Where to start, where to start. I know little about philosophy as a whole, as during the creation of this reflection I was tempted to recommend the advice from friends of mine who I could easily identify as more philosophical than me. Philosophy is a very free subject, a subject that, as I have come to learn, is bested expressed & learned through feeling and action rather than definition (or at least for me); while there were references (the most vivid I could think of were rappers who seemed to express most if not all of their philosophy of life in one song) of information and definitions on the subject (you being one of them) I felt little comprehension of it main characteristics until I simplified the message to something I could best relate to, even if it may not be the all-ecompassing term used to define philosophy. As I see it, the philosophy of life for someone is basically **how they live their life, how they choose to live it, and/or how they can describe it.** While it was the best definition for me, it did not provide the instant lightbulb I was looking for; I still had yet to understand my philosophy of life due to neglecting to truly get to know one of the more important people in my life i.e. myself. I tried to analyze my history from much of my childhood to now, but I had forgotten (or been to young to remember) much of it, and what had come back to me was not, in my mind, usable. Frustrated, I accumulated all personal accounts of myself I could find, from childhood photo albums to yearbooks in the hope that I could see and understand more of myself in a philosophical sense. While the action in itself prove to be quite fruitless (for how can you analyze the philosophy of life of an infant?), it made me recognize that I should not have to research my history to find my philosophy of life; I had unconsciously known it like the back of my hand. I realized then that components of one's philosophy of life came from the things that were very meaningful to them, and that would inevitably lead many philosophies of life to be very personal, often requiring a plain, unprotected, uncompromising analysis of the self in areas that truly affect us, both good *and* bad. Suddenly, I learned more about myself in hours than I had learned in years, and while it brought many positive aspects of my life philosophy to light, it also re-opened the scars of things that had haunted me. Still, this has lead to a greater consequence of self-improvement, for how can I help someone that I don't even know? Like most

people, I did not know myself as a youth, nor can I claim that I fully know myself now. But the way I see it, life is fluid and ever-moving; everything can change in an instant. I know, because of life's changes, that my undiscovered past philosophy of life was not the same as it is now, nor is my present one guaranteed to mirror that of the future. Recognizing this, below is what I have defined as living in this instant of my life and how it most influences or relates to some of the philosophical movements between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries. In short: this is how *I* roll.

An efficient team project, the precision of a marching band, the organization of my day & life priorities: they all represent my favorite philosophical aspect. When I think of the philosophical aspects of my live that are pleasing to me and that I have practiced often, the strongest one was without a doubt order. I am an fervent believer in the practices of order, structure, and discipline because of the security it offers in almost all things. Unlike some teenagers, I find an immense appeal to working hard now for the main purpose of securing myself in the future occupationally, financially, etc. The affiliation my life has with hardworking comes close to resembling that of the Puritan work ethic; I recognize the power it gives me to succeed but I also recognize that it has often led to my undoing in that I often bite off more than I can chew. While my characteristic of overestimating my capabilities to work and being overambitious in all things I can do does relate to that of seventeenth century humanism (man can do anything and everything), it has often led to an imbalance in my life concerning work and play. The insecurities of my social life fuel my desire for the security that may be gained from order. I can see how this would cause me to be attracted to my Catholic faith, with institution as well as its laws of living, albeit its difficult ones too; it also reflects the security I wish to have in the realm of morals and ethics as well as insurance of entrance into the Kingdom of God. Now, I do not want to come across as being a Catholic solely for Heaven (but, if I'm honest with myself, this is a major factor), for outside the spiritual discipline offered by the Catholic faith I do find meaning in and for my life from faith. I believe what God has revealed to us as many aspects of life and I choose to fully and whole-heartedly

accept it/them. While there may be those who criticize this as a merely copying the Catholic Church's guideline's for living rather than developing my own, I choose not to be my own god by instead choosing to rely on the reason of God over people; even if I did figure out the truths of life as no other person had, I would have basically spent much of my life reinventing the wheel. Deep within me is the desire to balance my life in all of its demands i.e. those educational, recreational, spiritual, relationships, social, etc. Based off of my more recent experiment in order when I, captain of my project, had to deal with two members who wanted to do their own thing for the project, I am not a fan of complete freedom, for if everyone truly got to do whatever they wanted to do, anarchy would be inevitable. I believe order bears much fruit, and because of my pro-structure attitude, I admit that defining myself as a seventeenth century Classicist would probably be my best bet.

Yet as I know that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy", I also know that I not solely a lover of the machines of nature. When I was a child of 7-9, I lived in Detroit in a modest home with my little brother, and while we had a TV and toys (we we neither neglected nor spoiled), I found nothing to watch on TV i.e. to entertain me (except saturday morning cartoons); bored, I then developed an intense desire for reading that thrives to this day in order to escape the boredom that occupies our lives from time to time. I loved reading; rarely a day went by without my head in a book, and often the only thing that distracted me from the class was the <u>Capitan Underpants</u> or <u>Harry Potter</u> I hid under the desk on my lap. In remembering this history for my love of books I realized my underlying love of imagination was the key cause of it; I loved (re)creating entertaining events to liven up y life and/or relieve my boredom; From imagining scenarios of fantasy with my friends (of which there were no restricted topics), to my personal dreams that I would later recognize as unrealistic (as a middle schooler I had dreamed of writing and publish a book on "how to survive school" and wrote it until the realization of the impossibility hit me), imagination has run rampant in my personal philosophy. I believe that my love for this ties in with an attraction to animation that I have also had for a long time.

