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Chapter 1 : Silly Beliefs - PHILOSOPHY: Recommended Books, TV & Movies

*Aristotle Would Have Liked Oprah: Lessons for Living and Other Philosophic Musing [Ethel Diamond] on calendrierdelascience.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. Philosophy is easy and fun with this accessible survey of philosophic thought, which summarizes the ideas of Socrates.*

I guess it has to do with that brush with Frege not so long ago, when I was started on the business of worrying about to what I was really referring when I looked to to the moonlit sky and proclaimed that I was staring up at Hesperus. My, I would say, Hesperus is certainly bright tonight. With me so far? As all of my friends and family knows, I watch a tremendous lot of television. I only read Truthout and listen to Pacifica, they might say. That way, by saying so, you distinguish your eudaimonic lifestyle from that endless and decidedly unphilosophic television watching of all of the other swine. Popular culture is the sophist to the Socratic individual. If it is anything, popular culture is kryptonite to the philosopher. His philosophical powers are weakened by exposure to all things pop â€” eventually resulting in complete philosophic collapse. Popular culture, especially TV, makes idiots of us all. Or at the very least, it churns out a few empiricists. This is no joke. I know that there is almost a cottage industry of professional Oprah-bashing out there. Now, as a philosophy type person, any suggestion made by someone that they know anything with certainty is bound to grab my ear. At fist glance, the list can be easily dismissed as pop-psyche, motivational speaker babble. And in reality it is. Wiccans, I think, believ in a 3-fold law, and so on. But, how do I know that? How is it that Oprah can claim that she knows anything for sure? John Dewey, the American pragmatist, said that the knowledge that we gain through our experiences must be of practical value. For the pragmatist, all that info is fine and dandy, but real knowledge tells us one simple thing: I can use it to so something. If it does not, then the info is useless. Knowledge, for Dewey, enabled man to master our environment. For Dewey, the test for what counted as knowledge was a test of coherence. Does what I accept as true fit with what else I believe is true? If it fits, then it is true. If we realize that we may be subject to human or divine retribution, our actions or sentiments because Oprah believes that beliefs have force as well are more likely to be kind instead of malevolent. But, as Dewey admits, coherence is a shaky criteria for knoweledge at best. We all have different beliefs to which a piece of data does or does not cohere. Anything approaching universal knowledge would have to be decided by committee, or at least hopelessly relativistic. It is universal and not subject to relativity. I remembered that, some time ago, in my epistemology class, we discussed reliabilism. Now, if I remember correctly, reliabilism has something to do with accepting a belief as true only if it has been formed in a reliable manner or by way of a reliable process. That is, if my eyes never failed me before, that is, I can rely on the accuracy of what they are seeing, and I think that I see a steamroller coming towards me, I can reliably believe that there is, in fact, a steamroller coming towards me. Or something like that. So now I thought, is that the hidden epistemic factor at work with Ms. Even reliable methods fail from time to time. So then I thought, if Oprah knows these things for sure, what she knows for sure cannot be derived from any outside means. We know that if we hinge our knowledge on what we discover from the world around us, we may come across false information or worse yet, arrive at a false belief. So then I thought, if not empirical, then we or at least she knows these things for sure without experience. And that led me to the rationalists: When Descartes wrote the Meditations, he asked of what things he can know for certain. Descartes stated that any knowledge he derived from his sense must be discarded until he could be certain that that knowledge was not subject to doubt. Ultimately, he arrived at the truth of his own existnce. That knowledge, Descartes claimed, was known a priori â€” without experience. Even if he doubted that he existed, something, Descartes reasoned, must be thinking that it does not exist â€” so he exists. That fact at least cannot be doubted. But, Oprah makes an even bigger claim. Now, I know that Oprah does not rule out the existence of a creator-being that put the world and events in motion. So, I guess that we could say that what is revealed to her as the truth concerning her 20 claims is the product of the Divine Light of Reason. I guess we could say that Oprah knows these

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things because God revealed them to her as true. I feel that somehow, that explanation is not Oprahly satisfying. When I watch Oprah, I often hear her say that something is a gut feeling or known to us as some sort of intuitive notion of the way that things are or should be. But, here we find another snag. How would we know that whatever we put out comes back unless we actually put out something that came back? Is Oprah telling us that her life lessons possess some sort of synthetic a priori quality? I think that this may be putting us on the right track here. Indeed, what Oprah may be suggesting is that there is an intuitive a priori knowledge. The fact that there are things that we know for sure suggests that there are undoubtable truths that transcend our own experience. But, I also think that when we easily dismiss Oprah and other so-called mind numbing entertainment, or say that we cannot gain from watching them, we are wrong in saying so. It is arrogant, and I think, philosophically dangerous to believe that only those who are endowed with the proper philosophic credentials are credible sources for philosophic theory or discussion. If we want others to think philosophically, we should encourage them to see philosophic questions and answers in everything they see â€” even on TV. As I wrap this up, I need only think to the slave that Socrates used to demonstrate that even the uneducated possess knowledge that they may not even know that they possess. I might make a name for myself at last!

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Chapter 2 : oprah diamond | eBay

It takes various philosophers through the ages & explains why they would have liked certain modern people/things/ideas. For example, Aristotle would have like Oprah because he was pro-self-improvement & making a better life for yourself.

