

## II) The Unbearable Heaviness of Being

„*The only question of philosophy that really matters is suicide*“ said Albert Camus. After all, the necessity of life is what all the philosophical confrontations derived from. The miserable and absurd human life begins with the obligation to choose, although this obligation to choose could also mean that one does not have the freedom to choose at all. At the crossroads in their lives, humans face oppositions and diversities, Since life is a big opposition in itself, accompanied by death, the acceptance of fate seems appealing as fate is considered to be the answer to most questions that dazzle the human mind. However, soothing words, such as, fate and harmony, do not mean anything in terms of explaining the significance of human lives in the cosmic sense. Zhuangzi took the blue pill, like in the movie *The Matrix*, and brought an explanation to the need of questioning which is probably both a reward and a curse mankind got from evolution, as Charles Darwin would agree. Camus, Zhuangzi and a myriad of philosophers tried to answer a question: Why do we question? The tumultuous relationship between questioning and confronting more questions is a never-ending cycle in a world where almost everything is explained through dialectics. Zhuangzi underlined the unnecessary of opposite terms as he accepted them as the “transformations of events, the proceedings of fate”. He followed a conformist path by following one of the most basic laws of nature, natural selection, and expressed his way of understanding this very law as “superiority and inferiority” One could argue that Zhuangzi’s way of explaining juxtapositions is almost no different than a scientist’s explaining complexities as “God/ Nature/Holy Power did this”. However Zhuangzi managed to use his freedom as a philosopher to go metaphysical on life matters even though his sense of “harmony” does not explain the agony of humans who are in the purgatory between choosing to live or not. Hence Zhuangzi’s arguments can be considered both valid and invalid, yet one needs to discover the medium in which those arguments gain their significance. The focus of this essay will be on how Zhuangzi neglected the incapability of humans to define existence and how he also succeeded to give a simple answer to a very difficult question. To explore all the aspects entirely, one must take the red pill instead of the blue one and delve into the realms of uncertainties.

Dialectically, death and life, success and failure, poverty and wealth all depend on each other’s existence. Zhuangzi took a further step and claimed that our harmony depends on the existence of these concepts as well. But what is harmony? Is it a term that humankind invented to eliminate entropy from their lives? Besides the fact that harmony is an abstract concept which is, most likely, interpreted differently by people; explaining such a concept in a changeable

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medium is not effective in terms of bringing enlightenment to the meaninglessness of human lives. Zhuangzi considered oppositions like cold and heat essential for harmony, however there should be an opposite of harmony for it to exist. Disregarding that opposition and claiming that “there is no need to disrupt our harmony” is a contradiction in the argument itself. In addition, Zhuangzi’s acceptance of fate indicates a certain path that is followed in life and disables free will. If there was fate and harmony as he suggested, humankind would be prosperous and have reached the ideal state of being “*übermensch*”, or at least this ideal would not seem unreachable to humans. Zhuangzi’s arguments fail to explain the meaning of life, if there is one, in real life situations. Suppose there is man who was born handicapped, has no family or the opportunity to get a decent education and earn money. Would he be thankful for all these negativities in his life because they would ultimately create harmony meant by fate? Judging by the norms of society and the general idea of prosperous life, that man would most likely not agree with Zhuangzi. Thus the presence of entropy disrupts harmony even though Zhuangzi claimed that oppositions would lead to harmony in themselves. The validity of harmony would be possible only in a utopia where people have completed their intellectual evolution and gave an answer to the question Camus suggested. While that question of suicide remains unanswered, the incapability of humans to agree on mutual aspects or comprehend existence will not allow them to perceive opposite concepts as gateways to harmony in their lives. Hence one could deduce that Zhuangzi’s argument can be valid, however, only in a medium where it is certain that there is a higher power that leads humans, such as, fate. With the existence of fate being uncertain, harmony remains uncertain as well, therefore humans must find something else to extinguish their need of questioning. To search for a meaning, or to accept meaninglessness as the meaning itself, would be more possible by replacing essence with harmony from an existentialist point of view.

