different lines of existentialism, German and French, inspired by Heidegger and the translations of Kierkegaard in the 1920's
- In existentialism, the source of 'universal' principles for moral commitment is the 'radically free decisions' of each acting, feeling and living individual
  - Neither God or *a priori* reason or universal features of human nature are available to guide in determining normative standards for any specific individual → the individual is 'higher' than the universal
- A useful example of the existential moral problem is whether to collaborate with an oppressive conqueror or the join the likely futile fight of the Resistance, e.g., Vichy France; Palestinians & Israelis

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Sartre and Existential Angst

- Jean-Paul Sartre was the leading figure of French existentialism, able to reconfigure the dry content of his philosophical discourse into plays and novels (*Nausea*)
  - Joined in the literary project by others such a Albert Camus (*The Stranger*) resulting in widespread popular interest in the nihilistic and pessimistic perspective of existentialism that the world is absurd and meaningless
    - Camus portrays the absurdity of a world of strangers where none have a home, and there is nothing outside this world
  - For Sartre, while 'man' has knowledge there is no hope in a world without God (contra Kierkegaard), in a finite, meaningless and hostile world it is difficult to avoid despair
    - For Sartre the desire to combat existential angst propels the need for action and pursuit of freedom

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Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology* (1943)

- For Sartre, ‘meaninglessness’ and ‘absurdity’ can be synonyms
- Basic argument: Meaninglessness of life derives from the absence of a foundation for individual freedom
  - This is a consequence of the ‘freedom to choose’ values (morals) being completely undetermined. Consequently, there is no basis to justify the choice of values
  - Without such values, the freedom that is the foundation of meaningful life does not have any foundation, which makes life ‘absurd’, i.e., meaningless
- At a deeper level, Sartre is arguing that although the individual can freely choose values, there is a meta-value that cannot be chosen
  - Values are acceptable only if justified by some independent factor rather than by an individual’s free choice

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Hannah Arendt and *The Human Condition* (1958)

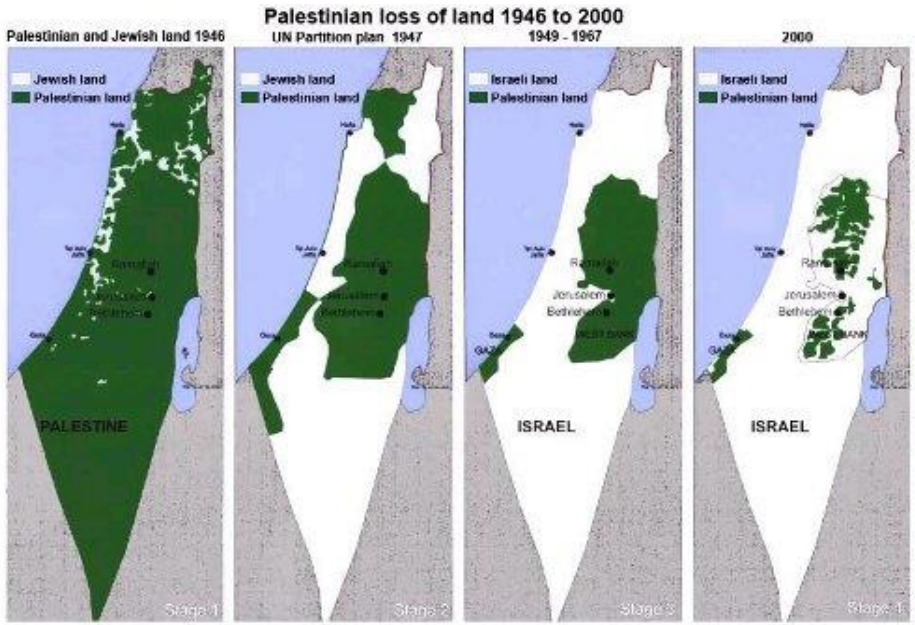
- An important political philosopher, Arendt presents a negative view of modernity in *The Human Condition*
  - The public sphere of action and speech is replaced by the private pursuit of economic interests
    - Modernity is characterized by bureaucratic administration and elite domination and the manipulation of public opinion; homogeneity and conformity have replaced plurality and freedom; isolation and loneliness have eroded human solidarity of living together.
    - Modernity represents the loss of traditional values and requires new grounds for human community.
  - Arendt was a Zionist, best remembered for *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963)
    - Seen (especially by Zionists) as an *apologia* by identifying the tendency to obey orders and conform to mass opinion instead of seeing a malevolent desire to do evil; also condemned for identifying the role of certain Jewish leaders in facilitating the Holocaust

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Stace and the Zionist Illusion

- **Zionism** is a Jewish nationalist movement that has the goal of creating and supporting a Jewish national state in Palestine based on historical claims this territory is the ancient homeland of the Jews
  - In contrast to the Western tradition separating Church and state, Zionism requires religious bigotry and the denial of rights to adherents of non-Jewish religions
    - For example, Israel confers citizenship of Jews returning to the homeland (with exceptions for non-white Jews)
  - The impetus to the creation of Israel is traceable to the Balfour declaration issued during WWI affirming the right to a Jewish state in Palestine, what was Ottoman territory with a minority Jewish population at that time
    - Another instance of the colonial activities of the British

