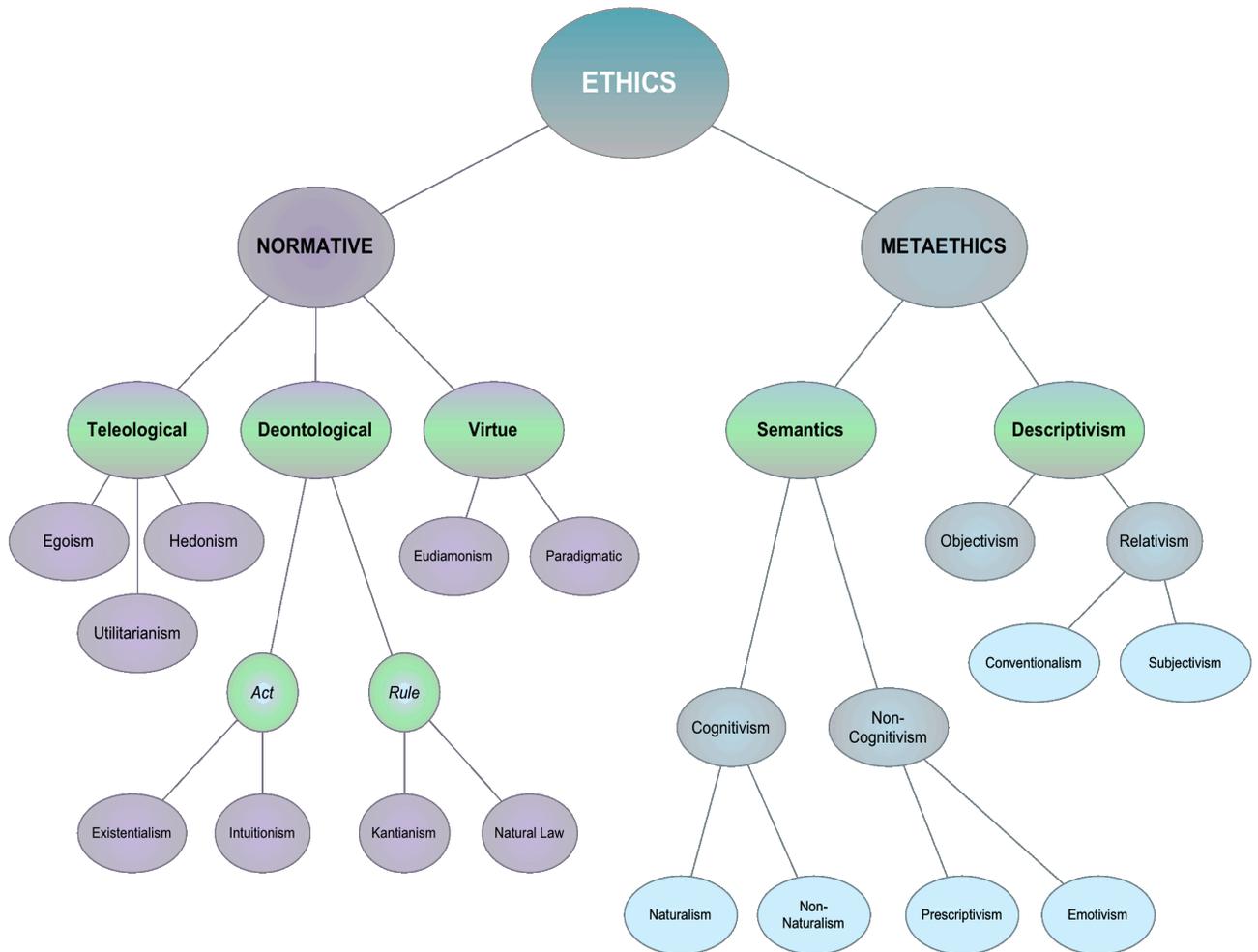


PHILOSOPHY 105

INTRODUCTION TO ETHICAL THEORY

2nd Edition



Edited by
Dr. Barry F. Vaughan

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INTRODUCTION

Philosophy, as an academic discipline, is the systematic rational investigation of five major questions (which subdivide into numerous—perhaps even infinite—*sub*-questions): 1) What is the nature of reality?, 2) What is the nature of knowledge?, 3) What is the nature of value?, 4) What is the nature of reason?, and 5) What do these questions look like in their historical context. For convenience sake we can label these questions, “Metaphysics”,



“Epistemology”,
“Axiology”,
“Logic”, and the
“History of
Philosophy”

respectively.

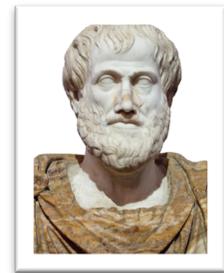
These questions are not limited to the sphere of Philosophy, of course, and you might encounter them in many academic and non-academic contexts alike. What makes the philosophical investigation of these questions distinct is the methodology that is used to investigate and propose answers to these complex and perennially perplexing questions. Just as the “hard” sciences (e.g., Physics, Chemistry, Biology, etc.,) have a common methodology—the scientific method—which allows us to organize them all under the general term ‘Science’, so too the various areas of philosophical inquiry are tied together by a common methodology making them all parts of ‘Philosophy’. The common methodology philosophers use is *reason*.

“But scientists use reason; everybody uses reason!” you might object. And, you would be correct. The word ‘reason’ can be used in both a broad and

narrow context which changes the denotation of the word. In the academic world we use a more restrictive denotations (i.e., technical language) in order to distinguish what we do in different academic disciplines. When philosophers talk about ‘reason’ as a methodology for investigating metaphysical or epistemological questions, they mean the explicit application of **inductive** and **deductive** reasoning to formulate arguments that conform to the rules of Logic. This is analogous to the way psychologists use Statistical Mathematics to analyze the data accumulated in their research. Thus, **Logic** is both a field of investigation *within* Philosophy, as well as *the* philosophical method.

Now we can more clearly understand what I said above about Philosophy: it is the systematic rational (i.e., *logical*) investigation of five perennial questions. One of those questions, you will recall, is “What is the nature of value?” The label for this question, and all of the sub-questions that fall under it, is Axiology. Thus, we can define ‘axiology’ as the systematic rational investigation of *value*.

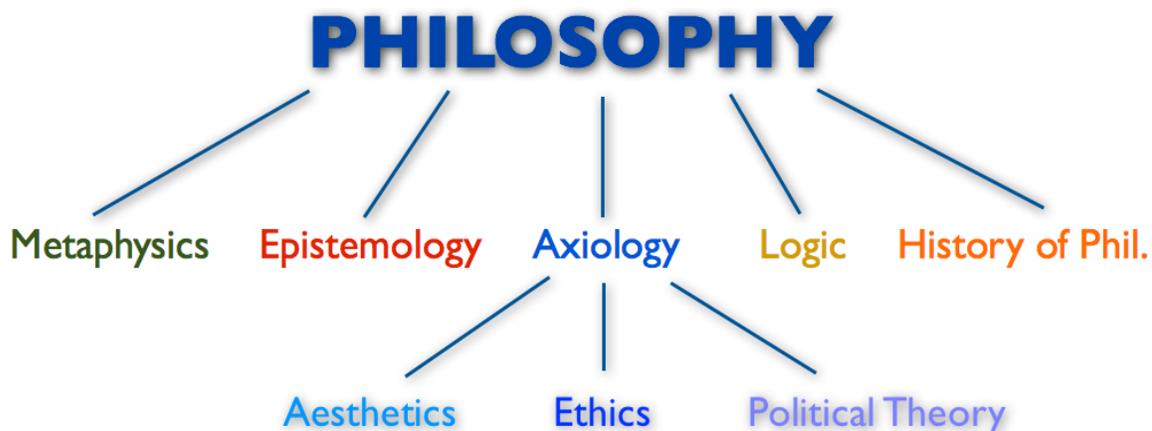
In the not too distant past it was commonly believed that humans alone engaged in value judgments. It was our awareness of and ability to think about right, beauty, and justice that led many thinkers to place humanity above the rest of the natural world. For some it was evidence of a god-like nature common to humans but missing from other animals; it was evidence of a soul (e.g., Plato). Other thinkers attributed this awareness to a distinctly human *faculty* which distinguished humans as rational animals (e.g., Aristotle).



