

# MOTES from the Dust Bin

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### THE PROBLEMS OF HUMANKIND: Logical Ruminations

Why does humankind have problems? But first: Why are there problems at all?

Problems of every sort originate from the first principle of the Universe: infinite imperfection—fundamental to which is the eternal imperfection of nothingness, making the phrase “nothing is perfect” a very deep and important misstatement, because it seems to be saying that ‘nothingness is perfect,’ implying that the only possible perfection is nothingness. That is incorrect; the wrong interpretation. There is certainly something, so nothingness is not perfect; cannot be perfect, except conceptually. The concept, *per se*, is useful, even in the real world, e.g., ‘zero’ has been extremely beneficial in accounting, and ‘infinity’ has been beneficial in higher mathematics. The ‘First Principle,’ infinite imperfection, includes nothingness and allness within its scope—for by that principle even nothingness is imperfect. This adjusted perspective further illuminates an old but generally disrespected notion that there never was, and can never be nothingness, out of which arises the inescapable conclusion, honed into a folksy aphorism: ‘there’s always something.’

It is widely accepted that there can be no perfection in the real world. It might be argued (actually it has been—and will be, but not immediately) that there can be no perfection even in the ideal world, including any and all fantastical-conceptual or wildly imaginary worlds, should those be closely examined intellectually. Therefore, *conflicts will arise*.

In nature we observe continual conflict between forces—e.g., the most obvious: attraction versus repulsion; expansion versus contraction; pressure versus vacuum—and between alternate states, such as light versus darkness; motion or acceleration versus stasis; oneness (wholeness) versus ‘many-ness’ (dividedness). These are examples of eternal opposites; immortal. Such as these co-exist forever within a dynamic universe—*must* always co-exist, for if any particular state should prevail, extinguishing its opposite, the Universe itself would be susceptible of destruction.

In biological nature, as no balanced observer can dispute, conflicts arise between ‘natures’—between life-forms; between species; between phenotypes. We recognize that these are not universal natures or eternal conflicts, but temporary mortal combatants. Here there can be winners, ultimately, and extinction of losers without bringing about the demise of the cosmos. However, for the losers, there is no perceptual difference—it might as well be the end of the world. The previous balance is certainly upset, at least for a while. Often the winners, free from the pressure provided by their rivals, all too quickly overpopulate and eat themselves out of existence, or are extinguished by diseases from which they were previously protected through the continual culling of their sick, aged, and weaker members by their now extinct enemy.

The weak may now procreate, adding more pressure on the food chain, until the group eats faster than the food can re-produce itself. Famine ensues, taking the place of their former enemy. If they are lucky, only sufficient numbers will die such as to allow the food source to recover. If they are unlucky; if they have overgrazed to the point of virtually exhausting the food source, the famine eradicates them. As a species, then, over time, they are actually weakened and ruined by the removal of their enemies; ultimately destroyed by their very victory over adversity—although it may not seem so to their first ‘free of adversity’ generations. Even regarding the microbial world, it is unknown how often, in your zeal to rid yourselves of a crippling disease, you have destroyed the natural enemy of an even more menacing germ, opening the door to a different and greater devastation.

Unavoidably, conflicts also will arise between ideas; between values; between desires; and especially between the humans and their organizations: the human agencies that have become attached to the opposing concepts. It has been seriously suggested that ideas have their own agenda; that there are certain strains or levels in the hierarchy of ideas that are in some way superior to their knowers, and which manipulate sentient beings as allies (or tools, or weapons) in their development or unfolding; in their own instinctive (unconscious?) drive to power.