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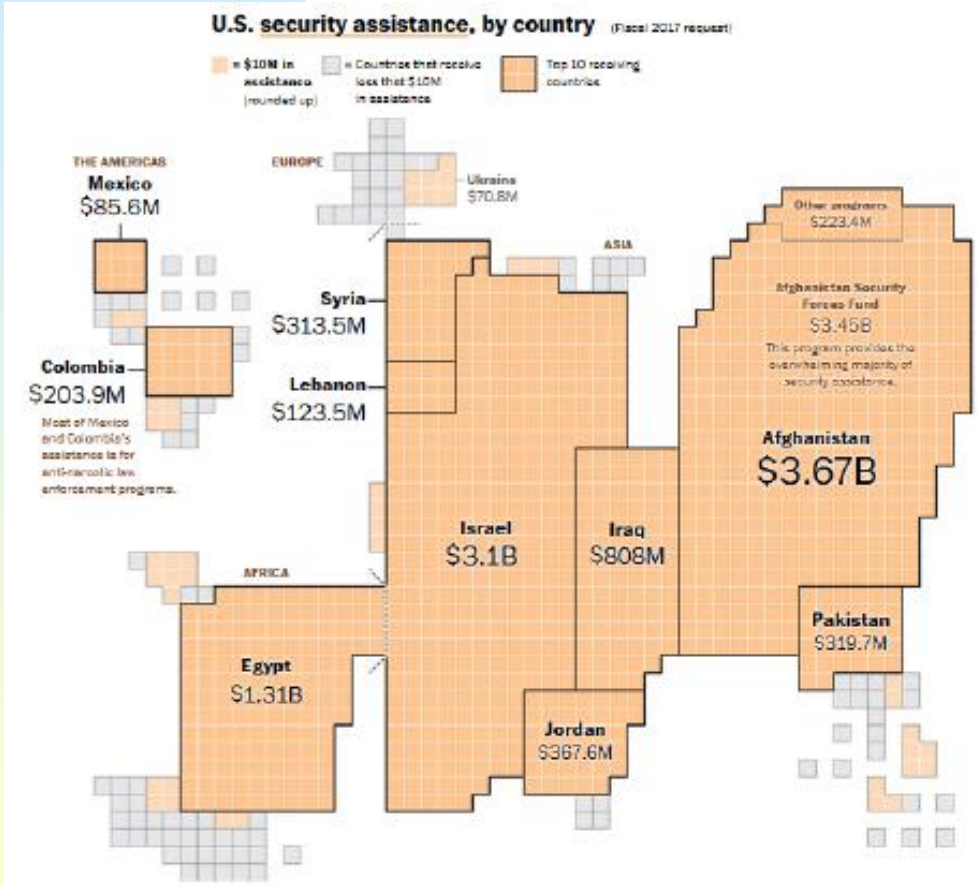


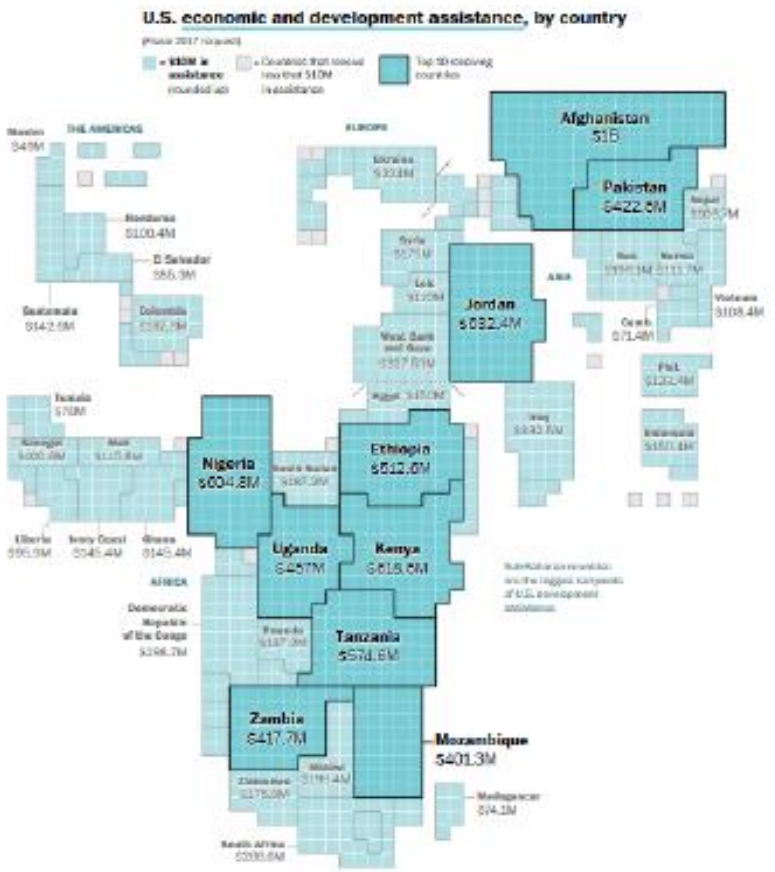




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US Military and Economic/Development Aid – Security Assistance typically requires that funds be spent on US source arms, though Israel has a partial exemption





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The Houthis: Famine and Saudi bombings

US major supplier of Saudi arms, fighter aircraft and bombs supplier

Iranian involvement pretext





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Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School

- Reference to “critical theory” refers to neo-Marxist approach to political philosophy associated with the ‘Frankfurt School’
  - The Frankfurt School is so named after the Institute for Social Research at Goethe University in Frankfurt founded in 1923, a loose collection of dissident Marxists ‘critical’ of the political philosophies of the day: capitalism, Soviet socialism and National Socialism
    - Having a number of Jewish intellectuals, following rise of the Nazis the Frankfurt School relocated to NYC in 1935
  - Important figures in the Frankfurt School include Max Horkheimer (head of the Institute from 1930); Theodor Adorno; and Herbert Marcuse
- In *Bemerkungen zur Religion (Eclipse of Reason)* (1972), Horkheimer distinguished “critical” theory from a “traditional” theory using a practical purpose: a theory is critical to the extent that it seeks human “emancipation from slavery”, acts as a “liberating … influence”, and works “to create a world which satisfies the needs and powers” of human beings.