Today we are suspicious of this anthropocentric tendency as we learn more and more about the behavior of non-human animals. But whether or not humans are alone in axiological awareness is not a question we will pursue. It

is a fact that humans do indeed engage in making value judgments and thinking about the nature of these judgments and that will be the launching point of our investigation.

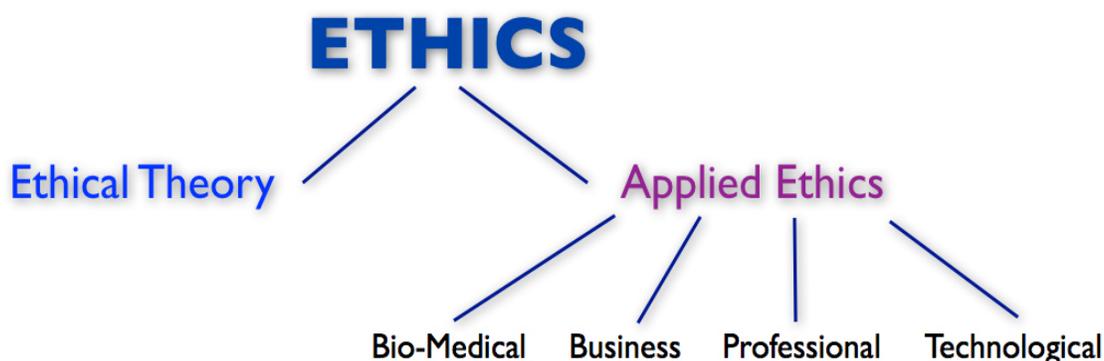
Axiology, as I have already stated, is the philosophical investigation of value. And, as a branch of academic Philosophy it divides into three major fields of investigation (or *sub-branches*): Aesthetics, Ethics, and Political Theory.



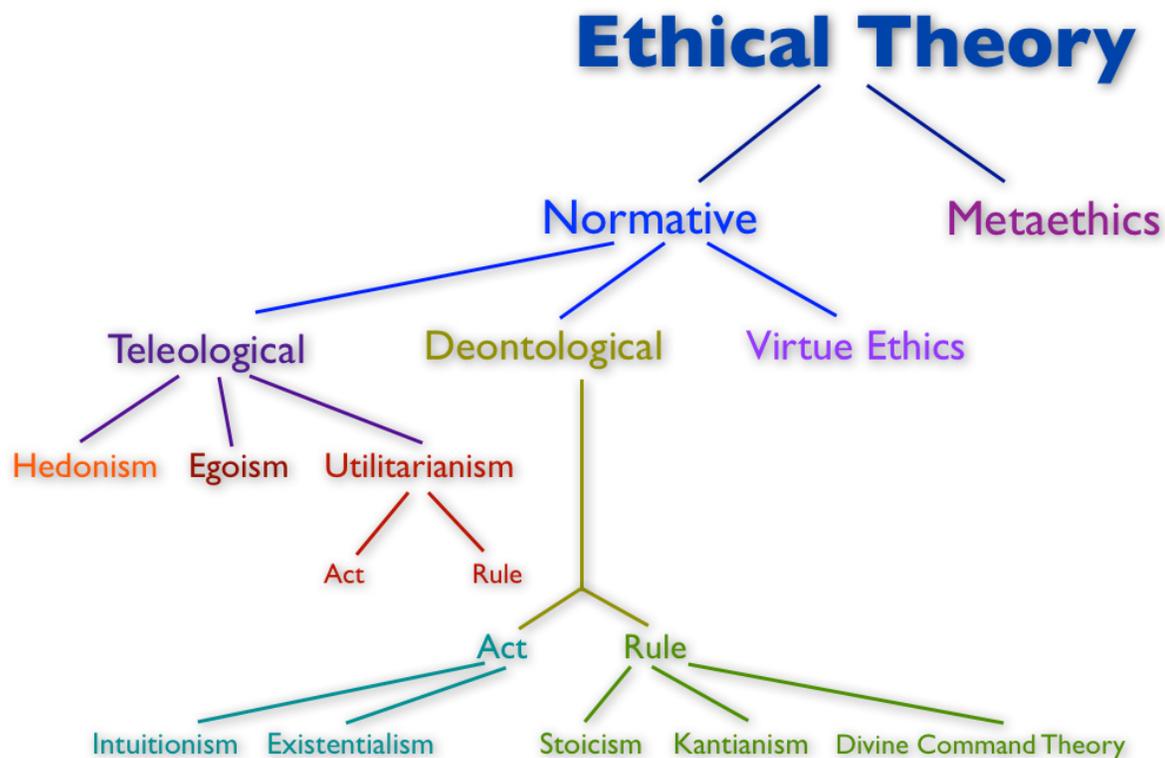
Aesthetics is the division of Axiology that investigates judgments rooted in *beauty*, Political Theory investigates judgments rooted in *justice*. Ethics, which is our focus, investigates judgments rooted in *goodness*.

There are, of course, many different views or theories about goodness and we call a theory of goodness a *moral theory*. So, we can now give a technical definition of ‘ethics’ as follows: **Ethics** is the systematic rational investigation of morality. In ordinary discourse, outside the academic world, the terms ‘ethics’ and ‘morality’ are often used synonymously, but we can now more clearly see that ‘ethics’ refers to an investigation, or field of research, into the *subject of* morality (i.e., a theory of goodness). So just as botany is a sub-discipline of Biology, so a theory of morality (e.g., Consequentialism) is a sub-branch of Ethics.

Now, let us make a map of Ethics (as a field of research) so we can see in more detail exactly what it, as an academic enterprise, entails. First, Ethics divides into two main branches: Ethical Theory and Ethical Application. As should be obvious, the first deals with the content of various moral theories and the second explores how those theories can be applied in the context of human existence. The Applied Ethics includes Business Ethics, Bio-Medical Ethics, Technological Ethics, Professional Ethics, and so on.

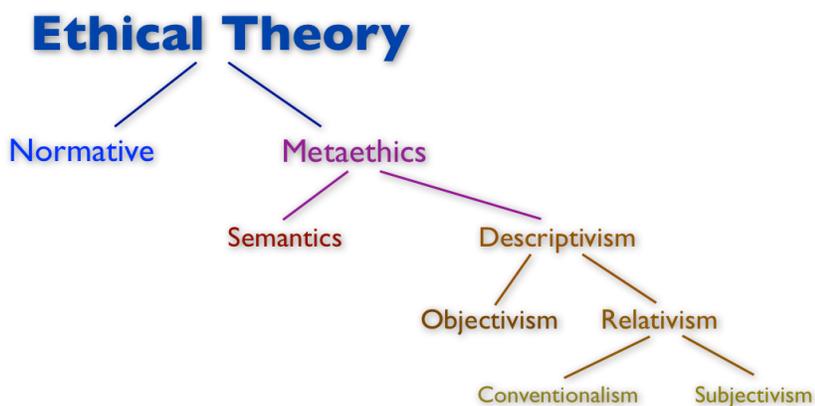


Ethical Theory, which is our focus, is the investigation of the competing moral theories that have been proposed by philosophers since the 7th Century BCE. It divides into two main sub-branches: Normative Ethics and Metaethics. The Normative (i.e., *action guiding*) branch investigates three distinct types of moral theories: 1) those that define ‘the good’ in terms of the consequences of our actions (i.e., Teleological Morality), 2) those that define ‘the good’ in terms of some intrinsic feature of actions or agents (i.e., Deontological Morality), and 3) those theories that define ‘the good’ in terms of certain dispositions of the character of moral agents, or *virtues* (i.e., Virtue Morality). Within each of these three main “families” of moral theories we will find a variety of distinct theories. For example, under Teleological Morality we find Utilitarianism, Egoism, and Hedonism, and multiple theories under Deontology as well.



