

*We live in a fantasy world, a world of illusion. The great task in life is to find reality*

And then I was in Egypt, more specifically right in front the pyramids, with my family making me some company, riding camels and taking pictures. *I cannot believe I am here!* I said. I was eating such a delicious banana-flavored ice-cream, I remember quite well that flavour, so sweet but yet refreshing, the cone cookie was kind of mid, though. I had always looked forward to travel to such a historical rich city, particularly because I am quite into Ancient Egypt history and astronomy. I took pictures from every single angle, and I was so excited because the guide told us he knew a spot nearby where we take the best pictures ever. We arrived. Then I woke up.

Putting aside how disappointed I was after waking up and realizing it had all been a dream, I was quite astonished by how real that experience felt. I genuinely believed I was travelling around Egypt, although I was not quite lucid or aware of how I got there, but I genuinely believed it was real; it was such a realistic experience.

A few days later, I saw a documentary on Jacobo Grinberg's missing case, who was a Mexican psychologist that studied the power and influence of mind in the construction of reality, and similarly to what George Berkley stated, he postulated the possibility of consciousness being able to transform reality throughout a series of meditations to connect with a transcendental realm in which all the information that belongs to this universe is connected. Although I am quite skeptical on his theory, I however found interesting the relation between his psychological theory and the philosophical posture that offers Berkley and the immaterialism branch, questioning, mainly as a materialization of curiosity at the moment, to what extent can we deny the status of dreams as reality if we essentially live the same cognitive process when we experience the dream reality as the commonly accepted *objective* reality, on in other words, *the actual* world? There are times in which dreams feel so real that it is hard to believe that we just woke up from such a real experience, at least from our perspective, and this has even been a question Descartes postulated for the development of this cartesian method and the final outcome of the well-known *cogito ergo sum*.

Iris Murdoch quotes offers an immaterialistic insight on regards of reality. She claims that we live in a fantasy world, and that the greatest task in life is to pursue reality, allowing the reader to understand that she refers as reality as the objective medium in which all happens everything, every time and all at once, independent from the biased and fictional world in which she claims we live in. She makes a marked distinction between what world is and what reality is, suggesting that whereas world is not objective and is deceiving, reality prevails as something objective, transcendental to that fantasy world that contains the actual facts. Nonetheless, it is relevant to question the value of reality under this interpretation, considering our perception limits us to see beyond what we can experience. Under this perspective, and just as Nietzsche said, *there are no pure facts, but instead mere interpretations*.

In Iris Murdoch quote, it would be more accurate to refer to world as meaning over than a deceiving space in which we exist, and this individual process of providing meaning to the world is what constitutes it as subjective, whereas reality shall be interpreted as the experience from interacting with the world rather than a transcendental objective world that must be pursued, as it is humanly impossible thus irrelevant and instead, the great task to which the author refers in her quote shall be conceived as opening one's self to interact with the world to build their reality.

Throughout this essay, the analysis will be divided in three sections in which I will state my disagreement with Iris Murdoch's quote: the first section will aim to explain why world shall be conceived as meaning, laying the foundations for the questioning of the world's objectiveness, the

second being directed to define what reality is and how is it built, and the third one aiming to defend why the pursuit of what Iris means as reality is irrelevant and must be interpreted as an experience in which one should exist rather than something to be blindly pursued.

In Iris Murdoch's quote, it is explicitly stated that our world is essentially pure illusion, therefore, it cancels out the possibility of living in an actual, material and objective world outside independent from what is built by our consciousness; our reality. However, using the word choice of fantasy and illusion delegitimizes the value of consciousness, which is the only concept we may rely on as individuals experiencing the world, painting perspective almost as if it was a delusion.

Often, we refer to world as the space in where we live in and we experience our surroundings, and Murdoch's concept of world falls under this definition. We often refer to Earth as our world, maybe some other people would define their affective relationships -such as family and friends, maybe even their pets- as their world, perhaps some others would reply saying that their world is their job. However, a deeper insight will reveal that these different answers fundamentally connect with the others under the fact that they all define world as the relationships one establishes throughout one's existence. To further analyse this, we must refer to Martin Heidegger's *Dasein* and *being-in-the-world\** theory.