He married a woman named Xanthippe at a young age and would take part in three military campaigns: He once called himself simply the midwife for the opinion of others. Socrates, as well as other Greek philosophers, lived in a time of continuous warfare, paranoia and tyranny. Leading up to Socrates time, Athens and Sparta had joined forces in BC, to bring an end to the Persian Wars and over the next 50 years Athens grew the stronger. Sparta reigned supreme until BC when they were destroyed by the army of the Greek city-state, Thebes, led by Epaminondas. The whole of Greece was then under Macedonian rule. Although Socrates himself never wrote anything down, founded no schools and had no disciples per se, he would become one of the great figures in ancient philosophy. He may not have written down his ideas, but did develop them through dialogues and discussions in Athens streets. He argued that one must pursue the truth through rational enquiry. But as Plato and Aristotle after him, the pupils were mostly young aristocratic men. Socrates is responsible for the shift of philosophical interest from speculations about the natural world and cosmology, to ethics and conceptual analysis. What is known about Socrates came from three very different sources. Aristophanes a playwright, Xenophon, a soldier and by far his most brilliant associate and pupil, and who was the best and main source, Plato. He taught that man should always feel the need for a deeper and more honest analysis of their everyday lives. In solving a problem, the particulars would be broken down into a series of questions. Finding the answers would gradually give you what you were seeking. Socrates often admitted his wisdom was limited to the awareness of his own ignorance. Socrates believed wrongdoing was a consequence of ignorance and those who did wrong knew no better. He believed the best way for people to live was to focus on self-development rather than the pursuit of material wealth. He always invited others to try to concentrate more on friendships and a sense of true community, for Socrates felt this was the best way for people to grow together as a populace. It was this sign that prevented Socrates from entering into politics. Another curious trait of Socrates was that he absolutely refused to say anything that he was not morally sure about. In conversations he would often suddenly stop talking half way through a sentence. He also brought up the idea that knowledge might just be a matter of recollection and not of learning, observation or study. The two most important points of his teachings were firstly that conscience is innate, and that our inner sense of what is right or wrong, good or evil originates from our intellect, our mind, rather than through experience and is inherent in our essential character. It lies within our soul. Secondly, the opinions, principles and beliefs of the faithful can easily be out pointed and satirized by those who at the onset will take their preaching at face value. This unpopular activity contributed greatly to demands for his conviction for crimes against the state. And although he bestowed and admitted ignorance, he also taught wisdom and cared for the soul. He would argue relentlessly. Someone would assert their position and Socrates would refute it; forever questioning. Though much progress was made in the conquest for knowledge, including the physical and human challenges of man, in Athens, during these days of the first democracy, the situation began to turn and sour with the military overthrow of Athens in BC. The court considered him to be unsound because of his advocacy of free thought and unrestricted inquiry, and for his refusal to give assent to any dogma. If he affirmed the charges, the judges told him he would face lesser charges. But Socrates knew his life to be forfeit so he replied that death did not scare him. If death was either perpetual rest or the chance at immortality or to finally be in communion with the people that had gone before, he was fine with that. This insulted and angered the judges, as Socrates had somehow used their own beliefs against them. The trial of Socrates and his judicial murder would be seen by many as representing the greatest moral defeat which the restored Athenian democracy inflicted upon itself. Plato Plato was one of the most important philosophers and mathematicians of all time.

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His father was Ariston and mother Perictione. As a boy he was praised for his quickness of mind and modesty, with his youth a mix of hard work and love of study. Plato was instructed in grammar, music, wrestling and gymnastics, by the most distinguished teachers of his time. He also attended courses in philosophy, and before meeting Socrates, he became acquainted with Cratylus a disciple of Heraclitus, a prominent pre-Socratic Greek philosopher and the Heraclitean doctrines, which surmised that all objects are in harmony between two units of energy, an ebbing and flowing, which Plato did not agree with. Plato was a pupil and associate of Socrates and would one day be the teacher of Aristotle. Any political aspirations he may have had withered when his friend and mentor Socrates was condemned to death in BC. Plato recorded many of Socrates teachings and philosophies in three dialogues; the Apology, the Crito, and the Phaedo. He returned to Athens in BC and founded the Academy at Athens, the first of, soon to be, many philosophical schools. It was here that Aristotle would later study and which would become a famous centre for philosophical, mathematical, and scientific research. Plato would preside over the Academy for the rest of his life. Thirty-five dialogues and thirteen letters have traditionally been ascribed to Plato, and what became most prominent in the middle dialogues was the idea that knowledge is recollection, the immortality of the soul. Specific doctrines about justice, truth, and beauty immersed in his Theory of Forms, which refers to his belief that the material world, as it seems to us, is not the real world, but only a shadow of the real world. Ideas about the differences in the material world, the particular objects of perception, opinion, belief and the timeless, unchanging world of universals are the realities of the world and should be the true objects of knowledge. The debated theories of universals lie within the realm of metaphysics and are the characteristics and qualities that particular things have in common. The three different types of universals are; the types or kinds of a thing, the shared properties of certain things and the relationships of each particular thing. As to the belief of a divine, universal God, Plato opined that a universe abandoned by God would feel like the disorderly motion of a boat upon the sea. He saw it as the structure of the individual soul. Each part of society stood for different parts of the body, symbolizing the castes of society; the Productive, the abdomen, represented the Workers – labourers, carpenters, plumbers, masons, merchants, farmers, ranchers, etc. The Protective, the chest, represented the Warriors or Guardians; individuals who were adventurous, strong and brave, especially those in the army. The Governing, the head, represented the rulers or philosopher kings; those who were intelligent, rational, self-controlled, in love with wisdom and who were well suited to making decisions for the community. Plato used this model to conclude that the principles of Athenian democracy, as it existed in his day, should be rejected, as only a few were seen as fit to rule. Instead of rhetoric and persuasion, Plato believed reason and wisdom should govern. As he put it: He believed that the Republic Athens needed to address how the educational system should be set up within the Republic, and how it should be structured in order for it to produce these philosopher kings. The philosophic soul, according to Socrates had reason and will and desired unity for virtuous harmony. A philosopher king needed a moderate love for wisdom and the courage to act accordingly; for wisdom is knowledge of the good of humanity and the right relations between which all exists. Concerning states and rulers, Plato had many interesting arguments. He argued that it would be better to be ruled by a tyrant, as there would be only one person committing bad deeds, than exist within a bad democracy, where all the people would be responsible for such actions. According to Plato, a state which is made up of different kinds of souls would progressively decline from an aristocracy ruled by the best to a timocracy rule by the honourable , then to an oligarchy rule by the few , then into a democracy rule by the people , and finally to tyranny rule by one despotic person , and then start all over again. For instance, he helped to distinguish the difference between pure and applied mathematics by widening the gap between arithmetic, now known as number theory and logistics. Plato died in his sleep at the age of 80, after spending a lifetime asking what lay beyond the deity-ruled world he lived in, and seeking the possible realities within the spiritually of man. Plato left and Aristotle Aristotle A Greek Philosopher and scientist who lived from to BC, Aristotle is known as one of most important and influential figures in the history of Western thought. Born at Stagira, a Greek colony on the peninsula of Chalcidice, Aristotle was a son to a court physician to the third