The second major branch of Ethical Theory is Metaethics. As the name implies, Metaethics investigates a series of questions *about* the normative theories. For example, all Teleological theories define ‘the good’ in terms of some end or consequence of our actions (e.g., happiness for me, pleasure for me, happiness/pleasure for the greatest number of people, etc.). But what is the *nature* of this end? Are the consequences we use to define what is good *objective* features of

the world, or are they *relative* to individuals, cultures, historical epochs, or even species?



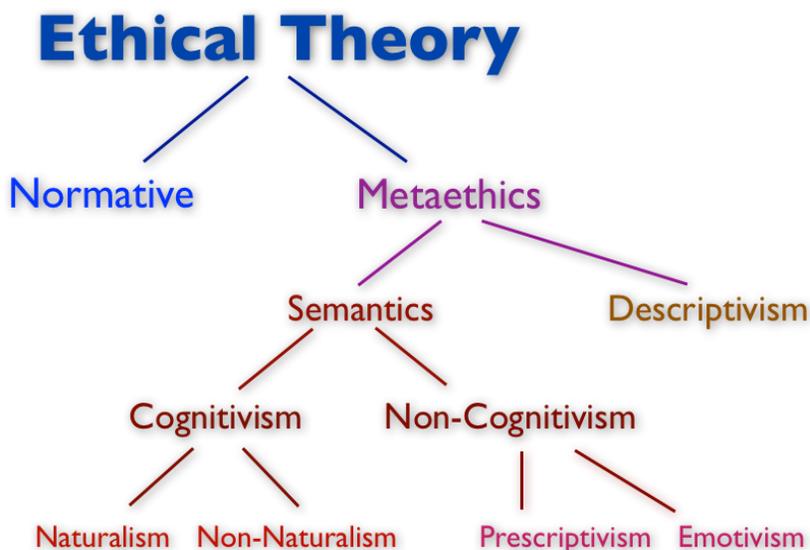
This investigation into the nature of the ‘the good’ as defined in the various moral theories of Normative Morality is called Descriptivism

Another set of questions about the various theories of Normative Morality regards the *meaning* of moral language. When, as a consequence of a particular moral theory, we label an action ‘right’ or an agent ‘bad’, when we say that we ‘ought’ or ‘ought not’ engage in some activity, what do these moral designators *mean*? They seem to have adjectival qualities because they modify nouns, but they also seem to be significantly different from standard descriptive adjectives (e.g., ‘large’, ‘blue’, ‘hot’ ‘sweet’, etc.). So, what’s going on when we use moral language?

One view, Cognitivism, holds that all moral designators (i.e., terms used in moral discourse) have cognitive content. That is to say, these linguistic symbols (i.e., terms) can be defined and translated across linguistic systems without loss of meaning. Now, if that is true, where does the meaning which supplies the cognitive content of the moral terms exist? Are these meanings natural facts of the material world as is the case with colors, or sounds or mass, or do these meanings exist in a non-natural (non-material) dimension of reality?

Opposing Cognitivism is, as you might guess, Non-Cognitivism which holds that moral designators *do not* have significant cognitive content. Emotivism, perhaps the most popular non-cognitivist theory of moral language holds that moral designators express emotional states relative to some action rather than meaningful content about that action. So, if someone says, “it’s wrong to drown puppies,” the moral designator ‘wrong’ does not express an objective meaning like, “that puppy is brown,” but rather is expressing my emotional discomfort with the thought of a drowning puppy. Emotivists think of moral language like other forms of verbal emoting: when I stub my toe I shout, “ouch!” But the word ‘ouch’ does not convey meaning or cognitive

content, it is a verbalization of the internal emotional state I experience when in pain.



All of this is an absurd over-simplification of the

views found in Normative morality and Metaethics, but it gives us a clear place to start. And, if it seems like there are an awful lot of technical terms being thrown around, you are right! But, as we proceed through our investigation of Ethical theory and place these various terms in their proper context, you will become proficient in their recognition and use.

One final note; it is not the intent of this text, or any decent introductory survey of Ethical theory for that matter, to tell you which of these theories is correct. The purpose of this text is to give you an introduction to, and overview of, some of the main moral theories that have emerged in the Western Philosophical tradition. I have organized the following readings chronologically in order to tell you the story of Ethical Theory as it has evolved for over two thousand years. It could just as well have been organized topically, but that would give us a very different emphasis. So as you read this text, keep in mind that you are sampling an *ongoing conversation* about morality, not looking into an instruction book on how to *be* moral. That is, this book is approaching Ethical Theory from the perspective of the History of Philosophy, not an attempt to promote any particular moral theory as the *correct* theory. It is my hope that you will find these readings both

underscore—and at the same time challenge—moral intuitions you already hold. Through that experience you should begin to become more aware of the *assumptions* you make about morality and perhaps also become more *critical* of those very same opinions. There is nothing I can add to Sokrates’ most penetrating insight that, “the unexamined life is not worth living.”¹

¹ Plato, The Apology of Sokrates, 38a5-6.



THEOGONY Or, *Birth of the Gods*, By Hesiod (c. 700 BCE)

Translated by: Hugh G.
Evelyn-White

Textural corrections, additions and
notes by Barry F. Vaughan²

PROLOGUE:

¹ From the Helikonian Muses let us
begin to sing,

who hold the great and holy mount of Helicon,
and dance on soft feet about the deep-blue spring
and the altar of the almighty son of Kronos,
⁵ and when they have washed their tender bodies in Permessus
or in Hippokrene (*the Horse's Spring*), or Olmeios,
make their fair, lovely dances upon highest Helikon
and move with vigorous feet.

¹⁰ Thence they arise and go abroad by night, veiled in thick mist,
and utter their song with lovely voice,
praising Zeus, the aegis-holder and queenly Hera of Argos who walks on golden sandals,

and the daughter of Zeus the aegis-holder bright-eyed Athena,
and Phoibos (*the shining one*) Apollo,
and Artemis who delights in arrows,
¹⁵ and Poseidon the earth-holder who shakes the earth,
and reverend Themis and quick-glancing Aphrodite,³
and Hebe with the crown of gold,
and fair Dione, Leto, Iapetos,
and Kronos the crafty counselor,
Eos and great Helios and bright Selene,
²⁰ Gaia too, and great Okeanos,

² This text is adapted from the Internet Sacred Text Archive's Theogony, by Hesiod, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/index.htm>. This edited version is intended for academic or personal use and may not be sold or used for profit. I have changed spellings of proper names to more accurately match the Greek text as opposed to the more traditional Latinized spellings which are dominant in Evelyn-White's translation. I have also changed UK spellings to US spellings where appropriate, as well as made clarifications in translation (noted with brackets) and have added explanatory footnotes.

³ The epithet probably indicates coquettishness.

and dark Nyx,
and the holy race of all the immortals that are for ever.

And one day they taught Hesiod glorious song
while he was shepherding his lambs under holy Helikon,
and this word first the goddesses said to me
²⁵ the Muses of Olumpos,
daughters of Zeus who holds the aegis:

“Shepherds of the wilderness: wretched things of shame, mere bellies.
We know how to speak many false things as though they were true;
but we know, when we will, to utter true things.”