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Marcuse and the Ideology of Technology http://www.marcuse.org/herbert/index.html

- “A comfortable, smooth, reasonable, democratic unfreedom prevails in advanced industrial civilization, a token of technical progress. Indeed, what could be more rational than the suppression of individuality in the mechanization of socially necessary but painful performances; the concentration of individual enterprises in more effective, more productive corporations; the regulation of free competition among unequally equipped economic subjects; the curtailment of prerogatives and national sovereignties which impede the international organization of resources. That this technological order also involves a political and intellectual coordination may be a regrettable and yet promising development.”
- By virtue of the way it has organized its technological base, contemporary industrial society tends to be totalitarian. For "totalitarian" is not only a terroristic political coordination of society, but also a non-terroristic economic-technical coordination which operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests. It thus precludes the emergence of an effective opposition against the whole.

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Materialism and One Dimensional Thought

- The productive apparatus and the goods and services which it produces "sell" or impose the social system as a whole. The means of mass transportation and communication, the commodities of lodging, food, and clothing, the irresistible output of the entertainment and information industry carry with them prescribed attitudes and habits, certain **intellectual and emotional reactions which bind the consumers more or less pleasantly to the producers and, through the latter, to the whole. The products indoctrinate and manipulate; they promote a false consciousness which is immune against its falsehood. And as these beneficial products become available to more individuals in more social classes, the indoctrination they carry ceases to be publicity; it becomes a way of life. It is a good way of life**--much better than before--and as a good way of life, it militates against qualitative change. Thus emerges a pattern of ***one-dimensional thought and behavior*** in which ideas, aspirations, and objectives that, by their content, transcend the established universe of discourse and action are either repelled or reduced to terms of this universe. They are redefined by the rationality of the given system and of its quantitative extension.

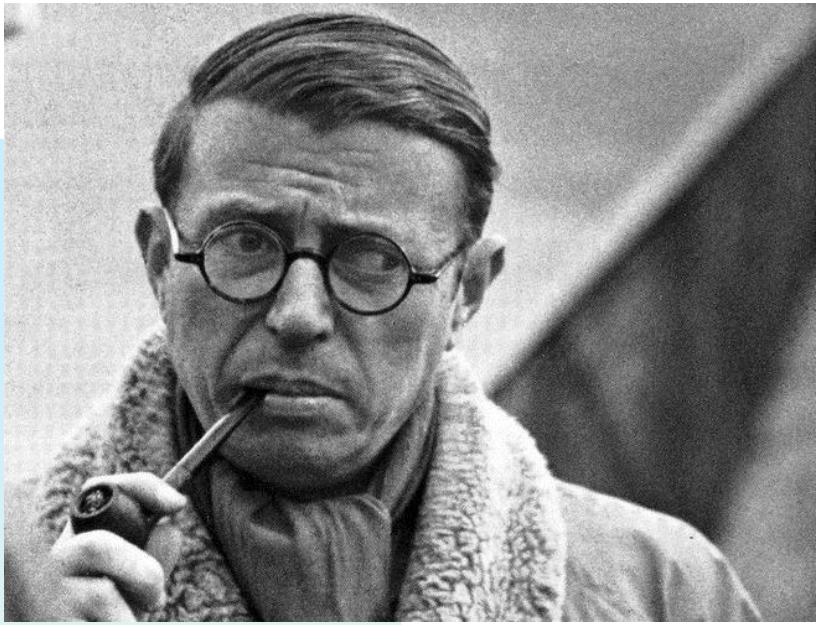
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Existential One-Dimensional Thought

- For Sartre, existential meaninglessness originates from the ‘freedom to choose’ the meaningfulness of the human condition being completely undetermined -- having no structure or ‘essence’.
  - Being completely undetermined, freedom cannot rely on any justification for making choices
- For Marcuse, advanced industrial society provides a basis for the ‘freedom to choose’ in commodity fetishism, ‘the consumer products that bind the consumers more or less pleasantly to the producers’ that ‘indoctrinate and manipulate’ promoting a ‘false consciousness which is immune to falsehood’
  - In effect, **the ‘one-dimensional thought’ of ‘the good life’ provides a ‘post modern’ resolution of the existential angst of a meaningless life**.

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Nothingness haunts Being

- That means that being has no need of nothingness in order to be conceived and that we can examine the idea of it exhaustively without finding there the least trace of nothingness.
- Being is prior to nothingness and establishes the ground for it.
- Non-being exists only on the surface of being.



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Who is … ?