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king of Macedon, father of Phillip II and grandfather to Alexander the Great. After his father died, Aristotle was moved to Atarneus, in present day Turkey, where he was taken care of and schooled by a relative, Proxenus. For seven years Aristotle taught the thirteen year old Alexander all the disciplines, from mathematics to philosophy. It was now and near the temple of the Greek god, Apollo Lyceus, Aristotle opened a school for the children of the elite, which he called the Lyceum. There he would teach for twelve years. When Alexander the Great died in BC there was a strong anti-Macedonian reaction in Athens and Aristotle was accused of lacking reverence to the gods. Not wanting to end up like Socrates before him, he moved to the Greek island of Euboea and within a year died of natural causes at the age of 72. His writings represented an enormous encyclopaedic output covering every field of knowledge; including logic, rhetoric, and psychology. His thinking and studies covered man and his environment as they existed, rather than what they were thought to be. He performed original research in the natural sciences including biology, botany, zoology, physics, astronomy, chemistry, meteorology, and several other sciences. Today's accepted circumference is 40,000 km or 24,854 miles. In the study of physics, he defined the five elements: Each of the four earthly elements had its natural place; the earth was at the centre of the universe, with water, air and fire lying in their respective places beyond that which was believed to be the center. With disharmony in the natural order of the elements there was a self-righting shift- requiring no external cause. This shift saw bodies sink in water, air bubbles rise, rains fall and flames rise in air. The heavenly element Aether had a perpetual circular motion. Aristotle believed spontaneity and chance related to causes from effects different from other types of cause. That chance is of accidental things and creates things that are spontaneous. But spontaneous does not come from chance. It was an incredible concept for that time; that when things that continually keep happening, with the same result each time, it is not by chance. According to Aristotle, luck could only involve choice, and as only humans are capable of deliberation and choice, his theory was; for what is not capable of action, cannot do anything by chance. Further to causes and effects, Aristotle theorized there to be four main reasons for anything happening. The four causes were; material cause- the material that something is made of; formal cause- its form; efficient cause- what sets something in motion, and final cause- the purpose for which anything exists, including everything that gives purpose to human behaviour. As to the human psyche, Aristotle thought every human has three souls. The vegetative soul is shared by all living things, the sensitive soul we share with all animals, while the rational soul is only inherent in humans. His work as one of the earliest natural historians, has survived in some detail, and reflects on his research in his books, *History of Animals*, *Generation of Animals*, and *Parts of Animals*. These observations and interpretations placed the rational soul in the heart, rather than the brain. Aristotle taught that the virtue of an entity is related to its role and purpose in life.

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Chapter 3 : Aristotle Would Have Liked Oprah: And Other Philosophic Musings by Ethel Diamond

Get this from a library! Aristotle would have liked Oprah: lessons for living and other philosophic musings. [Ethel Diamond] -- By linking the teachings of great thinkers to today's celebrities and cultural icons, this lighthearted, informative book makes philosophy accessible and fun.

The book cuts across political parties and ideologies and speaks directly to those among us who are concerned about the ever-tightening noose being placed around our liberties. In this timely call to arms, Naomi Wolf compels us to face the way our free America is under assault. The secret is that these leaders all tend to take very similar, parallel steps. The Founders of this nation were so deeply familiar with tyranny and the habits and practices of tyrants that they set up our checks and balances precisely out of fear of what is unfolding today. Wolf is taking her message directly to the American people in the most accessible form and as part of a large national campaign to reach out to ordinary Americans about the dangers we face today. This includes a lecture and speaking tour, and being part of the nascent American Freedom Campaign, a grassroots effort to ensure that presidential candidates pledge to uphold the constitution and protect our liberties from further erosion. The End of America will shock, enrage, and motivateâ€”spurring us to act, as the Founders would have counted on us to do in a time such as this, as rebels and patriotsâ€”to save our liberty and defend our nation. Reviews and Praise Library Journal starred review - This latest offering from best-selling author Wolf, *The Beauty Myth*, is a harbinger of an age that may finally see the patriarchal realm of political discourse usurped. She contributes this call to action to a canon that from Plato and Aristotle to Hobbes and Locke and forward, with a few exceptions e. Readers will appreciate her energy and urgency as she warns we are living through a dangerous "fascist shift" brought about by the Bush administration. Highly recommended for all collections. We must come together as a nation and recommit ourselves to the fundamental American idea that no president, whether Democrat or Republican, will ever be given unchecked power. Patriots like Madison, Paine, and Franklin would certainly applaud Naomi Wolf and recognize her as a sister in their struggle. Her essays have appeared in various publications including: She also speaks widely to groups across the country. *The Beauty Myth*, her first book, was an international bestseller. She followed that with *Fire With Fire: The Secret Struggle for Womanhood*, published in *Misconceptions*, released in , is a powerful and passionate critique of pregnancy and birth in America. *Eccentric Wisdom from My Father on How to Live, Love and See* , Wolf shared the enduring wisdom of her father, Leonard Wolf, a poet and teacher who believes that every person is an artist in their own unique way. Wolf is co-founder of The Woodhull Institute for Ethical Leadership, an organization devoted to training young women in ethical leadership for the 21st century. The institute teaches professional development in the arts and media, politics and law, business and entrepreneurship as well as ethical decision making. She lives with her family in New York City. Connect with this author.