So said the ready-voiced daughters of great Zeus,
³⁰ and they plucked and gave me a [staff],
a shoot of sturdy laurel, a marvelous thing,
and breathed into me a divine voice to celebrate things that shall be
and things there were aforetime.
They bade me sing of the race of the blessed gods that are [forever],
but ever to sing of themselves both first and last.
³⁵ But why all this about oak or stone?⁴

Come thou, let us begin with the Muses
who gladden the great spirit of their father Zeus in Olumpos with their songs,
telling of things that are and that shall be
and that were aforetime with consenting voice.
Unwearying flows the sweet sound from their lips,
⁴⁰ and the house of their father Zeus the loud-thunderer
is glad at the lily-like voice of the goddesses as it spread[s] abroad,
and the peaks of snowy Olumpos resound,
[along with] the homes of the immortals.
And they, uttering their [undying] voice,
celebrate in song first of all the reverend race of the gods from the beginning:
⁴⁵ those whom Gaia (*Earth*) and wide Ouranos (*Heaven*) begot,
and the gods sprung of these, givers of good things.

Then, next, the goddesses sing of Zeus, the father of gods and men,
as they begin and end their strain,
how much he is the most excellent among the gods and supreme in power.
⁵⁰ And again, they chant the race of men and strong giants,
and gladden the heart of Zeus within Olumpos,
the Olympian Muses, daughters of Zeus the aegis-holder



⁴ A proverbial saying meaning, “*why expound on irrelevant topics?*”

INVOCATION:

Hail, children of Zeus! Grant lovely song.
¹⁰⁵ Celebrate the holy race of the deathless gods who are for ever,
 those that were born of Gaia and starry Ouranos
 and gloomy Nyx,
 and them that briny Pontos did rear.

Tell how at the first gods and earth came to be,
 and rivers, and the boundless sea with its raging swell,
¹¹⁰ and the gleaming stars, and the wide heaven above,
 and the gods who were born of them,
 givers of good things.

And tell how they divided their wealth,
 and how they shared their honors amongst them,
 and also how at the first they took many-folded Olumpos.
 These things declare to me from the beginning,
 ye Muses who dwell in the house of Olumpos,
¹¹⁵ and tell me which of them first came to be.

THE BEGINNING:

Birth of the Titans –

[Truly] first Xaos (*Chaos*) came to be,
 but next wide-bosomed Gaia (*Earth*),
 the ever-sure foundations of all the deathless ones
 who hold the peaks of snowy Olumpos,⁵
 and dim Tartaros in the depth of the wide-pathed Gaia,
¹²⁰ and Eros (*Love*), fairest among the deathless gods,
 who unnerves the limbs and overcomes the mind and wise counsels
 of all gods and all men within them.

From Xaos came forth Erebos, [the shadow, and dark Nyx (*Night*)];
 but of Nyx were born Aether (*Bright Sky*)⁶ and Hemera (*Day*),
¹²⁵ whom she conceived and bore from union in love with Erebos.
 And Gaia first bore starry Ouranos (*Heaven*),
 equal to herself, to cover her on every side,

⁵ Earth, in the cosmology of Hesiod, is a disk surrounded by the river Okeanos and floating upon a waste of waters. It is called the foundation of all (the qualification “the deathless ones...” etc. is an interpolation), because not only trees, men, and animals, but even the hills and seas (cf. lines 129, 131) are supported by it.

⁶ Aether is the bright, untainted upper atmosphere, as distinguished from Aer, the lower atmosphere of the earth.

and to be an ever-sure abiding-place for the blessed gods.
 And she brought forth long Hills,
 graceful haunts of the goddess-Nymphs
¹³⁰ who dwell amongst the glens of the hills.
 She bore also the fruitless deep with his raging swell, Pontos (*Sea*),
 without sweet union of love.

But afterwards she lay with Ouranos and bore deep-swirling Okeanos (*Ocean*),
 Koios and Krios and Hyperion and Iapetos,
¹³⁵ Theia and Rhea, Themis and Mnemosyne and gold-crowned Phoebe
 and lovely Tethys.
 After them was born Kronos (*Time*) the wily,
 youngest and most terrible of her children,
 and he hated his lusty sire.

And again, she bore the Kyklopes (*Cyclopes*), overbearing in spirit,
¹⁴⁰ Brontes (*Thunder*), and Steropes (*Lightening*) and stubborn-hearted Arges (*Brightner*),
 who gave Zeus the thunder and made the thunderbolt.
 In all else they were like the gods,
 but one eye only was set in the midst of their fore-heads.
 And they were surnamed Kyklopes (*Orb-eyed*)
¹⁴⁵ because one orbed eye was set in their foreheads.
 Strength and might and craft were in their works.

And again, three other sons were born of Gaia and Ouranos,
 great and [strong] beyond telling,
 Kottos (*Striker*) and Briareos (*Vigorous*) and Gy[g]es (*Big-Limbed*), presumptuous children.
¹⁵⁰ From their shoulders sprang one hundred arms,
 not to be approached,
 and each had fifty heads upon his shoulders on their strong limbs,
 and irresistible was the stubborn strength that was in their great forms.
 For of all the children that were born of Gaia and Ouranos,
¹⁵⁵ these were the most terrible,
 and they were hated by their own father from the first.

The Crimes of Ouranos -

And he (Ouranos) used to hide them all away in a secret place of Gaia
 as soon as each was born,
 and would not suffer them to come up into the light.
 And Ouranos rejoiced in his evil doing.

¹⁶⁰ But vast Gaia groaned within,
 being [pained],
 and she made the element of grey flint
 and shaped a great sickle,

and told her plan to her dear sons.
 And she spoke, cheering them,
 while she was vexed in her dear heart:

"My children, [be]gotten of a sinful father,
 if you will obey me,
¹⁶⁵ we should punish the vile outrage of your father;
 for he first thought of doing shameful things."

So she said; but fear seized them all,
 and none of them uttered a word.
 But great Kronos, the wily,
 took courage and answered his dear mother:

¹⁷⁰ "Mother, I will undertake to do this deed,
 for I reverence not our father of evil name,
 for he first thought of doing shameful things."

So he said, and vast Gaia rejoiced greatly in spirit,
 and set and hid him in an ambush,
¹⁷⁵ and put in his hands a jagged sickle,
 and revealed to him the whole plot.

And Ouranos came,
 bringing on night and longing for love,
 and he lay about Gaia spreading himself full upon her.⁷
 Then the son from his ambush
 stretched forth his left hand
¹⁸⁰ and in his right took the great long sickle with jagged teeth,
 and swiftly lopped off his own father's members
 and cast them away to fall behind him.
 And not vainly did they fall from his hand;
 for all the bloody drops that gushed forth Gaia received,
 and as the seasons moved round
¹⁸⁵ she bore the strong Erinyes (*The Furies*)
 and the great Giants with gleaming armor,
 holding long spears in their hands,
 and the Nymphs whom they call Meliae⁸
 all over the boundless earth.

And so soon as he had cut off the members with flint
 and cast them from the land into the surging sea,
¹⁹⁰ they were swept away over the main a long time.

⁷ The myth accounts for the separation of Ouranos and Earth. In Egyptian cosmology Nut (*the Sky*) is thrust and held apart from her brother Geb (*the Earth*) by their father Shu, who corresponds to the Greek Atlas.

⁸ Nymphs of the ash-trees, as Dryads are nymphs of the oak-trees. Cp. note on [Works and Hemeras](#), l. 145.