- **Jean-Francois Lyotard (1924-1998)**
  - The Prophet of Post-Modernity, contemporary of Jacques Derrida (1930-2004)
    - *The Postmodern Condition: a Report on Knowledge* (1984)
- **Ulrich Beck (1944-)**
  - German sociologist
    - Studies modernization, ecological problems and globalization
    - *The Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (1992)

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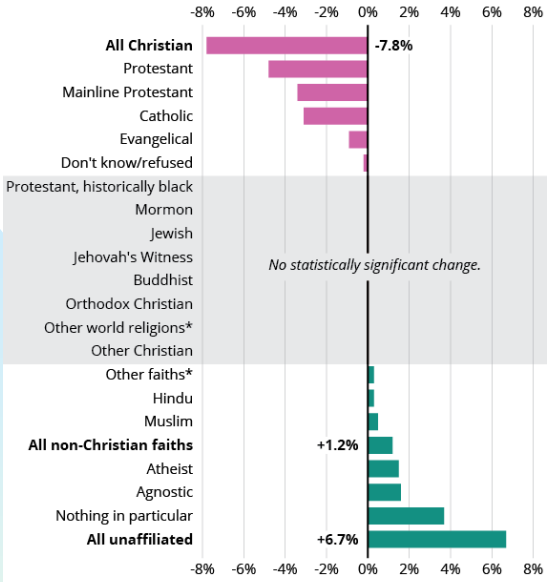
Religion: Giving (*a priori*) Meaning to Life

- Giving Meaning to Life through Religion
  - Death gives meaning to Life
    - Religion provides guidance as to the meaning of death
      - A method of dealing with Existential angst of 'Being and Nothingness'
    - All good men (people!) go to heaven (Price *Dissertation 3 "On the Reasons for expecting that virtuous Men shall meet after Death in a State of Happiness")*
  - Religious tradition and community provide shared values and meaningful social interaction
    - Contrast with the isolated individual of existentialism or rat race pursuit of wealth and possessions of materialism
- Is superstitious belief in 'God' and moral traditions associated with religious myths necessary to achieve the meaning to life that religion can provide?

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More Americans Identify As Non-Christian Or Unaffiliated

Percent change in Americans identifying with a religious group, 2007-2014

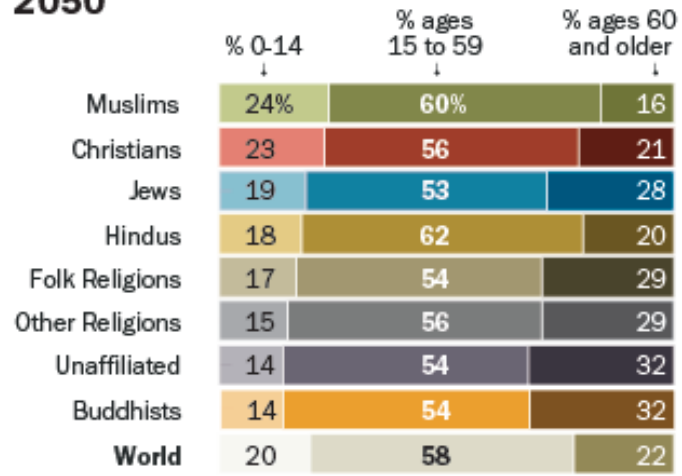


*The "other world religions" category includes Sikhs, Baha'is, Taoists, Jains and a variety of other world religions. The "other faiths" category includes Unitarians, New Age religions, Native American religions and a number of other non-Christian faiths.

Source: Pew Research Center

THE HUFFINGTON POST

Age Distribution of Religious Groups, 2050

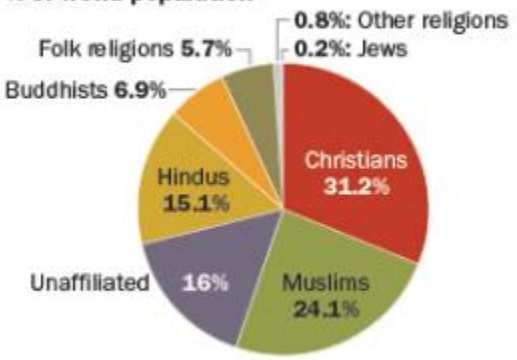


Source: The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

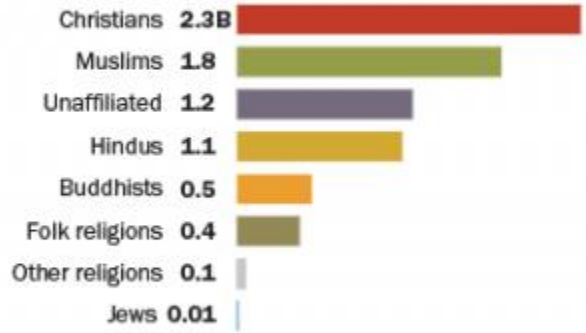
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Christians are the largest religious group in 2015

% of world population



Number of people in 2015, in billions



Source: Pew Research Center demographic projections. See Methodology for details. "The Changing Global Religious Landscape"

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Religious Fideism as a route to a Meaningful Life

- Meaningfulness (pleasure, happiness, a feeling of ‘goodness’) is achieved by conscious commitment to underlying ethical/moral principles
  - Undertaking a belief in God (or gods?) allows the ‘word of God’, or a conscience inspired by God, to provide the moral guidance needed for meaningfulness
  - For Christians, faith in the ‘truth’ provided by the Holy Scriptures provides the guidance needed to determine virtuous actions from those that are evil
    - For Catholics, ‘objective authority’ on the interpretation of Scripture is provided by the Church hierarchy
    - For Protestants, some form of subjective conscience is needed
  - This avenue to meaningfulness is only available to those able to achieve the threshold for ‘faith’