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Chapter 4 : Plato's Ethics and Politics in The Republic (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

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Please contact mpub-help umich. The Second Inaugural Address. University Press of Mississippi, Lincoln never formally joined a particular religious sect, yet is renowned for his knowledge and use of Scripture. He is thought by many to have been a magnanimous man, yet emerged from the most humble of origins. His intellectual virtues were as imposing as his moral virtues, earning him a reputation while in Congress as the bookworm among his fellow legislators. He argues that before the war Lincoln held to a "firm belief in the ideology of white supremacy" 43 , but that he eventually came to realize the error of his ways. As a result of that humiliation, Tackach suggests, Lincoln "reached back to find the Puritan God of his youth" in order to explain the carnage of the war and to cleanse his own soul. Thus, White understands Lincoln in a more political light than does Tackach, whose moral portrait of Lincoln is often abstracted from the political conditions of his time. But it is almost as much a treatise on the requisites for moral statesmanship in a modern republic. Lincoln "was developing, on the run," he argues, "an ethic of responsibility, of prudence, of realism, like that of many serious politicians" but more explicit and, eventually, profound" This "ethic of responsibility," which Miller derives from Max Weber, assumes that "there are principles that determine action decisively, but absent those, the moral case should be determined by the consequences, the results, the fruits" Lincoln is a moral realist because he understands that doing good requires more than merely having good intentions. This imperative assumes that duty, rather than consequence, is all that one can really know. Lincoln rejected such a view as an "oversimplified moral outlook" , which assumes that to be "principled is to be simple" The ethic of responsibility, on the other hand, demands "observation and intellect" , a reasoned engagement with social and political reality. This ethic is akin to the habit and prudence of traditional moral philosophy, especially that of Aristotle, to which Miller obliquely refers Prudence is a "pattern or habit that should become ingrained" in the character, which prepares the morally virtuous person to make sound judgments. That means it entailed a central role for cognition, for learning and knowing, in praiseworthy conduct" It is that intellectual virtue which completes or perfects the moral virtues by providing the means for the "intelligent judgment of consequences. Such perfectionism is, he suggests, largely driven by a form of "moral pride" and for the sake of "self-indulgent convenience" The "evangelical Protestant culture" of the period, he explains, placed the individual at the center of his own world. In contrast, Lincoln would be an "unmoralistic moralist" , one who would convey moral teaching by example and argument rather than arrogance and condescension. He was a politician Lincoln sometimes used racist language, notably in the famous debates with Stephen Douglas in But Miller emphasizes that Lincoln must be compared "not to unattached abolitionists in Massachusetts or to anyone a century and a half later but to other engaged politicians in the Old Northwest in the s" It is the engagement with politics that is most important. Abstract moral principles mean little if they are not brought to bear on political life. Far from cheapening politicians, the compromises that they make often enable them to do great good. It is the possibility for this great effect on the world that places the statesman on a higher moral plane than the private citizen. In this view, abolitionists come to sight as essentially apolitical and, therefore, essentially less meaningful and even less relevant in any concrete moral sense. After Lincoln "became a political leader engaged with the deepest moral fundamentals of the nation. He would come to combine with the realism of the politician a new and unwavering moral clarity" In response to this, Lincoln would come to realize the "moral clarity and elevation of He always aimed at the moral improvement of America, but not so as to threaten the existence of the one people itself; he would not altogether banish society despite its failings. But Miller sees the deep connection between the principles of emancipation and the necessity of union, for this really means the connection between morality and politics. The moral imperative of emancipation flows from the principles enshrined in the Declaration,