The Crimes of Kronos –

But Rheia was subject in love to Kronos
and bore splendid children,
Hestia,⁹ Demeter, and gold-shod Hera
⁴⁵⁵ and strong Hades, pitiless in heart,
who dwells under the earth,
and the loud-crashing Earth-Shaker,
and wise Zeus, father of gods and men,
by whose thunder the wide earth is shaken.

These great Kronos swallowed as each came forth from the womb
⁴⁶⁰ to his mother's knees with this intent,
that no other of the proud sons of Ouranos
should hold the kingly office amongst the deathless gods.
For he learned from Gaia and starry Ouranos
that he was destined to be overcome by his own son,
⁴⁶⁵ strong though he was,
through the contriving of great Zeus.¹⁰

Therefore he kept no blind outlook,
but watched and swallowed down his children:
and unceasing grief seized Rheia. But when
she was about to bear Zeus,
the father of gods and men,
then she besought her own dear parents,
⁴⁷⁰ Gaia and starry Ouranos,
to devise some plan with her
that the birth of her dear child might be concealed,
and that retribution might overtake great,
crafty Kronos for his own father
and also for the children whom he had swallowed down.
And they readily heard and obeyed their dear daughter,
⁴⁷⁵ and told her all that was destined to happen
touching Kronos the king and his stout-hearted son.

⁹ The goddess of the hearth (the Roman "Vesta"), and so of the house. Cp. *Homeric Hymns* v.22 ff.; xxxix.1 ff.

¹⁰ The variant reading "of his father" (sc. Ouranos) rests on inferior MS. authority and is probably an alteration due to the difficulty stated by a Scholiast: "How could Zeus, being not yet begotten, plot against his father?" The phrase is, however, part of the prophecy. The whole line may well be spurious, and is rejected by Heyne, Wolf, Gaisford and Guyet.

So they sent her to Lyktos,
 to the rich land of Krete,
 when she was ready to bear great Zeus,
 the youngest of her children.
⁴⁸⁰ Him did vast Gaia receive from Rheia in wide Krete
 to nourish and to bring up.
 [There from] came Gaia
 carrying him swiftly through the black night to Lyktus first,
 and took him in her arms
 and hid him in a remote cave beneath the secret places
 of the holy earth on thick-wooded Mount Aigaion;
 but to the mightily ruling son of Ouranos,
 the earlier king of the gods,
⁴⁸⁵ she gave a great stone wrapped in swaddling clothes.
 Then he took it in his hands and thrust it down into his belly:
 (the) wretch!
 He knew not in his heart that in place of the stone his son was left behind,
 unconquered and untroubled,
⁴⁹⁰ and that he was soon to overcome him by force
 and might and drive him from his honors,
 himself to reign over the deathless gods.

After that,
 the strength and glorious limbs of the prince increased quickly,
 and as the years rolled on,
⁴⁹⁵ great Kronos the wily was beguiled by the deep suggestions of Gaia,
 and brought up again his offspring,
 vanquished by the arts and might of his own son,
 and he vomited up first the stone which he had swallowed last.
 And Zeus set it fast in the wide-pathed earth
 at goodly Pytho under the glens of Parnassos,
⁵⁰⁰ to be a sign thenceforth and a marvel to mortal men.¹¹

And he set free from their deadly bonds
 the brothers of his father,
 sons of Ouranos whom his father in his foolishness had bound.
 And they remembered to be grateful to him for his kindness,
 and gave him thunder
 and the glowing thunderbolt and lightening:
⁵⁰⁵ for before that, huge Gaia had hidden these.
 In them he trusts and rules over mortals and immortals.

¹¹ Pausanias (x. 24.6) saw near the tomb of Neoptolemus "a stone of no great size", which the Delphians anointed every day with oil, and which he says was supposed to be the stone given to Kronos.

The Birth and Crimes of Prometheus –

Now Iapetos (*the Piercer*) took to wife the neat-ankled maid Klymene (*Asia*),
daughter of Okeanos,
and went up with her into one bed.

⁵¹⁰ And she bore him a stout-hearted son: Atlas.

Also she bore very glorious Menoetios
and clever Prometheus,
full of various wiles,
and scatter-brained Epimetheus
who from the first was a mischief to men who eat bread;
for it was he who first took of Zeus the woman,
the maiden whom he had formed.

But Menoetius was outrageous,

⁵¹⁵ and far-seeing Zeus struck him with a lurid thunderbolt
and sent him down to Erebos
because of his mad presumption and exceeding pride.

And Atlas through hard constraint
upholds the wide heaven with unwearying head and arms,
standing at the borders of the earth before the clear-voiced Hesperides.

⁵²⁰ For this lot wise Zeus assigned to him.

And ready-witted Prometheus he bound with inextricable bonds,
cruel chains,

and drove a shaft through his middle,
and set on him a long-winged eagle,
which used to eat his immortal liver.

⁵²⁵ But by night the liver grew as much again
everyway as the long-winged bird devoured in the whole day.

That bird Heracles,
the valiant son of shapely-ankled Alkmene, slew.

And [he] delivered the son of Iapetos from the cruel plague,
and released him from his affliction

not without the will of Olympian Zeus who reigns on high,

⁵³⁰ [but] that the glory of Heracles, the Theban-born,
might be yet greater than it was before over the plenteous earth.

This, then, he [thought],
and honored his famous son.

Though he was angry,
he ceased from the wrath which he [felt] before
because Prometheus matched himself in wit
with the almighty son of Kronos.

⁵³⁵ For when the gods and mortal men had a dispute at Mekone,
even then Prometheus was forward to cut up a great ox

and set portions before them, trying to fool the mind of Zeus.

Before the rest he set flesh
and inner parts thick with fat upon the hide,
covering them with an ox paunch;
⁵⁴⁰ but for Zeus he put the white bones dressed up with cunning art
and covered with shining fat.

Then the father of men and of gods said to him:

"Son of Iapetos, most glorious of all lords,
good sir.
How unfairly you have divided the portions!"

⁵⁴⁵ So said Zeus whose wisdom is everlasting,
rebuking him.
But wily Prometheus answered him,
smiling softly and not forgetting his cunning trick:

"Zeus, most glorious and greatest of the [everlasting] gods,
take which ever of these portions your heart within you bids."

⁵⁵⁰ So he said, thinking trickery.
But Zeus, whose wisdom is everlasting,
saw and failed not to perceive the trick,
and in his heart he thought mischief against mortal men
which also was to be fulfilled.
With both hands he took up the white fat
and was angry at heart,
and wrath came to his spirit
⁵⁵⁵ when he saw the white ox-bones craftily tricked out.

[It is] because of this
the tribes of men upon earth
burn white bones to the deathless gods upon fragrant altars.
But Zeus who drives the clouds was greatly vexed
and said to him:

"Son of Iapetos, clever above all!
⁵⁶⁰ So, sir, you have not yet forgotten your cunning arts!"

So [spoke] Zeus in anger,
whose wisdom is everlasting.
And from that time he was always mindful of the trick,
and would not give the power of unwearying fire

to the Melian¹² race of mortal men who live on the earth.

⁵⁶⁵ But the noble son of Iapetos outwitted him
and stole the far-seen gleam of unwearying fire in a hollow fennel stalk.
And Zeus who thunders on high was stung in spirit,
and his dear heart was angered when he saw amongst men the far-seen ray of fire.