In Heidegger's philosophy, the subject is named as *Dasein*, which translated from German, it literally means *to be there*. Under Heidegger's perspective, the essence of the *Dasein*, or the human being, relies on simply existing on its own way, this is, projecting itself in such way that they establish relation with intramundane beings to fulfil its desires. In this way, the *Dasein*, or the subject's, fundamental essence is being in a certain way in a certain space, this space having a relating connotation instead of physical space. As the *Dasein* makes use of intramundane beings through the comprehension of them, thus it can be claimed that the *Dasein* gives meaning to its world, it gives meaning through the relations it established with the intramundane beings it finds in relation with its existence in some particular place in space to exteriorize its desire of being in some way in a certain moment. Heidegger's theory encourages the fact of questioning the structure of world as it is commonly known, giving it a rational or conscious connotation over a physical one. If world is to be referred as something rationally created, as giving meaning is sign of consciousness, therefore, it questions the status of world as an objective physical space that englobes subjects and objects. This is the first step into considering that world is an illusion considering the popularly accepted definition of world being physical, therefore objective; the social-constructed definition of world. This space for open interpretation is essentially, what Iris claims to be the illusion side of the world, as it prevents us to reach an objective world, as everything means different things for everybody.

Reality can be defined as a context-dependent phenomenon built based on one's historical, social and cultural background, essentially processed by the gathering of sensory information later organized by mind structures. This is, reality is the experience created by the subject while interacting with the world; its surroundings to which one gave meaning. However, if in this definition we imply that the process of the creation of reality is purely on a conscious level, it consequently opens space of the arise of the following question: Is there something such as an objective reality out there? Or reality is essentially consciousness? Is reality more of an experience than an independent objective world?

George Berkeley, immaterialism's biggest exponent, provides an interesting insight to support the fact that reality is essentially built upon consciousness, this is, consciousness creates reality, or in

other words, reality is consciousness. George Berkeley's famous quote *to be is to be perceived*, suggest that to be, or to exist, fundamentally requires an observer that can process the sensory information of the object, or other subject, to which the mind is focusing on, send it to the brain and later on organize it under different mind functions, such as time or space, as Kant's suggests, that will serve to the final comprehension of the empirically known and perceived outside, leading to the final outcome of perception. In a nutshell, existence relies on being part of someone's perception, and going even further, existence relies on being part of someone's reality. To illustrate this, I would like to present a quick mental experiment. Under the hypothetical situation in which the only person left on the universe were you, imagine you leave you house and now you are found on a forest. In that situation, if you, the only observer left to rationally perceive things, is not there, present to observe the house, perceive the electromagnetic wavelengths that it emits and we perceive as colour, to interpret shape or even to locate it in relation with other surrounding objects, in that case, to what extent can it be claimed that the house exists at the precise moment? Surely, under a physics lens, it can be claimed that it exists just as bunch of energy gathered together in some point of space, however, under a philosophical perspective, if it does not form part of our existence, and nor of anybody else's, then the status of the house becomes questionable. This is essentially what Berkeley's quote implies, if an object is not to be perceived by any subject capable of giving a meaning to it, to make it part of its world, then the status of its existence becomes questionable, *to be is to be perceived*.

Reality, as an experience, must be pursued not through some sort of philosophical journey, but instead, pursued by existence, by opening one's self to experience and build reality. In the quote, using the word choice of *find* in *to find reality* gives it sort of a journey connotation, as if it is something it must be looked throughout one's lifespan. However, is there such thing as a reality we can pursue, if so far we have discussed that it is something that objectively doesn't exist and is essentially mind created? Can we say there is something as an ultimate objective reality, and that would be what the author encourages the audience to pursue? Can we pursue something that resides entirely inside the consciousness, and therefore, is such a private experience?

In summary, referring to reality as a concept that englobes objectively may remain as an irrelevant topic considering the limits of human mind and perception, which will always be biased by biological, psychological and social variables, and we are doomed to never being able to escape from them. This analysis suggests that the most accurate connotation than could be given to reality is as a context-dependent phenomenon that occurs after the cognitive process and organization of sensory information. In order to consider that something is, or exists, then it must form part of someone's reality, as it needs to be perceived by an observer; by a subject. Furthermore, the subject builds reality as it encounters with surrounding objects, processed and afterwards added into the subject's world. However, considering that reality is built by the subject, then this implies the possibility for considering that there is no such thing as an objective reality, nor a single world out there, instead, there exist multiple worlds out there, with different meanings. I believe that the pursue of objectiveness blinds us from considering the possibility of existence of different realities rather than a single one, and maybe the study of epistemology must be directed towards this possibility, after all, structure means a possibility of form, and consciousness is always about structuring thought; structuring perceptions, therefore, just as things may be as they are for one, could also be in another not-yet-thought way.