“*You are what you settle for.*” This is a quote by the American grunge idol Kurt Cobain who committed suicide at the age of 27. As he is a human who answered the most essential question of philosophy by choosing not to live, it is wise to deviate an existentialist meaning from his point of view. Similar to Jean Paul Sartre, Cobain believed that we have free will and we choose our lives, we can even choose not to go with harmony and rebel against the basic norms of society, such as, fate. This rebellion of the individual proves Zhuangzi’s hypothesis wrong for two reasons: 1) There is no certain thing as “harmony”. 2) Not everybody has oppositions in their lives to the same degree. Some people are superior and some are inferior in the societal complex that mankind has created over thousands of years, therefore in a society

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surrounded by injustice and inequalities one is not being realistic for talking about harmony. Similarly, there are people who desperately try to reach the state of being the “absurd” human and those face a harsher existential crisis than others do, which is one of the reasons why they commit suicide. If, so to speak, death and life are “the transformations of events” then how can harmony be defined when an individual chooses to blur the line between those concepts, by committing suicide? It cannot. This equilibrium that Zhuangzi suggested is a mere attempt to find a purpose and meaning for existence yet when it comes to actually having a positive impact on human lives universally, his claims fail if they were to be evaluated from a pragmatist point of view. Hence the question that needs to be asked at this point is “Can essence replace harmony if we were to find it and apply it to the voids of meaninglessness in our lives?” This question can only be answered through individualism. As modernism showed its face in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, philosophers ignited intellectual revolutions and lawfully created societal complexes started breaking down. The impact of this very situation on the idea of harmony was negative as individuals got the idea that they could define their own lives with their acts hence find the essence that comes after their existence. To sum up, most people came to a realization that there might not be, and is most probably not, a harmony nor fate that the humanity has to abide. The ability of essence in terms of being beneficial for humans to save them from existential crisis has not yet been discovered entirely, however this does not mean harmony is not a question of human lives even today.

To follow a path, to believe in a higher being, to live prosperously, to be lead, to try to find harmony in diversities... These are modes of lives introduced to mankind by mostly religions and states, yet the mentioned-above societal inequalities are in existence, clearly indicating the struggle and agony of humans in a harsh environment, trying to figure out the necessity of life. There are still people in the world who do not have access to clean water and there are also people in the world who are born really rich and do not have to lift a finger to make a living. Many solutions were applied to this problem e.g. socialism. However the idea of a homogeneous society in harmony was never comprehended completely, due to the virtues of humans. To talk about harmony for beings with virtues does not bring an explanation to anything whatsoever. Even under strict law regulations people still manage to commit crimes. Is the murder of innocent a transformation of events, too? To say “yes” to this question is to accept our miserableness, however one must remember that there is always a hope to find essence, which will destroy the need for believing in harmony. After all, “*one must imagine Sisyphus happy*”. There are masses of people killed by missile bombs while the ones who gave

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the orders sleep in their comfortable beds. How can one talk about harmony while there is such a huge gap of poverty and wealth? According to Kant's categorical imperative, it is our own moral system and intentions that matter. Thus it is highly unlikely for a person who views poverty or hunger an important part of the equilibrium of harmony to actually believe in harmony, which is another contradiction of Zhuangzi in himself. A counter argument to all these negative evaluations about Zhuangzi's claim would be "Since mankind could not succeed to eliminate societal differences and oppositions from life, maybe Zhuangzi's simplistic and conformist point of view might be valid." Maybe, as humans, we are pushing our limits so far, further from what we were actually meant to be. Maybe, we just have to go for the simplest rules of nature, disregard all the societal complexities and live accordingly. All these "maybe"s give birth to other "maybe"s as the existence of such uncertainty words lead humanity to chaos, by reminding people their incapability of causing changes in the cosmic sense. We choose to believe or not believe in harmony, but it all comes to the beginning as our obligation to choose between juxtapositions is a sign of our being not entirely free,

To question every opposite aspect of life thoroughly or not to question thoroughly? That is the question. Even disagreements and different views are oppositions as Zhuangzi stated. Yet his views of those oppositions, or simplistic approach to the subject of harmony will have no impact in the cosmic sense no matter people accept them or not. That is what constitutes philosophy: knowing that it does not matter but also acting like it will matter. Humanity will try. Humans will write songs, publish novels. Humans like Jean Jacques Rousseau will try to explain the notion of state as a replica of a family to bring solutions to societal problems. Humans will try to reach harmony without knowing if it exists or not. Humans will imitate Sisyphus desperately, because every person in this planet is incapable of understanding existence entirely or finding the meaning of life. "Maybe" we will all find the answer to that essential question of philosophy and not need harmony or fate. After all, "*One must imagine Sisyphus happy*"