

Pablo Ruiz Picasso

1881- 1973

Spain

“ Whenever I have wanted to express something, I have done so without thinking of the past or the future”



Virtue Ethics

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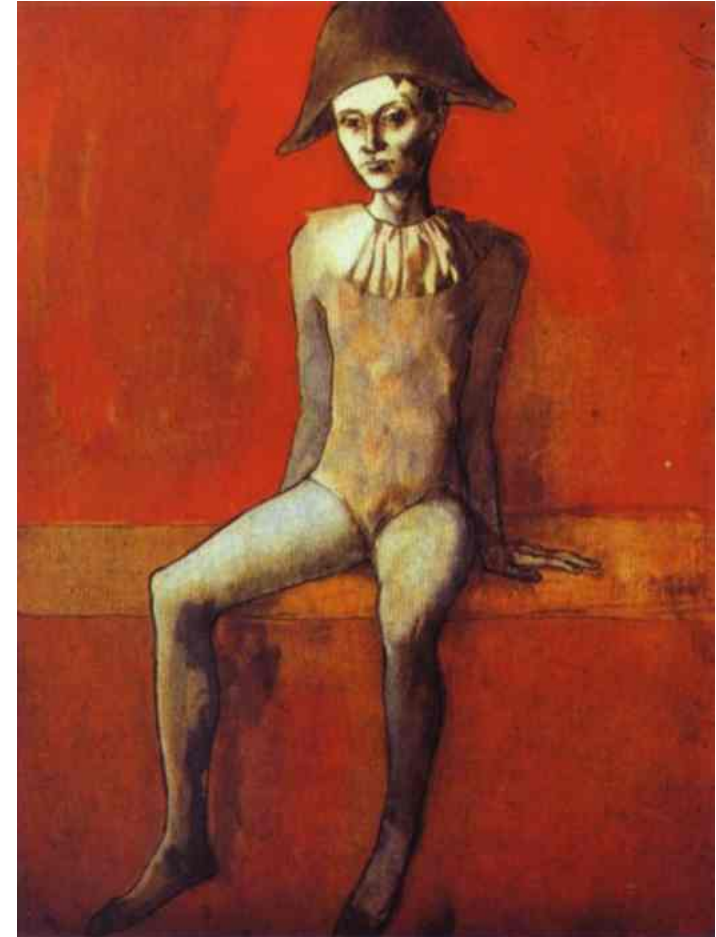


History of Virtue Ethics

- We all have questions about the essence of human existence -
HAPPINESS
-

- What would make us happy?
'EUDIAMONIA'
- Western Greek Philosophy 400 BC
 - Human conversation
 - A discipline with its own method –
by questions
 - Even today we dwell in the dark !

The final knowledge is unknown
to us



Fifth and Fourth Century BC - Athens

- ❑ The Greeks had no sense of sin
 - “bad shots” Could happen to anyone – “take better aim next time”
- ❑ The Greek concept of a good life
- ❑ Greek culture – generous celebration of life is to live now, to flourish, achieve, learn, appreciate and enjoy - hedonism
- ❑ The healthy, fit, trained body was the summit of Greek perfection - Gymnasium from ‘gymnos’ meaning naked
(Judeo-Christian view of nudity a chilling contrast – shame)

“A splendid era of mighty men”

Honour or fame or heroism

- ❑ Latin – Virtus meaning “manliness”

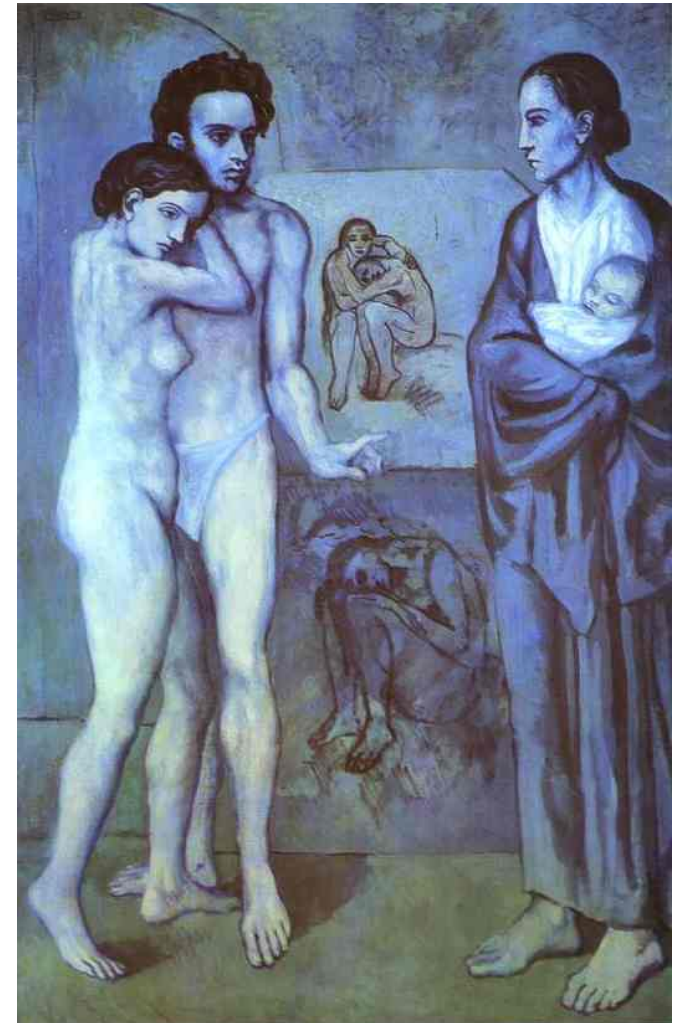
The philosophers of the time (Socrates) did not agree