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which principles form the "standard maxim for a free society. But, importantly, Lincoln was not moved to merely scientific pursuits; he was ambitious and geared to politics. Normally this kind of character would befit a man of more aristocratic breeding, but Lincoln was different. Despite being largely self-taught, he became "quite an extraordinary thinker, on moral-political subjects, with depth and power. In short, Miller describes a man blessed with the faculties classically associated with prophecy. Miller argues that Lincoln was not a particularly good speaker in his early career. He was prone to "oratorical overkill." His address to the Springfield Temperance Society was "overdone to the point of being comic." The high-flown peroration to his Sub-Treasury speech was, Miller says, "goofy." Miller himself notes that at Lewiston, Illinois, in an older Lincoln provided a "little reminder" of his "youthful speech endings." The speech indicates that the mature Lincoln was not above a measure of self-aggrandizing bombast. But the tone of his speeches generally did change, especially in the war years. It is not surprising that the drama of the Civil War extracted from Lincoln his greatest speeches, especially the Second Inaugural. James Tackach goes further than Miller, suggesting that the war brought forth from Lincoln not only great speeches, but a moral and religious reformation in Lincoln himself. In order to support his thesis, Tackach must demonstrate that for most of his life Lincoln was a wayward soul. Until as late as , according to Tackach, Lincoln was a confirmed racist. But this is the general problem of the book, as it is for many books that are unduly critical of Lincoln on this point. He believes that Lincoln not only envisioned, but favored, a Negro-free America. It is true that Lincoln remarked to a group of black leaders in that the physical differences between blacks and whites had caused both races to "suffer," which is "a reason at least why we should be separated." He specifically stated that "Whether it is right or wrong I need not discuss, but this physical difference is a great disadvantage to us both. That is, a choice had to be made according to what was politically possible, not merely what was morally desirable. From a pre-Civil War perspective it may very well have appeared to honest egalitarians that the races could not, as a practical matter, live together in social and political equality. Tackach argues that the colonization plan was unrealistic. Tackach notes that scholars such as Don Fehrenbacher, Mark E. Tackach leaves the reader with the impression that, because Lincoln did not wage a war of racial liberation, he was a white supremacist. But Tackach recognizes that embracing a policy of complete social equality for blacks would have been politically dangerous, for it might have encouraged the border slave states to join the Confederacy. It may be true that Lincoln could have done more, but as is commonly recognized, prudential questions of this kind are manifestly easier to consider in hindsight than in the moment. For example, Lincoln remarked in the final debate with Douglas in that, "There is no danger that the people of Kentucky will shoulder their muskets and with a young nigger stuck on every bayonet march into Illinois and force them upon us." But he misses the heightened sense of degradation that the word adds to the horrible image of human beings impaled on bayonets; Lincoln conveys the ugliness of the phenomenon, rather than merely and self-righteously castigating the slaveholders. Indeed, Tackach himself observes: Tackach, oddly enough, notes the irony of Lincoln using the offending word while criticizing slavery, but fails to consider sufficiently that Lincoln himself may have been aware of that same irony. But why insist on this interpretation? Miller quite sensibly notes that while Lincoln "doubtless used the ubiquitous n-word, there is no evidence that he joined in the more intentionally demeaning anti-Negro acts and attitudes common to his world." But exactly the opposite may be true. Tackach seems unaware of or unwilling to entertain this possibility. But Tackach unfortunately engages in interpretations that border on the inexcusable. A well-known instance of this is his observation, recounted in a letter to Mary Speed in , that a group of slaves tied together on a riverboat appeared like "fish upon a trot-line," yet were "the most cheerful and happy creatures on board. He notes that Lincoln makes a "general observation about the human condition under humiliation and deprivation. There is nothing in the letter to suggest that Lincoln meant that blacks are more satisfied with enslavement than are whites. Any plain reading of the text reveals this to be so. Such lies, in fact, may enable the community to achieve a greater good. But Tackach goes further, suggesting that Lincoln eventually accepted, at least implicitly, the superiority of the abolitionist position, that he thought the ethic of intention to be superior to the ethic of responsibility. By the

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end of the war, Tackach implies, Lincoln had come to believe that intelligence can, at best, only discern the commands of God or of conscience; it should not, therefore, abrogate those commands in the name of prudence. Indeed, Tackach argues that the Union itself was a "fiction" that paled in comparison with the moral necessity of emancipation. But he clearly intimates that the abolitionists, who had been much more willing to risk the Union for the sake of emancipation, adhered to a purer moral vision than did Lincoln. He is much less critical of Lincoln than is Tackach, especially on the question of race. He notes that "One may criticize Lincoln for his attitudes on race or the timing of emancipation, but only if there is a prior acknowledgement of the centrality of the Constitution in both his political and moral thinking" White seems to think that Lincoln was right to defend the Constitution. More generally, White is attentive to the limits of moral perfectionism. He notes the danger in the caustic rhetoric of abolitionists, such as William Lloyd Garrison, who often "alienated the uncommitted" 91 and "inflamed and thus polarized the public" Lincoln, in contrast, "most often chose to speak in language that he believed would not ignite, and just might convince the uncommitted" Instead of alienating the people, "Lincoln offered his sermon as the prism through which he himself strained to see the light of God. White argues that Lincoln came to see the limits of prudence. But he is more tentative than Tackach about the conclusions to be drawn from this. Guelzo suggests that Lincoln "made the idea of the nationâ€”a single people unified rationally Lincoln eventually concluded that human beings must be as practically wise as they can, but that their choices occur within the confines of a world often conditioned by an inscrutable providence. Through an impressive line-by-line exegesis of the speech, White explains just why it was so successful, how Lincoln was, indeed, a "master of phrase and words" White agrees with many observers, including Tackach, that the speech is written in the form of a Puritan jeremiad, in which is "combined both criticism and reaffirmation" Reason, it seems, cannot fathom the enormity of suffering brought on by the rebellion. In the September fragment, Lincoln notes that he is "almost ready to say this is probably trueâ€”that God wills this contest, and wills that it shall not end yet. But he is only open to this possibility; he is not convinced. In the Second Inaugural, written thirty months later, Lincoln would express his final conviction that, indeed, God had willed the war as a just punishment for the sin of slavery. The principal lesson of the speech is that God decided that not just the South, but the North as well must suffer.

