

The Absurd Advantage: What Camus Got Wrong About Consciousness.

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Abstract: The topic of absurdity has, in large part, been treated by philosophers as a problem to be solved. This paralyzing sense that one's own existence is futile and that the habits and goals we occupy ourselves with are meaningless is often regarded as an undesirable defect – if it is human nature to desire meaning, but meaning is incompatible with human life, then it could follow that continued existence will lead only to despair and dissatisfaction, and as such, suicide is the most authentic and logical course of action. This, anyway, is a solution initially considered by Albert Camus, and the successive solutions proposed by Camus, Thomas Nagel, and Jonathan Westphal are less drastic but similarly pessimistic. However, I argue that these philosophers do not take the issue far enough. The ability to comprehend absurdity is a uniquely human capacity, and the despair that it inspires is the surface-level understanding of it. Exploration and utilization of the capacity is the deeper understanding; our transcendental consciousness is what enables us to conceptualize and affect change. Absurdity is not a cause for despair, but rather, it is something to celebrate, explore, and work through.