There have been millions of your ancestors who were fodder for one idea or another. Determining which idea has caused the most mayhem, taken the most lives, and/or caused the greatest economic upheaval might make an interesting study; or the ordering of the ‘great ideas’ according to their history of devastation, or in terms of their destructive capacity. Some heretofore assumed innocent or ‘good’ ones might surprise you by their position in such a ranking. The well intentioned idea of perfecting the system of government and its policy, for instance: that happy utopian dream of a golden city in the clouds is not free of that onus. How many have died for ‘liberty, equality, and fraternity?’ How many are the martyrs to the peaceful Christ; to Mohammed; Jehovah/Yahweh? How many are the victims of tyrants; conquerors; would-be supermen? Or is it the other way around: are otherwise amoral, insensate, ‘beyond good and evil,’ (i.e., neutral) ideas simply the tools of power-hungry humans who cleverly use them (even invent them) to motivate you to follow, elevate, and serve them—even worship them; suffer and die for them; torture, maim, ruin, rape, enslave, and kill for them? Whatever the case, the ideas seem to be at war, fighting for supremacy beside the very mortals who carry their banners into the fray. And they win or lose respect along with the forces mustered, even if falsely, in their behalf.

Humans and ideas are inseparable. But humans will divide among themselves over opposing ideas. Polarization is inevitable. So, as long as there are opposing ideas, there will be war. Slavery and freedom; autocracy and democracy; fear and security; God and Satan; tyranny and the rule of law, and on and on—such ideas will struggle against each other, twisting its shape and disguising its underlying nature to extend its appeal and endurance, until one or another exhausts its sway over the humans who have championed it. It may seem to have been defeated, but it is only in a state of dormancy, waiting to be rediscovered and reinvigorated when (relieved of their opposing tendencies) the prevailing ideas have passed through extremism and entered into absurdity. So, conflict, like the poor, will be always with you; conflicts fueled by actual and perceived

needs—e.g., the basic survival of the species; of political entities and agencies; of sub-groups or sub-cultures such as races, tribes, types, etc.; of communities; of families (extended and primary); and, ultimately, foundationally, the endurance of separate individuals fighting for their lives, or for improvement—even striving for impossible perfection.

Some leaders would have you believe that bad ideas can be isolated and eradicated, as if thought can be sanitized. You have heard the old cliché about certain concepts having been ‘swept into the dust bin of history.’ Such banishment does not amount to eradication or death, and they are not necessarily bad or worthless ideas simply for having been deposited there. In time, a changing wind may blow, or the dust-bin may be tipped, and things long buried may be airborne again. The past can be reshuffled—revised; inverted; re-examined with renewed interest by new historians sifting through garbage dumps of forgotten communities and investigating the dung of extinct cultures; like bargain hunters sorting through junk shops, salvaging a bit of the old world and, now and then, finding something that might be useful again, in a way unforeseen by its ancient maker—or some rare treasure, once discarded and long overlooked out of ignorance of its worth, or lack of foresight regarding its potential value. As with the conservation of energy, the motes in history’s dust bin may be unavailable temporarily, but, like protons, do not decay.

No chance of perfection, then; no government warning labels on ideas to help guide the shopper; no perfect world just around the corner if you could only globalize humanity; no end to serious disagreement and ideological polarization; no abolition of war—that is reality. Ideas can be stifled and ridiculed, yes; despised, of course, but not killed. Good and bad alike, ideas are the life force behind conscious being. If they cannot be resisted, they might still be managed, in a way, by allowing them, like the ambitious humans in a free republic, to compete.

Some individuals will suffer the consequences of bad choices (or sheer bad luck), but society will be strengthened. Life will be worse for some, but generally better—and, as always, great for a few. It’s a continual balancing act. You must face it. Well, I suppose you can’t be forced to do so. To survive and prosper in the present world; to succeed (at business or finance, or child-rearing, or ditch-digging, or taxi-driving, or liquor store robbery) it isn’t mandatory for each individual to understand these arguments. I can only recommend strongly that you do face reality, generally, as a people; as societies; as nation-states in electing or appointing your officers; in obedience or disobedience to legislation; in your overall civil attitude. Let me say to you, then, that you *ought* to face the facts if humanity is to have any chance at control over its destiny. Otherwise, Nature will bury you beneath your finally impotent ideas, and continue on her way without thought or regret.

—Mythokrates