Virtue – What would a good person be like ?

Three kinds of people by nature
– “attend the Games” -
Pythagoras

1. Spectators of life
 - Experience, reflect, inquire, knowledge seeking
2. Competitors “Most virtuous”
 - Honour, fame, heroism
3. Those who buy and sell in the stands
 - Gain the object

Still defining 'Virtue'



The shift from warrior to civic morality

- ❑ Heroism, fame and honor - open to relatively few
- ❑ Every citizen should be included in the concept of a good life
- ❑ It took philosophers, artists, the theater and writers to introduce theory, rhetoric, questions about the deeper meaning of life - virtue.
- ❑ Socrates moved beyond the irresolvable questions about the nature of the world and focused on human nature, self-knowledge, the important question of how to live!

□ Questions about what really matters

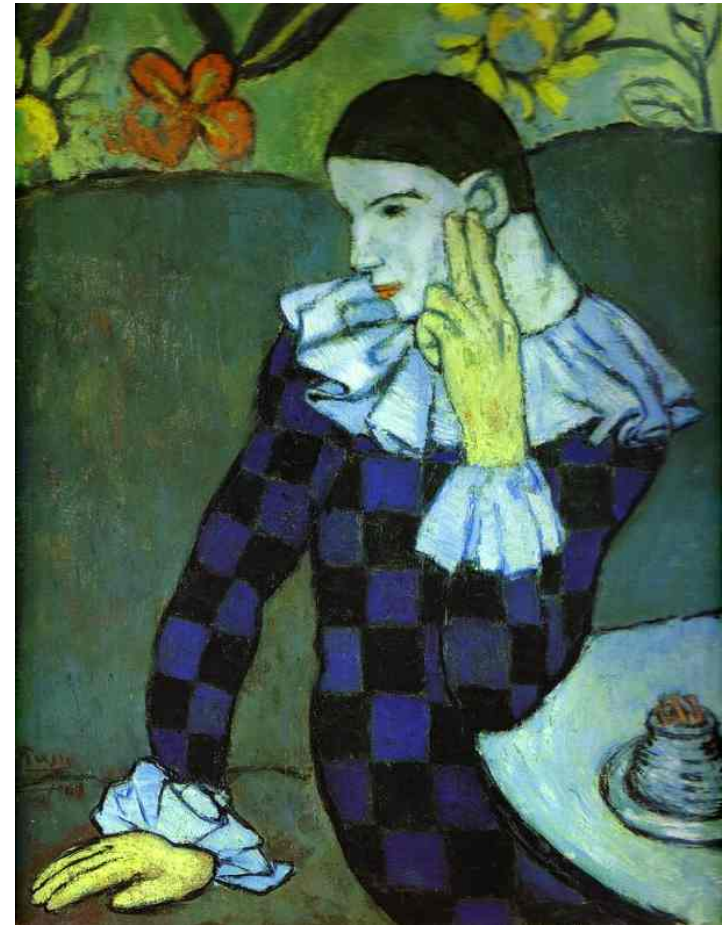
- There is a goal
- A purpose
- A value in life worthwhile as an end in itself – not only a means to an end.

A kind of 'goodness' that gives value to wealth and success or pleasure

It is a kind of knowledge –
knowledge about the intrinsic
values of things that man do and
desire – wisdom !

A young man asked Socrates if virtue can be taught ?