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Three decades ago, my doctoral supervisor in a tutorial said something that was to change my life and which still prompts these thoughts so many long years later, something that shredded my shallow angry atheism. A confirmed agnostic, he argued that his was the only rational position since it was impossible to disprove the existence, or otherwise, of a transcendent creator God outside time and space. He went further and argued that atheism was the least rational of all three positions as there is much more circumstantial evidence for the existence of God than for his non-existence testimonial witness evidence, the fact that all human societies have some belief in a form of divinity. An argument I still find as compelling today as thirty years ago, albeit I now believe that the testimonial and other circumstantial evidence is of sufficiently high quality to compel faith, if not certainty, in the existence of such a God. Indeed, the developing understanding of DNA was enough to force Professor Anthony Flew, the Dawkins of the philosophical world for half a century, to abandon his hard-line atheism of half a century and to embrace theism. I would contend that the three greatest civilisations in terms of contribution across the spectrum in a broad range of fields of human endeavour, were the Sumerians, the Hebrews whom some scholars believe emerged from the Sumerians, and the Greeks. The Sumerians pretty much invented civilisation, but it was the Hebrews who were the first known to advocate monotheism and a God outside time and space the first verses of Genesis. But more fundamentally the Hebrews were focused on the exploration for the Nature of God and reconciling Man to Him, while the Greeks were obsessed with understanding and improving the nature of Men. Now, starting with the Greeks, where this all began for me being a Hellenist myself, who were intellectually much more interested in human nature than in their gods. A perhaps controversial thing to say. They were not eternal, but were situated very much in time and space and would have an end at some point. The Greeks gods were super-beings, no more, to be placated and got onside with ritual and sacrifice. The various schools of philosophy might all compete energetically and differ widely in their teachings, but at their heart they shared one unifying view – the content man or woman achieves this state by measured self-discipline, even denial, with some verging on asceticism. And this is what counted; the gods and other people were capricious, untrustworthy, even oppressive, and therefore to make your way through life intact you needed to master yourself. The Hebrews by contrast, having become monotheists, if somewhat inconsistently, made the understanding of their conception of a single creator God outside time and space their overwhelming intellectual obsession for two millennia before Christ. The collected works of their civilisation, which we call the Old Testament, is in fact a library of histories, laws, poems, songs, prophetic works, even origin legends, all united in the central narrative of their collective culture – their relationship with the all-powerful one god, Jehovah, and the portrayal of their perception of His nature. They produced very little that did not have this central thread running through it. In pursuing the nature of God, they conceived Him to be responsible for the laws of the universe, rather than subject to them like the Hellenic deities, and therefore comprehensible, consistent, rational, reasoned the New Testament often uses the word logos as a title for Christ – the divine rational thought underpinning the universe, and immutable. Another facet, somewhat surprisingly, is that the Hebrews saw God as interested in every fraction of His creation because he upholds everything every second, and that without this continual divine sustenance, everything would just cease and lapse into the void once more. Again, an utterly different view from the Greeks. They were certainly accorded a promised homeland, but never empire: So here we have it – arguably the two most brilliant ancient peoples seeing human and divine natures utterly differently, one theological extroverts, the other philosophical introverts, as a consequence, and, I would argue, both part right and part wrong. And yet, on a night in probably 3 or 4 BC, these different world views were reconciled in the Incarnation in the person of the God child, the Son of Man, the Logos in the Greek mind, the Messiah in the

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Jewish. A Jew from the ancient Hebrew line growing up in a Romano-Greek intellectual world, whose early disciples were Jewish but whose teachings and faith spread like wildfire across the Greek speaking world of the time, subsuming the philosophical schools, reconciling Greek and Jewish thought into a unity that of Christianity. And here we get to the script for the passing of the exam of life. The Hebrews believed that, by being ritually purified and theologically fastidious, they would obtain a form of better afterlife. So, what is Christmas all about? Plato used an analogy to describe love between men and women how all happily fulfilled beings were originally spheres that were split into two and how they spend their lives searching for their other halves to be complete once more. And so it is, Christians like me believe, that the sundered halves of the Greeks and Hebrews were reconciled in the faith born about 2, years ago. Islam on this reading, went the opposite way it took the worst features of tribal Judaism and paganism, and magnified them a hundred-fold.

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Chapter 6 : Epistemology with Oprah! | the mindless philosopher