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Logical Positivism and the basis for religious knowledge

- As evidenced by A.J. Ayer on God, logical positivism has no basis for religious knowledge
  - “If ‘god’ is a metaphysical term, then it cannot be even probable that a god exists. For to say that ‘God exists’ is to make a metaphysical utterance which cannot be either true or false. And by the same criterion, no sentence which purports to describe the nature of a transcendent god can possess any literal significance”
  - “The fact that people have religious experiences is interesting from a psychological point of view, but if does not in any way imply that there is such a thing as religious knowledge. Unless he can formulate this ‘knowledge’ in propositions that are empirically verifiable. We may be sure that he is deceiving himself”
    - Presumably females are not capable of having ‘knowledge’

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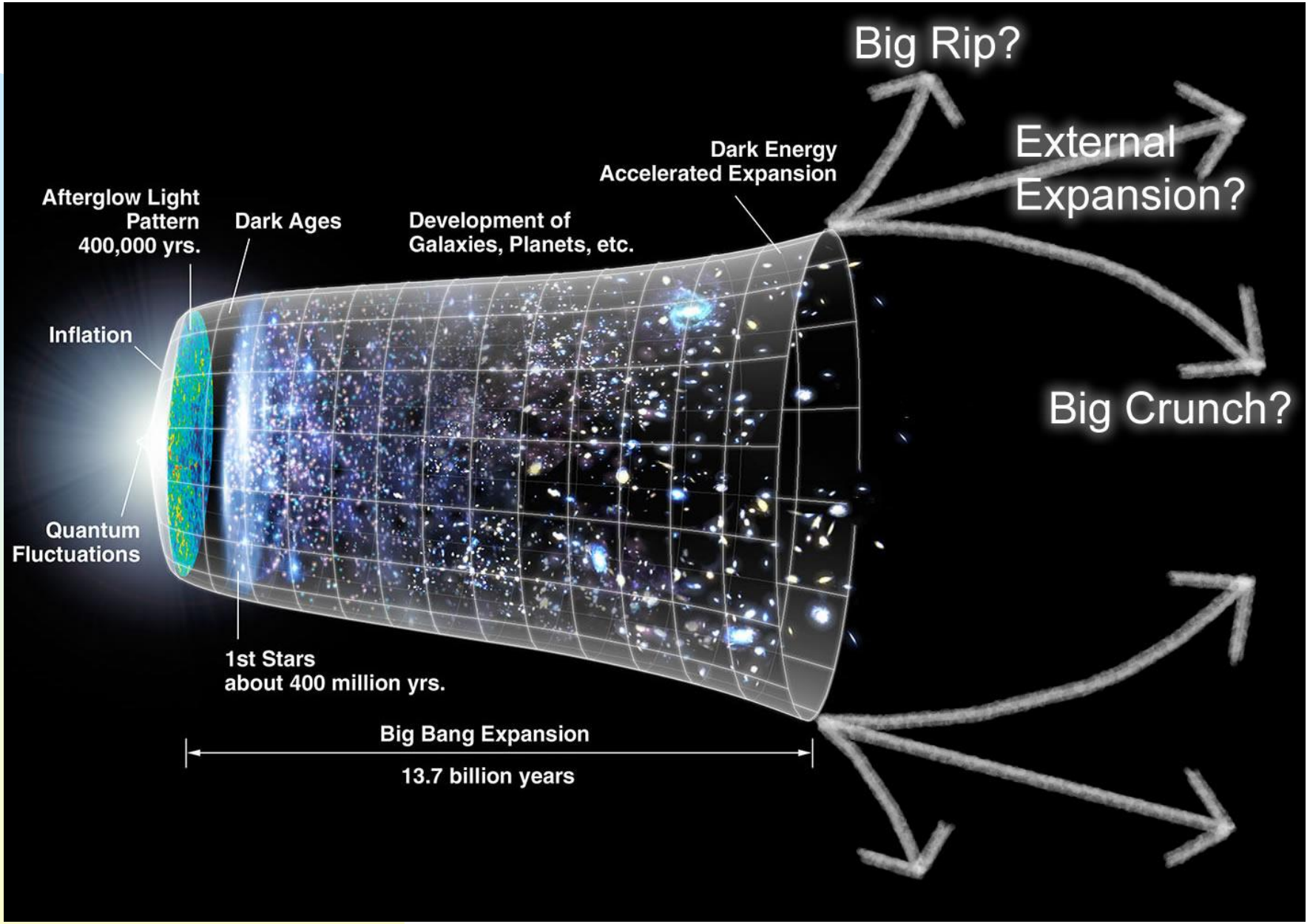


Science and the Meaning of Life

- Meaning of Life
  - Deals with Big Picture questions such as the Origin of the Universe, the purpose of Life on earth
- Science is fundamentally concerned with meaning of life questions
  - E.g., Searching for the origins of the universe
- Giving Meaning to Life?
  - By viewing religion as superstitious nonsense, ‘science’ is concerned only with the secular world
    - Empiricism and Positivism as viable philosophies
  - Does pursuit of scientific and technological progress to better mankind give meaning to life?