Out of all the genres of television that I like, I can (although not in public) say that cartoons have been and most likely will be by coveted genre; I literally feel like I would seriously embarrass myself with the amount of cartoons (both TV and manga-japanese comics) I watch as this age, but I still am enchanted by them all the same and don't see myself intentionally stopping (unless I grew bored of them over time, which is unlikely). However, this pales in comparison to my love music; it is both preferred and necessary in my life. While I like certain songs in certain genres, I know that my law of love for music is whatever animates me, be it rock, dance, or rap (this indiscriminate selection of music testifies to my lack of musical taste, but as I see it, music is music). I listen daily to many songs, but I do it not out of a drug-like dependence on it but rather as an enhancer to whatever I do be it work, play, or anything in between; music is the spice of my life that makes a bad situation good and a good situation better. I do not think but *feel* that nineteenth century romanticism constitutes a considerable of my life philosophy

There are unfortunately, aspects of my philosophy of life that I dislike and often (but not always) have been unable to change. For one, the prospect of the nationalism that should be haunts me. Contrary to what most think of me, I see myself as a full fledged American, not solely as my country of origin but my country of allegiance. I recognize that it's not perfect, but I love my country and am proud to let it define me. Yet I feel that, to many I know, my portrayal as a Nigerian comes first and as an American comes second (I most recently experienced this when on of my classmates at first glance more or less doubted if I spoke English); if I am placed up to another African-American in my class, they will be seen as more American and I as more African. I don't know where this comes from (possibly my name or appearance is the giveaway), but I feel conflicted not in wanting to look more American, but by wanting to be more Nigerian. I know little to nothing the language/culture of Igbo, I have little affection for the country (widespread poverty and corruption aren't exactly appealing to me), and I cannot be identified as a fellow Nigerian by the bone fide ones. Like many 1st generation

Nigerian kids I walk a fine line of being a fully-assimilated/Americanized Nigerian who is seen as a Nigerian by Americans and as an American by Nigerians. I can easily relate to those both American and Nigerian while learning of the culture my parents belong to, but I can never surrender that primary identity as an American for the nation of my blood/origin, thus illustrating both the existence and lack of nationalism in my philosophy of life. Another component of my life that disturbs me is my hypocritical view on the importance of time. Like most hardworking people, I do have a "live for today, but plan for tomorrow" mentality, but I do admit to using this as a cover-up to cope with the present and to ignore the past, both of which can be unpleasant at times. When I don't want to look at the more awkward sections of my life or when I don't want to test my social capabilities I'll claim that I have to prepare for final exams and college (at an unnecessary time of course). I'm not proud of this soon-to-be temporary aspect of my philosophy, but it is what it is. Which leads to my biggest blight on my philosophy: my social stance. Much of my emotional battles have been on the importance I place in socializing. Often in the past I had justified my more isolated stance by saying that I was more of an introvert or that I worked best alone (having classified myself as an Individualist), but I realized that while that may have been partially true, I had to face the stark truth that I was just a shy guy; upon reflection I realize that I often had unconsciously tried to fill this void with over-excessive entertainment, hoping that watching *Friends* would make me feel better about not hanging out with mine. My social weakness led to me forming a love/hate relation on being a loner; I did appreciate the peace, reflection, comfort, and security that I felt when I was alone, as well as the independence that came with it, but I did recognize that I enjoy living it up with people, be it best friends or total strangers, as well as the feeling of belonging to a group or team (I doubt that there is an exact philosophical movement between the that relates to much if not all of these characteristics between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, but you know what I mean). I can't say that my self-reflection has sorted out all of my feelings for socializing (lack of social skills & experiences limit me from really knowing myself in this aspect of life), but it had stirred within me a longing for change. My old life

consisted of basically of studying around the clock and lavishing all of my curiosities and boredoms with entertainment, but I aim for a philosophy of life that incorporates my pillar of faith, my family, all of those I wish to pass time and communicate with, my education, and a little bit for myself. I had heard of something like this from a teacher of mine (although I don't think many took it seriously):

God > Family > Friends > School > Me

That is the philosophy of life that I intend to live and abide by; I wish to just simplify and enjoy my life with the most important things it has to offer, aiming for true happiness while living out my calling of responsibility to my friends, my family and my God. I know not of any specific philosophical movement in all European history that I can directly relate my improvised & simplified one to, but it doesn't matter to me. I don't know how my philosophical aspirations will be in the future of my life, for as I said before anything and everything can change "in an instant", so I instead choose to focus on living my philosophy of life than on predicting its end. As far as I'm concerned, the purpose of life lies more in the journey than the destination.

~Ikechukwu Chinedu Onwuzurike
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