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The Question and the Strategy 1. After Socrates asks his host what it is like being old and rich and rather rude, we might think Cephalus says that the best thing about wealth is that it can save us from being unjust and thus smooth the way for an agreeable afterlife. This is enough to prompt more questions, for Socrates wants to know what justice is. Predictably, Cephalus and then Polemarchus fail to define justice in a way that survives Socratic examination, but they continue to assume that justice is a valuable part of a good human life. Thrasymachus erupts when he has had his fill of this conversation, and he challenges the assumption that it is good to be just. The strong themselves, on this view, are better off disregarding justice and serving their own interests directly. See the entry on Callicles and Thrasymachus. The brothers pick up where Thrasymachus left off, providing reasons why most people think that justice is not intrinsically valuable but worth respecting only if one is not strong enough or invisible enough to get away with injustice. They want to be shown that most people are wrong, that justice is worth choosing for its own sake. More than that, Glaucon and Adeimantus want to be shown that justice is worth choosing regardless of the rewards or penalties bestowed on the just by other people and the gods, and they will accept this conclusion only if Socrates can convince them that it is always better to be just. So Socrates must persuade them that the just person who is terrifically unfortunate and scorned lives a better life than the unjust person who is so successful that he is unfairly rewarded as if he were perfectly just. The challenge that Glaucon and Adeimantus present has baffled modern readers who are accustomed to carving up ethics into deontologies that articulate a theory of what is right independent of what is good and consequentialisms that define what is right in terms of what promotes the good Foster, Mabbott, cf. Prichard. But the insistence that justice be shown to be beneficial to the just has suggested to others that Socrates will be justifying justice by reference to its consequences. In fact, both readings are distortions, predicated more on what modern moral philosophers think than on what Plato thinks. At the beginning of Book Two, he retains his focus on the person who aims to be happy. But he does not have to show that being just or acting justly brings about happiness. The function argument in Book One suggests that acting justly is the same as being happy. But the function argument concludes that justice is both necessary and sufficient for happiness, and this is a considerably stronger thesis than the claim that the just are always happier than the unjust. After the challenge Glaucon and Adeimantus present, Socrates might not be so bold. Even if he successfully maintains that acting justly is identical to being happy, he might think that there are circumstances in which no just person could act justly and thus be happy. This will nonetheless satisfy Glaucon and Adeimantus if the just are better off, that is, closer to happy than the unjust in these circumstances. See also Kirwan and Irwin. He suggests looking for justice as a virtue of cities before defining justice as a virtue of persons, on the unconvincing grounds that justice in a city is bigger and more apparent than justice in a person, and this leads Socrates to a rambling description of some features of a good city. This may seem puzzling. The arguments of Book One and the challenge of Glaucon and Adeimantus rule out several more direct routes. But Book One rules this strategy out by casting doubt on widely accepted accounts of justice. Socrates must say what justice is in order to answer the question put to him, and what he can say is constrained in important ways. Most obviously, he cannot define justice as happiness without begging the question. But he also must give an account of justice that his interlocutors recognize as justice: Moreover, Socrates cannot try to define justice by enumerating the types of action that justice requires or forbids. We might have objected to this strategy for this reason: But a specific argument in Book One suggests a different reason why Socrates does not employ this strategy. When Cephalus characterizes justice as keeping promises and returning what is owed, Socrates objects by citing a case in which returning what is owed would not be just. Wrongful killing may always be

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wrong, but is killing? Just recompense may always be right, but is recompense? So Book One makes it difficult for Socrates to take justice for granted. What is worse, the terms in which Socrates accepts the challenge of Glaucon and Adeimantus make it difficult for him to take happiness for granted. If Socrates were to proceed like a consequentialist, he might offer a full account of happiness and then deliver an account of justice that both meets with general approval and shows how justice brings about happiness. But Socrates does not proceed like that. He does not even do as much as Aristotle does in the *Nicomachean Ethics*; he does not suggest some general criteria for what happiness is. He proceeds as if happiness is unsettled. But if justice at least partly constitutes happiness and justice is unsettled, then Socrates is right to proceed as if happiness is unsettled. In sum, Socrates needs to construct an account of justice and an account of happiness at the same time, and he needs these accounts to entail without assuming the conclusion that the just person is always happier than the unjust. Socrates can assume that a just city is always more successful or happy than an unjust city. The assumption begs no questions, and Glaucon and Adeimantus readily grant it. If Socrates can then explain how a just city is always more successful and happy than an unjust city, by giving an account of civic justice and civic happiness, he will have a model to propose for the relation between personal justice and flourishing. There must be some intelligible relation between what makes a city successful and what makes a person successful. It works even if it only introduces an account of personal justice and happiness that we might not have otherwise entertained. Although this is all that the city-person analogy needs to do, Socrates seems at times to claim more for it, and one of the abiding puzzles about the *Republic* concerns the exact nature and grounds for the full analogy that Socrates claims. At other times Socrates seems to say that the same account of justice must apply in both cases because the F-ness of a whole is due to the F-ness of its parts. Again, at times Socrates seems to say that these grounds are strong enough to permit a deductive inference: At other times, Socrates would prefer to use the F-ness of the city as a heuristic for locating F-ness in persons. Plato is surely right to think that there is some interesting and non-accidental relation between the structural features and values of society and the psychological features and values of persons, but there is much controversy about whether this relation really is strong enough to sustain all of the claims that Socrates makes for it in the *Republic*. Williams, Lear, Smith, Ferrari. Rather, it depends upon a persuasive account of justice as a personal virtue, and persuasive reasons why one is always happier being just than unjust. What Justice Is 2. So his account of what justice is depends upon his account of the human soul. According to the *Republic*, every human soul has three parts: This is a claim about the embodied soul. In Book Ten, Socrates argues that the soul is immortal and says that the disembodied soul might be simple, though he declines to insist on this and the *Timaeus* and *Phaedrus* apparently disagree on the question. At first blush, the tripartition can suggest a division into beliefs, emotions, and desires. But Socrates explicitly ascribes beliefs, emotions, and desires to each part of the soul. In fact, it is not even clear that Plato would recognize psychological attitudes that are supposed to be representational without also being affective and conative, or conative and affective without also being representational. The *Republic* offers two general reasons for the tripartition. First, Socrates argues that we cannot coherently explain certain cases of psychological conflict unless we suppose that there are at least two parts to the soul. The core of this argument is what we might call the principle of non-opposition: Because of this principle, Socrates insists that one soul cannot be the subject of opposing attitudes unless one of three conditions is met. One soul can be the subject of opposing attitudes if the attitudes oppose each other at different times, even in rapidly alternating succession as Hobbes explains mental conflict. One soul can also be the subject of opposing attitudes if the attitudes relate to different things, as a desire to drink champagne and a desire to drink a martini might conflict. Last, one soul can be the subject of opposing attitudes if the attitudes oppose in different respects. Initially, this third condition is obscure. The way Socrates handles putative counter-examples to the principle of non-opposition might suggest that when one thing experiences one opposite in one of its parts and another in another, it is not experiencing opposites in different respects. That would entail, apparently, that it is not one thing experiencing opposites at all, but merely a plurality. The most natural way of relating these