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Giving (*a posteriori*) Meaning to Life: From Pragmatism to Instrumentalism

- **Instrumentalism** proposes that scientific concepts and/or theories cannot be literally true descriptions of ‘reality’ but can only be judged by the accuracy of the empirical predictions or the ability to resolve conceptual problems.
  - Scientific theories are necessarily underdetermined by available data because empirical evidence alone cannot rule out the possibility that an alternate explanation for observed phenomena is more ‘truthful’.
  - Being an advanced form of pragmatism, instrumentalism is philosophically opposed to realism, which maintains that scientific theories are more that tools for generating reliable predictions but have the ultimate objective of accurately uncovering the ‘true’ world.
    - Reaiism sees science progressing linearly to a more advanced knowledge of reality as more empirical knowledge is accumulated
    - Instrumentalism sees theories as temporal and science progressing in a haphazard and non-linear fashion – this implies that there is no certain conception of reality to be uncovered but, rather, a changing reality, e.g., climate change alters the scientific basis upon which earlier predictions about climate change were predicated

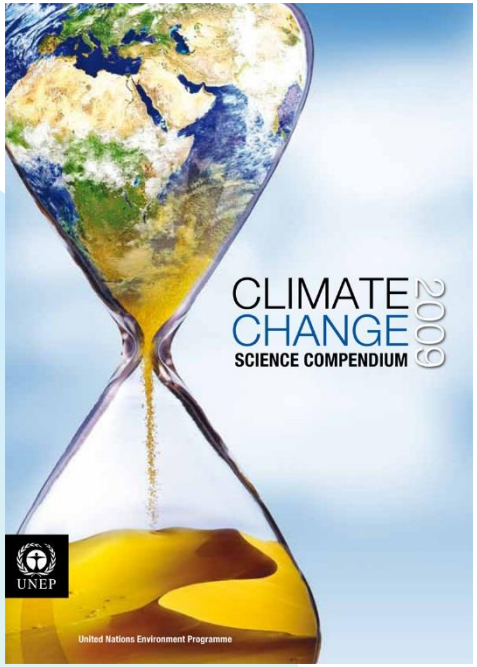
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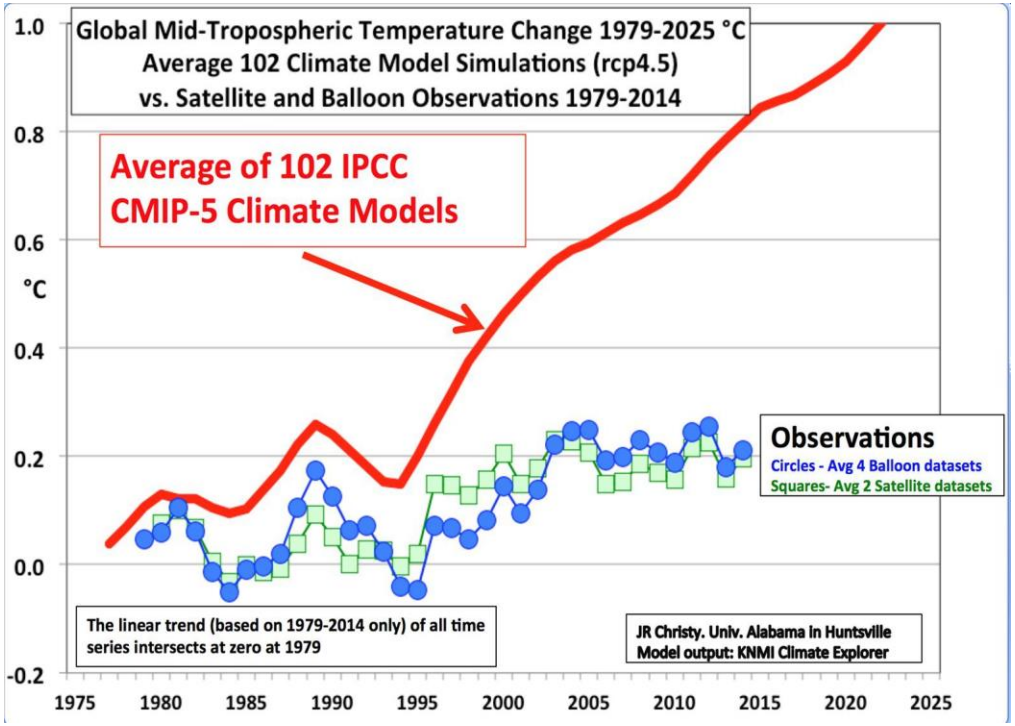