The Birth of Pandora (the completely gifted one) -

⁵⁷⁰ Forthwith he (Zeus) made an evil thing for men
as the price of fire.
For the very famous Limping God (*Hephaestus*)
formed of earth the likeness of a shy maiden
as the son of Kronos willed.
And the goddess, bright-eyed Athena,
girded and clothed her with silvery raiment,
⁵⁷⁵ and down from her head she spread with her hands a brodered veil,
a wonder to see.
And she, Pallas Athena, put about her head lovely garlands,
flowers of new-grown herbs.
Also she put upon her head a crown of gold
which the very famous Limping God made himself
⁵⁸⁰ and worked with his own hands as a favor to Zeus his father.
On it was much curious work, wonderful to see;
for of the many creatures which the land and sea rear up,
he put most upon it, wonderful things,
like living beings with voices:
and great beauty shone out from it.

⁵⁸⁵ But when he had made the beautiful evil to be the price for the blessing,
he brought her out,
delighting in the finery which the bright-eyed daughter of a mighty father had given her,
to the place where the other gods and men were.
And wonder took hold of the deathless gods and mortal men
when they saw that which was sheer guile,
not to be withstood by men.

⁵⁹⁰ For from her is the race of women and female kind:
of her is the deadly race and tribe of women
who live amongst mortal men to their great trouble,
no helpmeets in hateful poverty,
but only in wealth.

⁵⁹⁵ And as in thatched hives bees feed the drones

¹² As Scholiast explains: "Either because they (men) sprang from the Melian nymphs (cp. l. 187); or because, when they were born (?), they cast themselves under the ash-trees, that is, the trees." The reference may be to the origin of men from ash-trees: cp. *Works and Hemeras*, l. 145 and note.

whose nature is to do mischief by day
 and throughout the day until the sun goes down
 the bees are busy and lay the white combs,
 while the drones stay at home in the covered skeps
 and reap the toil of others into their own bellies
⁶⁰⁰ even so Zeus who thunders on high made women
 to be an evil to mortal men,
 with a nature to do evil.

And he gave them a second evil
 to be the price for the good they had:
 whoever avoids marriage and the sorrows that women cause,
 and will not wed,
 reaches deadly old age without anyone to tend his years,
⁶⁰⁵ and though he at least has no lack of livelihood while he lives,
 yet, when he is dead,
 his kinsfolk divide his possessions amongst them.
 And as for the man who chooses the lot of marriage
 and takes a good wife suited to his mind,
 evil continually contends with good;
⁶¹⁰ for whoever happens to have mischievous children,
 lives always with unceasing grief in his spirit and heart within him;
 and this evil cannot be healed.
 So it is not possible to deceive or go beyond the will of Zeus;
 for not even the son of Iapetos,
 kindly Prometheus,
⁶¹⁵ escaped his heavy anger, but of necessity strong bands confined him,
 although he knew many a wile.



THE TITANOMACHY:

But when first their father was vexed in his heart
 with Briareus and Kottus and Gyges,
 he bound them in cruel bonds,
 because he was jealous of their exceeding manhood
 and comeliness and great size.
⁶²⁰ And he made them live beneath the wide-pathed earth,
 where they were afflicted,
 being set to dwell under the ground,
 at the end of the earth, at its great borders,
 in bitter anguish for a long time and with great grief at heart.
 But the son of Kronos and the other deathless gods
⁶²⁵ whom rich-haired Rhea bore from union with Kronos,
 brought them up again to the light at Gaia's advising.

For she herself recounted all things to the gods fully,
 how that with these they would gain victory
 and a glorious cause to vaunt themselves.

The Titan gods
 and as many as sprang from Kronos,
⁶³⁰ had long been fighting together in stubborn war.
 With heart-grieving toil,
 the lordly Titans [fought] from high Othyrs.
 But the gods, givers of good,
 whom rich-haired Rheia bore in union with Kronos,
 [fought] from Olumpos.
⁶³⁵ So they, with bitter wrath,
 were fighting continually with one another
 at that time for ten full years,
 and the hard strife had no close or end for either side,
 and the issue of the war hung evenly balanced.

But when he had provided those three with all things fitting,
⁶⁴⁰ nectar and ambrosia which the gods themselves eat,
 and when their proud spirit revived within them all
 after they had fed on nectar and delicious ambrosia,
 then it was that the father of men and gods spoke amongst them:

"Hear me, bright children of Gaia and Ouranos,
⁶⁴⁵ that I may say what my heart within me bids.
 A long while now have we,
 who are sprung from Kronos and the Titan gods,
 fought with each other every day to get victory and to prevail.
⁶⁵⁰ [Now] show your great might and unconquerable strength,
 and face the Titans in bitter strife;
 for remember our friendly kindness,
 and from what sufferings you are come back to the light,
 from your cruel bondage under misty gloom through our counsels."

So he said.

And blameless Kottus answered him again:

"Divine one!
⁶⁵⁵ You speak that which we know well.
 Nay, even of ourselves we know that your wisdom
 and understanding is exceeding,
 and that you became a defender of the deathless ones from chill doom.
 And through your devising we are come back again
 from the murky gloom
 and from our merciless bonds,

enjoying what we looked not for,
⁶⁶⁰ oh lord, son of Kronos.
 And so now with fixed purpose and deliberate counsel
 we will aid your power in dreadful strife
 and will fight against the Titans in hard battle."

So he said.
 And the gods, givers of good things,
⁶⁶⁵ applauded when they heard his word,
 and their spirit longed for war even more than before.
 And they all, both male and female,
 stirred up hated battle that day,
 the Titan gods,
 [against] all that were born of Kronos together with those dread,
 mighty ones of overwhelming strength
⁶⁷⁰ whom Zeus brought up to the light
 from Erebus beneath the earth.
 [A] hundred arms sprang from the shoulders of all alike,
 and each had fifty heads growing upon his shoulders upon stout limbs.

These, then, stood against the Titans in grim strife,
⁶⁷⁵ holding huge rocks in their strong hands.
 And on the other part
 the Titans eagerly strengthened their ranks,
 and both sides at one time showed the work of their hands and their might.
 The boundless sea rang terribly around,
 and the earth crashed loudly:
 wide Ouranos was shaken and groaned,
⁶⁸⁰ and high Olumpos reeled from its foundation
 under the charge of the undying gods.
 And a heavy quaking reached dim Tartaros
 [because of] the deep sound of their feet in the fearful onset
 and of their hard missiles.
 So, then, they launched their grievous shafts upon one another,
⁶⁸⁵ and the cry of both armies as they shouted
 reached to starry heaven,
 and they met together with a great battle-cry.

Then Zeus no longer held back his might;
 but [soon] his heart was filled with fury
 and he showed forth all his strength.
 From Ouranos and from Olumpos he came forthwith,
⁶⁹⁰ hurling his lightning.
 The bolt flew thick and fast from his strong hand
 together with thunder and lightning,
 whirling an awesome flame.

The life-giving earth crashed around in burning,
 and the vast wood crackled loud with fire all about.
⁶⁹⁵ All the land seethed,
 and Okeanos's streams and the unfruitful sea.
 The hot vapor lapped round the earthborn Titans.
 Flame unspeakable rose to the bright upper air.
 The flashing glare of the thunder,
 stone and lightning blinded their eyes for all that there were strong.

⁷⁰⁰ Astounding heat seized Xaos.
 To see with eyes and to hear the sound with ears
 it seemed even as if Gaia and wide Ouranos above came together;
 for such a mighty crash would have arisen
 if Gaia were being hurled to ruin,
 and Ouranos from on high were hurling her down;
⁷⁰⁵ so great a crash was there while the gods were meeting together in strife.
 Also the winds brought rumbling earthquake and dust-storm,
 thunder and lightning and the lurid thunderbolt,
 which are the shafts of great Zeus,
 and carried the clangor and the war-cry
 into the midst of the two hosts.
⁷¹⁰ An horrible uproar of terrible strife arose:
 mighty deeds were shown
 and the battle inclined.
 But until then,
 they kept at one another and fought continually in cruel war.



