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A Philosophical Analysis of Difficulty

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Life is often *difficult*: much of what we do, endure, or choose is difficult, hard, or challenging. Cultural narratives, technological advancements, and socioeconomic trends support mixed evaluations of the value of difficulty in our lives. On the one hand, we rejoice at the prospect that advancements in AI and robotics could alleviate much of the hardship we endure in our labour; on the other, we feel satisfaction after a hard day's work, and often strive to be challenged in our projects. Despite its prevalence in our lives, difficulty has not received an extended treatment in philosophy. I aim to correct this omission by providing a critical philosophical analysis of difficulty. My research examines what difficulty *is* (as well as cognate notions such as hardship, challenge, and adversity), whether it makes our lives go better or worse, and how it affects our responsibilities to one another, other species, and the planet.