Science, Eco-Feminism and the Climate Change Dilemma

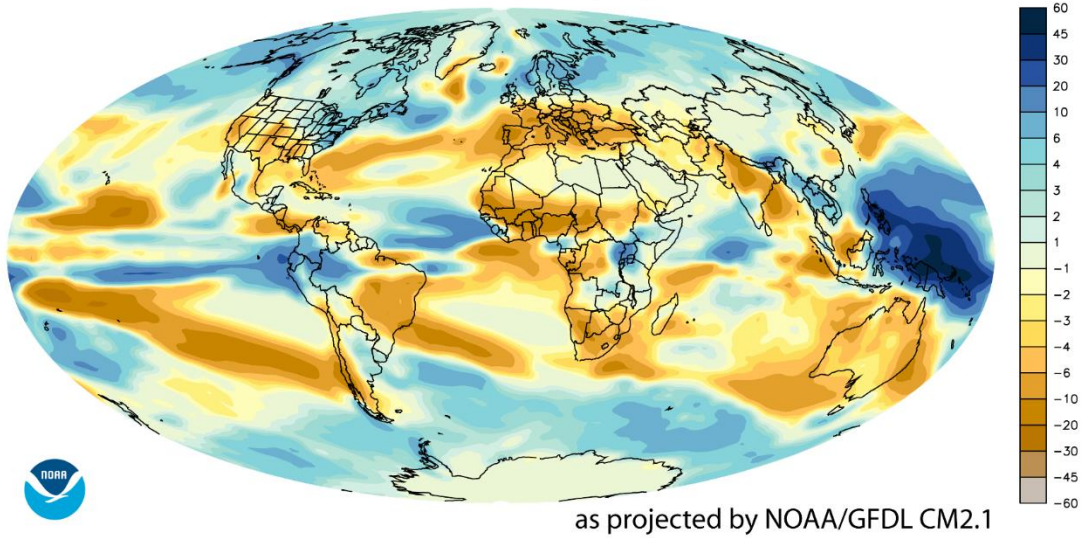
- Though the origins of eco-feminism stretch back to the late 19th century, the academic 'eco-feminist' movement commences with *Le Féminisme ou la Mort* (1974) by Françoise d'Eaubonne (1920-2005) and Carolyn Merchant *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (1980)
  - With some flourish, Merchant observes the rise of modern science, technology, and capitalism produced and relied on the death, domination, and exploitation of a nature gendered female, and that this reinforced and reflected the cultural subordination and exploitation of women.
  - Merchant identifies two fundamental tenets of eco-feminism
    - the domination of women and the domination of nature are structurally linked
    - The recognition and celebration of the values and activities traditionally associated with women, including childbirth and various kinds of nurturing

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CHANGE IN PRECIPITATION BY END OF 21st CENTURY
inches of liquid water per year



as projected by NOAA/GFDL CM2.1

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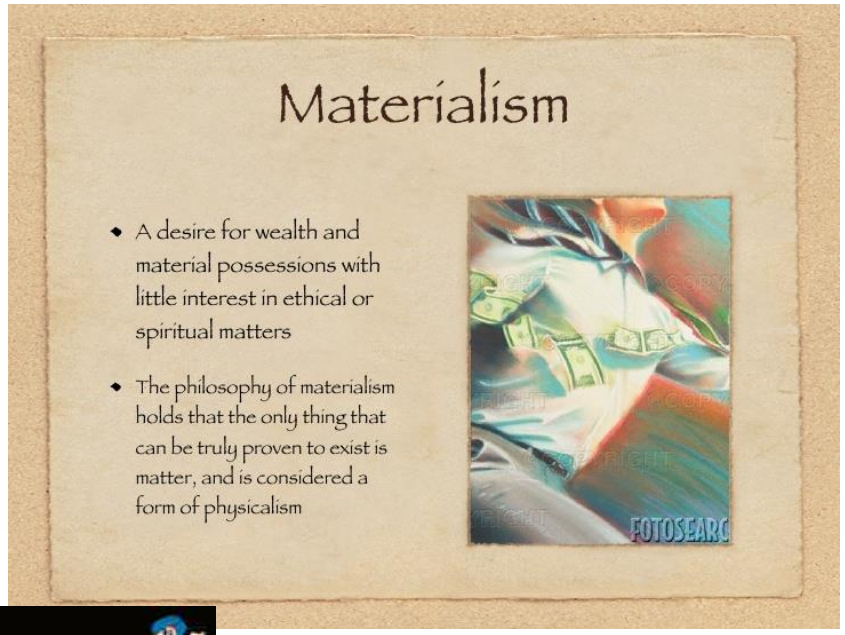
Business: Can materialism give Meaning to Life?

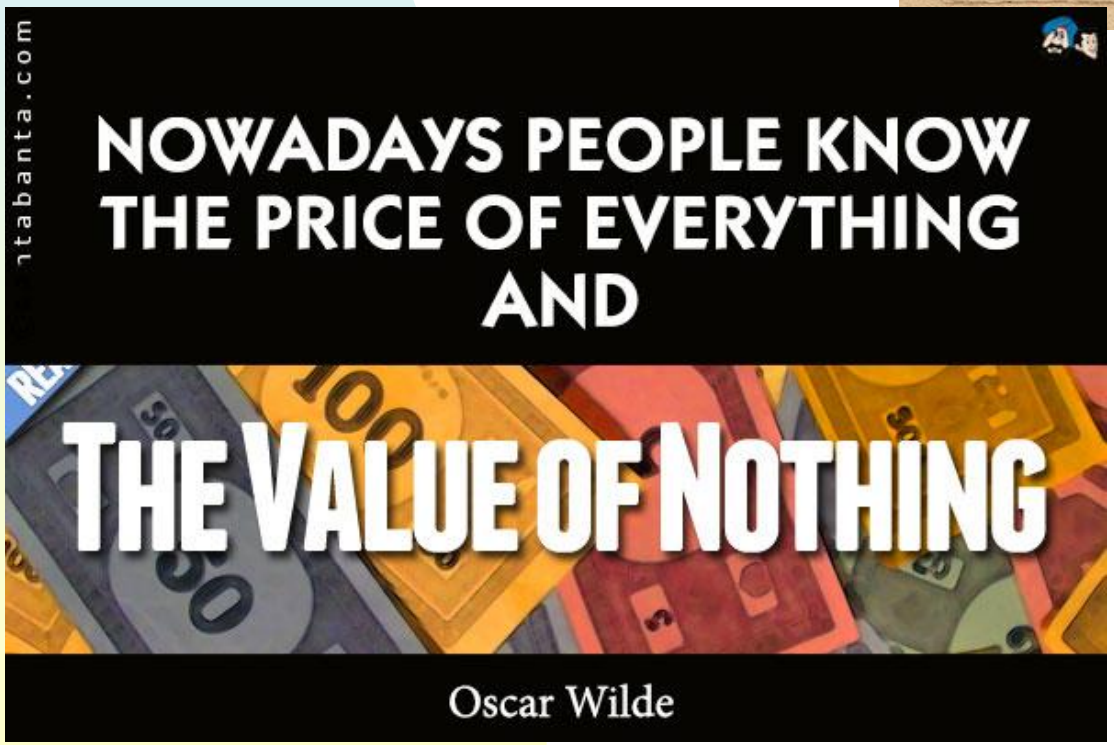
- ‘Business’ emphasizes the individual pursuit of materialism to give meaning to life
  - Utilitarian social philosophy, pursue social objectives that provide the greatest good for the greatest number
  - Giving meaning to life depends fundamentally on the defense of property rights and individual freedoms
- Business is only concerned with a hedonistic approach to finding the meaning of life
  - Hedonistic conception of reality can refer to ‘ethical hedonism’ (Epicureanism) or ‘extreme hedonism’ where moral and sexual restraint is unnecessary
- Materialism has different meanings in philosophy
  - Physicalism maintains that interactions of physical matter encompass consciousness and mental processes
  - Philosophy that the highest values are found in material well-being and in the pursuit of personal and societal material progress