The Last Battle: Zeus and Tiphoeus –

⁸²⁰ But when Zeus had driven the Titans from heaven,
 huge Gaia bore her youngest child Typhoeus
 of the love of Tartaros,
 by the aid of golden Aphrodite.
 Strength was with his hands in all that he did
 and the feet of the strong god were untiring.
⁸²⁵ From his shoulders grew an hundred heads of a snake,
 a fearful dragon,
 with dark, flickering tongues,
 and from under the brows of his eyes in his marvelous heads
 flashed fire,
 and fire burned from his heads as he glared.
 And there were voices in all his dreadful heads
⁸³⁰ which uttered every kind of sound unspeakable;
 for at one time they made sounds such that the gods understood,

but at another,
 the noise of a bull bellowing aloud in proud ungovernable fury;
 and at another, the sound of a lion,
 relentless of heart;
 and at another's, sounds like whelps, wonderful to hear;
 835 and again, at another, he would hiss,
 so that the high mountains re-echoed.

And truly a thing past help would have happened on that day,
 and he would have come to reign over mortals and immortals,
 had not the father of men and gods been quick to perceive it.
 But he thundered hard and mightily,
 840 and the earth around resounded terribly and the wide heaven above,
 and the sea and Okeanos's streams and the nether parts of the earth.
 Great Olumpos reeled beneath the divine feet of the king
 as he arose and earth groaned thereat.
 And through the two of them
 heat took hold on the dark-blue sea,
 845 through the thunder and lightning,
 and through the fire from the monster,
 and the scorching winds and blazing thunderbolt.
 The whole earth seethed,
 and sky and sea and the long waves raged along the beaches round and about,
 at the rush of the deathless gods,
 and there arose an endless shaking.

850 Hades trembled where he rules over the dead below,
 and the Titans under Tartaros who live with Kronos,
 because of the unending clamor and the fearful strife.
 So when Zeus had raised up his might and seized his arms,
 thunder and lightning and lurid thunderbolt,
 855 he leaped from Olumpos and struck him,
 and burned all the marvelous heads of the monster about him.
 But when Zeus had conquered him
 and lashed him with strokes,
 Typhoeus was hurled down, a maimed wreck, so that the huge earth groaned.
 And flame shot forth from the thunder-stricken lord
 860 in the dim rugged glens of the mount,¹³
 when he was smitten.
 A great part of huge earth was scorched by the terrible vapor
 and melted as tin melts when heated by men's art in channeled crucibles;¹⁴
 or as iron,
 which is hardest of all things,

¹³ According to Homer Typhoeus was overwhelmed by Zeus amongst the Arimi in Cilicia. Pindar represents him as buried under Aetna, and Tzetzes reads Aetna in this passage.

¹⁴ The epithet (which means literally "well-bored") seems to refer to the spout of the crucible.

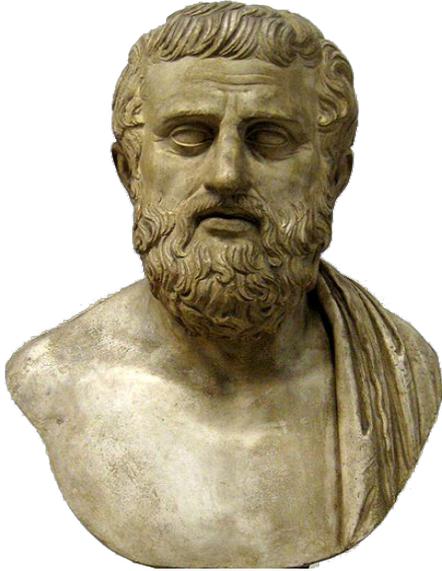
is softened by glowing fire in mountain glens
⁸⁶⁵ and melts in the divine earth through the strength of Hephaestus.¹⁵
 Even so, then,
 the earth melted in the glow of the blazing fire.
 And in the bitterness of his anger
 Zeus cast him into wide Tartaros.

And from Typhoeus come boisterous winds which blow damply,
⁸⁷⁰ except Notos and Boreas and clear Zephyr.
 These are a god-sent kind,
 and a great blessing to men.
 But the others blow fitfully upon the seas.
 Some rush upon the misty sea
⁸⁷⁵ and work great havoc among men with their evil, raging blasts;
 for varying with the season they blow,
 scattering ships and destroying sailors.
 And men who meet these upon the sea have no help
 against the mischief.
 Others again over the boundless, flowering earth
 spoil the fair fields of men who dwell below,
⁸⁸⁰ filling them with dust and cruel uproar.

THE OLYMPIAN RULE:

But when the blessed gods had finished their toil,
 and settled by force their struggle for honors with the Titans,
 they pressed far-seeing Olympian Zeus
 to reign and to rule over them, by Gaia's prompting.
⁸⁸⁵ So he divided their dignities [i.e., titles, responsibilities] amongst them.

¹⁵ The fire god. There is no reference to volcanic action: iron was smelted on Mount Ida; cp. Epigrams of Homer, ix. 2-4.



ANTIGONE¹⁶ BY: SOPHOKLES

Translation by: **R. C. Jebb**

Editing, additions, corrections, and footnotes by Barry F. Vaughan

CAST:

- **ANTIGONE** - daughter of Oidipous
- **ISMENE** - daughter of Oidipous
- **KREON** - King of Thebes
- **EURUDIKE** - his wife
- **HAEMON** - his son
- **TEIRESIAS** - the blind seer
- **CHORUS** - Theban Elders
- **GUARD**

SCENE:

The same as in Oidipous the King; an open space before the royal palace, once that of Oidipous, at Thebes. The back scene represents the front of the palace, with three doors, of which the central and largest is the principal entrance into the house. The time is at daybreak on the morning after the fall of the two brothers, Eteokles and Poluneikes, and the flight of the defeated Argives. ANTIGONE calls ISMENE forth from the palace, in order to speak to her alone.



ANTIGONE

Ismene, sister, mine own dear sister, know you what ill there is, of all bequeathed by Oidipous, that Zeus fulfills not for us twain while we live? Nothing painful is there, nothing fraught with ruin, no shame, no dishonor, that I have not seen in your woes and mine.

And now what new edict is this of which they tell, that our Captain has just published to all Thebes? Know you [anything]? Have you heard? Or is it hidden from you that our friends are threatened with the doom of our foes?

ISMENE

No word of friends, Antigone, gladsome or painful, has come to me, since we two sisters

¹⁶ This text is adapted from the Project Gutenberg's Antigone, by Sophokles, www.gutenberg.org. For the full text visit the Project Gutenberg website. This edited version is intended for academic or personal use and may not be sold or used for profit.

I have changed spellings of proper names to more accurately match the Greek text as opposed to the more traditional Latinized spellings which are dominant in Jebb's translation. I have also changed UK spellings to US spellings where appropriate, as well as made clarifications in translation (noted with brackets) and have added explanatory footnotes.

were bereft of brothers twain, killed in one day by twofold blow; and since in this last night the Argive host has fled, know no more, whether my fortune be brighter, or more grievous.

ANTIGONE

I knew it well, and therefore sought to bring you beyond the gates of the court, that you might hear alone.

ISMENE

What is it? It is plain that you are brooding on some dark tidings.

ANTIGONE

What, has not Kreon destined our brothers, the one to honored burial, the other to unburied shame? Eteokles, they say, with due observance of right and custom, he has laid in the earth, for his honor among the dead below. But the hapless corpse of Poluneikes—as rumor says, it has been published to the town that none shall entomb him or mourn, but leave unwept, un[buried], a welcome store for the birds, as they [see his body], to feast on at will.

