Meaning, Metanarrative, and the Cross

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The Roadmap

Humans are made for meaning

Meaning is informed by metanarrative

Two ways to view life

The mystery of the Cross
All men, by nature, desire to understand.
What every 5-year-old wants to know!
Telos – Purpose

Teleology
Two Important Qualifications

1. One’s desire for meaning can be **cultivated** or **extinguished**.

2. The desire for meaning is not shared in the **same degree** among every human being.

- Even if the question for meaning (i.e., “what’s the point?”) is not profound, the mundane is almost inescapable.
Metanarrative = Big Story

Oh, the Places You'll Go!
Two Ways to View Life

Point

No Point
Two Metanarratives

Supernaturalism  Naturalism
Naturalism: *Nature is all there is*

“Nature is neither kind nor cruel but indifferent.”

- Richard Dawkins
Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the market-place, and cried incessantly: "I am looking for God! I am looking for God!" . . . "Where has God gone?" he cried. "I shall tell you. We have killed him - you and I . . . God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him . . . Must we not ourselves become gods simply to be worthy of it?
They outrageous, them rules. Who live in this cider house? Who grindin' up those apples, pressin' that cider, cleanin' up all this mess? Who just plain live here, just breathin' in that vinegar? Well, someone who don't live here made those rules. Those rules ain't for us. **We are supposed to make our own rules. And we do. Every single day.**
The Burden of Deity

“It matters not how strait the gate, How charged with punishments the scroll, I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul.”

- William Henley
“At the heart of liberty is the right to define one’s own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life.”

*Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992)
The “Freedom” of Deity

It's my life
It's now or never
I ain't gonna live forever
I just want to live while I'm alive
(My heart is like an open highway)
Like Frankie said
I did it my way
I just wanna live while I'm alive
It's my life
The “Freedom” of Deity

Throw it away
Forget yesterday
We'll make the great escape
We won't hear a word they say
They don't know us anyway
Watch it burn
Let it die
Cause we are finally free tonight
The “Freedom” of Deity?
The Metanarrative of Meaninglessness

Naturalism → Existentialism → Nihilism
“In the beginning, God . . .”
- Genesis 1:1
A Metanarrative for Meaning

- Creation
- Fall
- Redemption
- Restoration
The Christian Metanarrative

“Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed [in the “enemy-occupied territory” of Earth], and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign of sabotage.”

- C.S. Lewis: *Mere Christianity*
Humans are made for meaning
Meaning is informed by metanarrative
Naturalism is a metanarrative for meaningfulness
Supernaturalism (Christianity) is a metanarrative for meaning
So . . . ????
The Mystery of the Cross

“We’ve got everything figured out.”

“You’ve got nothing figured out.”
For the word of the cross is folly... Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?... we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles.

- I Corinthians 1:18-ff

The Mystery of the Cross
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“We’ve got everything figured out.”

“You’ve got nothing figured out.”
The Paradox of the Cross

Without the Cross, you can’t make sense of anything.

With the Cross, you can’t make sense of everything.
“So . . . how do I make sense of things?”

“This guy doesn’t make any sense!”
Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

- Philippians 2:5-8 (KJV)
Christ-Centered Education

- Christ-Centered Ed = Cross-Centered Ed
- To make sense of anything, one must go through the Cross.
- Going through the Cross in education means humble, patient, obedient discipleship.
  - "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." (Matthew 16:24)