

At the conclusion of the old film based on Erich Maria Remarque's book, All Quiet on the Western Front, a young German soldier, disillusioned by the realities of war and entranced by the sight of a beautiful butterfly just past the top row of sandbags of his trench, reaches out his hand, oblivious of the danger from French snipers across the no-man's land between the lines. Just as the hovering butterfly is about to settle on the young soldier's finger, a sniper's bullet hits and kills him. After many months in the drab earth-colored environment of warfare, beauty had become of more importance to him than safety.

This, then, is one area of ultimate concern that some human beings experience: anxious care over what they perceive to be the basic needs of life.

B. Some human beings experience ultimate concern over the questions of the purpose, meaning, and significance of life.

In James Hilton's book Lost Horizon, the main character, Robert Conway, is summoned by the high lama of Shangri-La, Father Perreau. The high lama says to Conway:

"You are still, by the world's standards, a youngish man. Yet in the normal course of existence, you can expect twenty or thirty years of gradually diminishing activity., Here, however, in Shangri-La, by our standards, your life is just begun, and may go on and on."

Conway answers, "Well, to be candid, father, a prolonged future doesn't excite me. It would have to have a point. I sometimes doubt whether life itself has any. If that is so, then long life must be even more pointless. No, I'd need a much more definite reason for going on and on."