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two articulations of the principle is to suppose that experiencing one opposite in one part and another in another is just one way to experience opposites in different respects. But however we relate the two articulations to each other, Socrates clearly concludes that one soul can experience simultaneously opposing attitudes in relation to the same thing, but only if different parts of it are the direct subjects of the opposing attitudes. Socrates employs this general strategy four times. In Book Four, he twice considers conflicting attitudes about what to do. First, he imagines a desire to drink being opposed by a calculated consideration that it would be good not to drink *à*d. We might think, anachronistically, of someone about to undergo surgery. This is supposed to establish a distinction between appetite and reason. Then he considers cases like that of Leontius, who became angry with himself for desiring to ogle corpses *à*b. These cases are supposed to establish a distinction between appetite and spirit. In Book Ten, Socrates appeals to the principle of non-opposition when considering the decent man who has recently lost a son and is conflicted about grieving *à*b cf. Austin and when considering conflicting attitudes about how things appear to be *à*b cf. Moss and Singpurwalla. These show a broad division between reason and an inferior part of the soul Ganson ; it is compatible with a further distinction between two inferior parts, spirit and appetite. In the Protagoras, Socrates denies that anyone willingly does other than what she believes to be best, but in the Republic, the door is opened for a person to act on an appetitive attitude that conflicts with a rational attitude for what is best. How far the door is open to *akrasia* awaits further discussion below. First, what kinds of parts are reason, spirit, and appetite? Some scholars believe that they are merely conceptual parts, akin to subsets of a set Shields , Price. They would object to characterizing the parts as subjects of psychological attitudes. At face value, Socrates offers a more robust conception of parts, wherein each part is like an independent agent. Indeed, this notion of parts is robust enough to make one wonder why reason, spirit, and appetite are parts at all, as opposed to three independent subjects. But the Republic proceeds as though every embodied human being has just one soul that comprises three parts. No embodied soul is perfectly unified: She must, as we shall see, in order to be just. But every embodied soul enjoys an unearned unity: It is not as though a person is held responsible for what his reason does but not for what his appetite does. There are questions about what exactly explains this unearned unity of the soul see E.

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Chapter 7 : Home - Musing Mind

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Baier says that in reality a scientific universe is harsh, cold, and indifferent to us. At least one of the most. George wants to go to college. George tells his sweetheart, Mary Hatch soon to become his wife, Mary Bailey, played by Donna Reed his dreams for his future: Well, not just one wish. A whole hatful, Mary. Italy, Greece, the Parthenon, the Coliseum. George gives up his dream of leaving Bedford Falls to tend to the family business. To make matters worse for George Bailey, local corporate kingpin, Henry F. With the possibility of a prison sentence looming over his head and an overwhelming feeling of failure and despair, George Bailey feels that the world would have been better if he was never born. George wants out of his unfulfilled, meaningless life. His exile is without remedy since he is deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land. This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, is properly the feeling of absurdity. This is exactly what we can assume George Bailey is feeling as he contemplates suicide. After getting drunk at the local bar, George decides to throw himself off of a bridge. Clarence wants to earn his wings and to do so, he has to prove to George Bailey that his life is not meaningless and that the world is better off with him in it. In a world without George Bailey Mary is a lonely spinster. George learns that not only is his younger brother Harry dead, but that the men on the troop transport that Harry saved during the war also perished "all because George was not there to save Harry when Harry fell through an ice-covered lake as a child. The townspeople know, even if George Bailey does not, that he has played a meaningful role in their lives. In an inscription in a book, Clarence leaves a final message for George Bailey; no man is a failure who has friends. Whoa, hold the phone! What Clarence Oddbody tells George Bailey is worth repeating. Clarence tells George Bailey no man is a failure who has friends. This certainly sounds like a sentiment that we can all rally behind. What this means folks "is perhaps we have we finally found what every great philosopher, thinker, theologian and layman has been looking for: Friendship is the meaning of life. And generally speaking, I still do. But listen; as much as I am reluctant to admit it, Aristotle gives us a reason to believe friendship is the meaning of life. Aristotle tells us that no one can be truly happy without friends. In Nicomachean Ethics Aristotle writes: But it seems strange, when one assigns all good things to the happy man, not to assign friends, who are thought the greatest of external goods" Therefore even the happy man lives with others; for he has the things that are by nature good. And plainly it is better to spend his days with friends and good men than with strangers or any chance persons. Therefore the happy man needs friends. If you think about it, perhaps the reason why we pursue philosophy "the reason why we want to know about truth and reality, why we need to know how to distinguish true beliefs from false beliefs or why we want to know the ethical way to act because, as Aristotle tells us, not only so we can determine what friendship is, but also good and virtuous people attract the right kind of people; people of good moral character. Our friends are not just our companions; our friends give us examples to live by, they teach and inspire us, support and encourage our better natures, and share with us our values and the most meaningful moments in our lives. Our friends are our mirrors. Our friends reflect what kind of person we are and what kind of person we want to be.

Chapter 8 : Summary/Reviews: The Simpsons and philosophy :

What is more, there are precious few "Lessons for Living," and little or no "Other Philosophic Musing." Sadly, the bibliography is too lame to even point the inquisitive reader in the direction of more substantive discussion of the issues.

Chapter 9 : A Stream of Prophets " Socrates, Plato and Aristotle | The Inquisitive Narrative

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