Socrates



Socrates asked the young sophist –

- Do you know what virtue is ? “No” said the young sophist
- Socrates - “ Now that you know that you do not know, we can begin to make progress”
- “Then, do you not think that the quest for ethical understanding and the living of an examined life is more important than the conclusion we can not come to ?”
- “ Should we not strive towards virtue and therefore inherit the good life?”

Plato 429-347 BC



Blue Nude 1901 Pablo Picasso

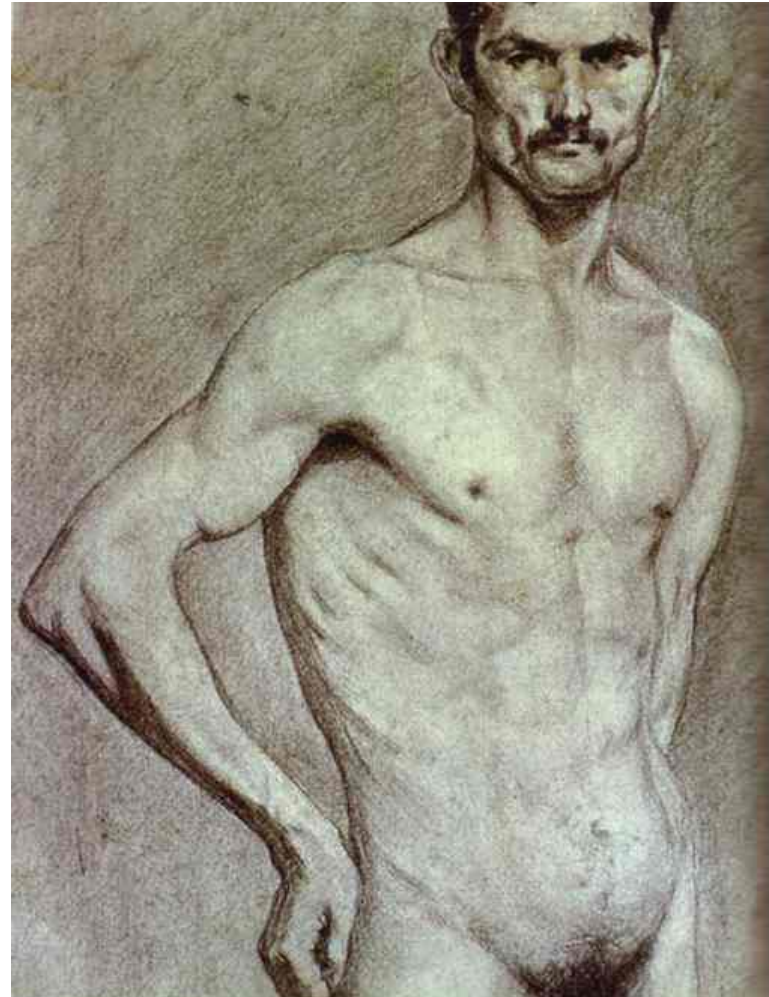
We need to ask the fundamental questions about the purpose of life

Plato

- “Polis” – meaning ‘city’
 - Police, policy, politics
- “ A man without the sense of justice will not be able to limit to his desires – always discontent”
- “Because we are social beings, only justice or fairness can bring harmony”

Personal happiness only possible through the happiness of others

‘Connectedness’



Aristotle 384-322 BC

- ❑ We learn by experience, we “taste the world”
- ❑ Practical wisdom – the ‘mean’
Cowardice ↔ Rashness
- ❑ An appropriate expression of needs and appetites eg. anger
- ❑ In harmony – self and others