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materialism (noun)

tendency to think material objects are more important than people; desire for money over ethics







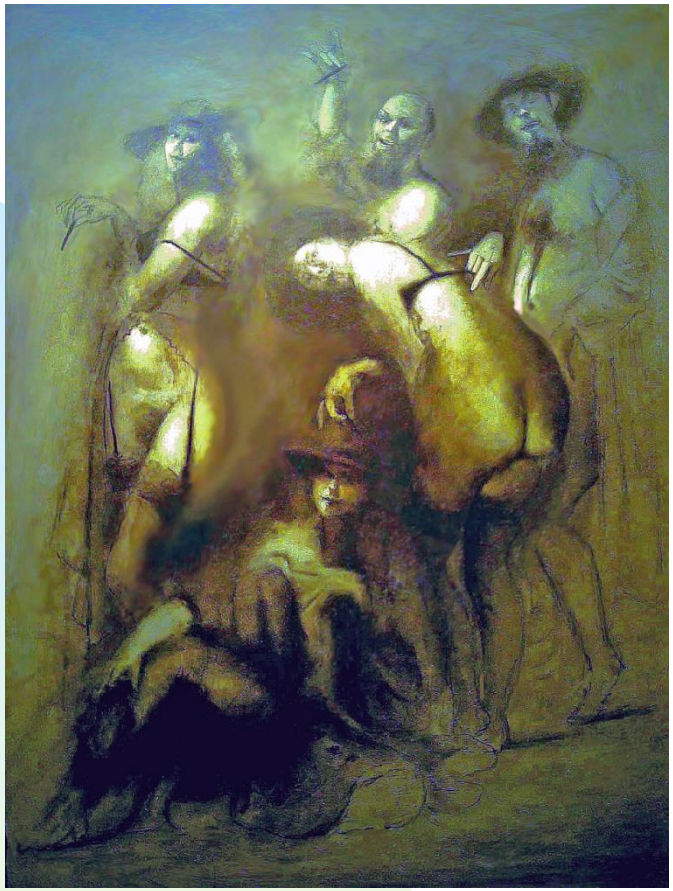
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Giving (Transcendental) Meaning to Life: Philosophies of Hedonism: Epicurus to Bentham

- Hedonism identifies the pursuit of pleasure (avoidance of pain) as the primary goal and the appropriate guide for life
  - Two types of hedonism in ancient societies: **egoistic hedonism** involves pursuit of individual pleasure without reference to others; **rational hedonism** requires reason to be exercised to obtain pleasure
- **Epicurus** was a rational hedonist that the highest state of pleasure was obtained by temperance, the pursuit of knowledge, friendship and seeking to live virtuously
  - Epicurus maintained some pleasures involved means that undermined the hedonist objective; death is final and a real threat to peace of mind; virtue that does not lead to pleasure has no value; sensory perception is the source of determining pleasure
- Epicureanism makes no connection to social outcomes → Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) developed **utilitarianism** for this objective: "it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong"

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Deciding on meaningful personal philosophy

- To make this decision requires answers to three fundamental philosophical questions:
  - What can I know?
    - Different answers are provided by empiricists, idealists, pragmatists, existentialists, etc. – there is no *agreed* answer for this question
      - Religion provides the 'word of God' as knowledge
  - What can I hope?
    - Existential atheists deny all hope (existential angst); empiricists only support hope based on experience; idealists base hope on transcendental insight; religious adherents base (heavenly) hope on the goodness of God and belief in miracles
  - What must I do?
    - This is the question of how personal philosophy relates to **moral agency –** how to determine right from wrong and be responsible of actions or inactions
      - Kant and the categorical imperative; utilitarian rules; Epicurean pleasure/avoid pain

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Wanderer above the Sea of Fog, (Caspar Friedrich 1818)



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