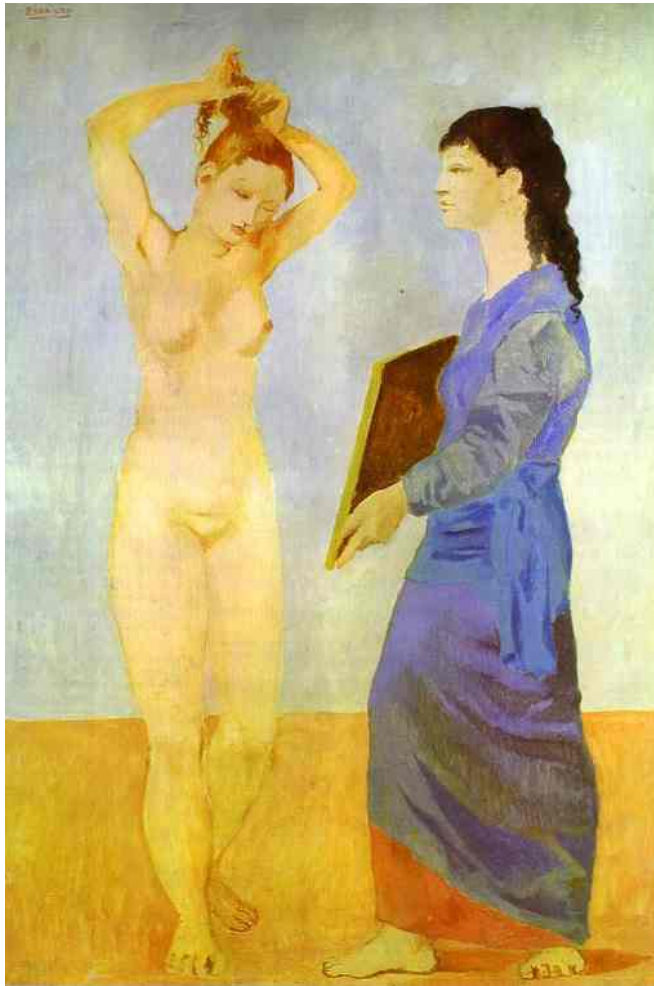
“To treat a friend like another self”

Search – Strive – Ongoing



Rene Descart
1596-1650

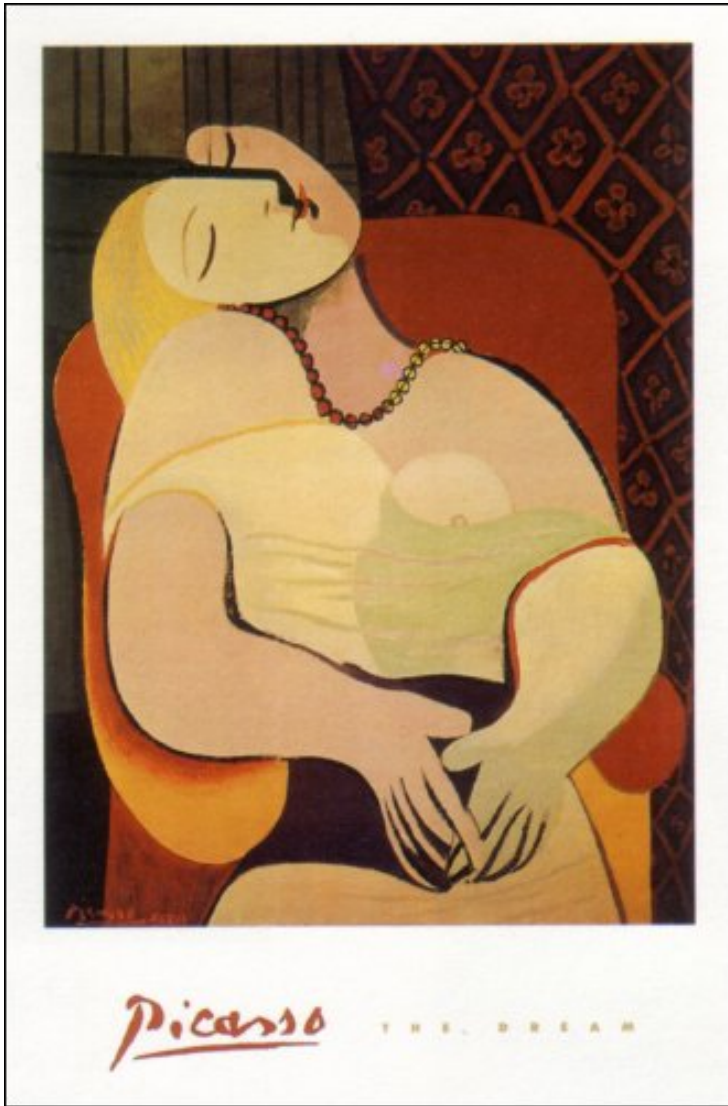
□ Mathematician –



Old beliefs are dwindling -
Pope/king/nobility are put in
place by God – all people are
equal – we have to live by social
contract - authority of state
replaced by authority of reason

Now to decide on my social
contract
Connectedness

Virtues



- ❑ Should be cultured
- ❑ Should become trait of character – “The good person”
 - Courage
 - Temperance
 - Liberality
 - Justice
 - Honesty
 - Altruism
- ❑ To do good only because it is good
 - I can always do this
 - Everybody can, always do this

Nichomachean Ethics

- ❑ We are rational, intellectual beings. A life of contemplation
- ❑ Our concern for others results in mutual use and pleasure
- ❑ “The good life is spent in search of the good life”



The good life is spent in search of the good life – the means and end in itself ARISTOTLE



Picasso