Such, it is said, is the edict that the good Kreon has set forth for you and for me, yes, for me, and is coming here to proclaim it clearly to those who know it not; nor counts the matter light, but, whoso[ever] disobeys in [done], his doom is death by stoning before all the [people]. You know it now; and you will soon show whether you are nobly bred, or the base daughter of a noble line.

ISMENE

Poor sister, and if things stand thus, what could I help to do or undo?

ANTIGONE

Consider if you will share the toil and the deed.

ISMENE

In what venture? What can be your meaning?

ANTIGONE

[Will] you aid this hand to lift the dead?

ISMENE

You would bury him, when it is forbidden to [the citizens of] Thebes?

ANTIGONE

I will do my part, and yours, if you will not, to a brother. False to him will I never be found.

ISMENE

Ah, over-bold! When Kreon has forbidden [it]?

ANTIGONE

No, he has no right to keep me from mine own.

ISMENE

Ah me! Think, sister, how our father perished, amid hate and scorn, when sins bared by his own search had moved him to strike both eyes with self-blinding hand; then the mother-wife, two names in one, with twisted noose did [end] her life; and last, our two brothers in one day, each shedding, hapless one, a kinsman's blood, wrought out with mutual hands their common doom. And now we in turn—we two left all alone; think how we shall perish, more miserably than all the rest, if, in defiance of the law, we brave a king's decree or his powers. No, we must remember, first, that we were born women who should not strive with men; [second], that we are ruled [by] the stronger, so that we must obey in these things, and in things yet [more painful]. I, therefore, asking the Spirits Infernal to pardon, seeing that force is put on me herein, will [listen] to our rulers, for it is [unwise] to be [too involved].

ANTIGONE

I will not urge you. No, nor if you yet should have the [desire], would you be welcome as a worker with me. No, be what you will; but I will bury him: [it is good] for me to die in doing that. I shall rest, a loved one with him whom I have loved, sinless in my crime. For I owe a longer allegiance to the dead than to the living: in that world¹⁷ I shall abide forever. [I will not] be guilty of dishonoring laws which the gods have established in honor.

ISMENE

I do them no dishonor; but to defy the State? I have no strength for that!

ANTIGONE

Such be your plea: I, then, will go to heap the earth above the brother whom I love.

ISMENE

Alas, unhappy one! How I fear for you!

ANTIGONE

Fear not for me: guide your own fate aright.

ISMENE

At least, then, disclose this plan to none, but hide it closely, and so, too, will I.

ANTIGONE

Oh, denounce it! You will be far more hateful for your silence, if you proclaim not these things to all.

ISMENE

You have a hot heart for chilling deeds.

ANTIGONE

I know that I please where I [ought] to please.

ISMENE

Yes, *if* you can! But you [intend to do] what you cannot.

¹⁷ Hades, the land of the dead.

ANTIGONE

Why, then, when my strength fails, I shall have done [what I should have done].

ISMENE

A hopeless quest should not be made at all.

ANTIGONE

If thus you speak, you will have hatred from me, and will justly be subject to the lasting hatred of the dead. Leave me, and the folly that is mine alone, to suffer this dread thing; for I shall not suffer [anything] so dreadful as an ignoble death.

ISMENE

Go, then, if you must; and of this be sure, that though your errand is foolish, to your [loved] ones you are truly [loved].

[Exit Antigone on the spectators' left. Ismene retires into the palace by one of the two side-doors. When they have departed, the Chorus of Thebes enters.]

CHORUS

Beam of the sun, fairest light that ever dawned on Thebes of the seven gates, you have shone forth at last, eye of golden day, arisen above Dirke's streams! The warrior of the white shield, who came from Argos in his panoply, has been stirred by you to headlong flight, in swifter career;

LEADER

who set forth against our land by reason of the vexed claims of Poluneikes; and, like shrill-screaming eagle, he flew over into our land, in snow-white pinion sheathed, with an armed throng, and with plumage of helms.

CHORUS

He paused above our dwellings; he ravened around our sevenfold [gates] with spears [thirsty] for blood; but he went hence, or ever his jaws were glutted with our gore, or the Fire-god's pine-fed flame had seized our crown of towers. So fierce was the noise of battle raised behind him, a thing too hard for him to conquer, as he wrestled with his dragon foe.

LEADER

For Zeus utterly abhors the boasts of a proud tongue; and when he beheld them coming on [like a river], in the haughty pride of clanging gold, he smote with brandished fire one who was now hasting to shout victory at his goal upon our ramparts.

CHORUS

Swung down, he fell on the earth with a crash, torch in hand, he who so lately, in the frenzy of the mad onset, was raging against us with the blasts of his tempestuous hate. But those threats fared not as he hoped; and to other foes the mighty War-god dispensed their several dooms, dealing havoc around, a mighty helper at our need.

LEADER

For seven captains at seven gates, matched against seven, left the tribute of their weapons to Zeus who turns the battle; [all except] those two of cruel fate, who, born of one father and one mother, set against each other their twain conquering spears, and are sharers in a common death.¹⁸

CHORUS

But since Nike [*Victory*] of glorious name has come to us, with joy responsive to the joy of Thebes whose chariots are many, let us enjoy forgetfulness after the late wars, and visit all the temples of the gods with night-long dance and song; and may Bakxos¹⁹ be our leader, whose dancing shakes the land of Thebes.

LEADER

But lo, the king of the land comes [here], Kreon, son of Menoikeus,²⁰ our new ruler by the new fortunes that the gods have given; what counsel is he pondering, that he has proposed this special conference of elders, summoned by his general mandate?

[Enter Kreon, from the central doors of the palace, in the garb of king, with two attendants.]

KREON

Sirs, the vessel of our [City], after being tossed on wild waves, has once more been safely steadied by the gods: and [you], out of all the [people], have been called apart by my summons, because I knew, first of all, how true and constant was your reverence for the royal power of Laios.²¹ [And again], when Oidipous was ruler of our land, and when he had perished, your steadfast loyalty still upheld [his] children. Since, then, his sons have fallen in one day by a twofold doom, each smitten by the other, each stained with a brother's blood, I now possess the throne and all its powers, by nearness of kinship to the dead.

No man can be fully known, in soul and spirit and mind, until he has been seen versed in rule and law-giving. For if any, being supreme guide of the [City], cleaves not to the best

¹⁸ After their father and king of Thebes, Oidipous, blinded himself for his crimes of pride and incest, Poulinekes and Etokles were supposed to rule Thebes in turn. But when Etokles refused to give up the throne as he promised, Poulinekes raised an army from Argos to force his brother to yield. The city of Thebes had seven gates and seven heroes from each side led the attack/defense at each gate. The two brothers faced each other at one of these gates, and in the fighting mortally wounded each other.

¹⁹ Bakxos (Bacchus) is an alternate name for the god Dionusos (Dionysus) who is associated with wine, celebration, and madness.

²⁰ Kreon was the brother of Jocasta and therefore uncle to Antigone, Ismene, Poulinekes, and Etokles. Upon the death of the brothers, Kreon was selected to be ruler of Thebes.

²¹ Laios (Laius) was the king of Thebes. He and his wife, Jocasta, received a message from the Oracle of Delphi warning them never to have a son as he would kill him and marry Jocasta. However, in a drunken stupor, Laios impregnated Jocasta who gave birth to a son. In order to cheat the prophecy they decided to kill the child by exposure (so as not to have blood on their hands). The baby was rescued by a passing shepherd and given to the barren king and queen of Korinth. The boy was raised as the prince of Korinth and would later hear of the prophecy that he was to kill his father and marry his mother. Again trying to cheat Fate, Oidipous ("the pierced one") would flee his "home" only to meet Laios in the country of Thebes. After quarreling, Oidipous slew his real father and traveled on to Thebes where he would later marry Jocasta (his real mother). It was the cursed actions of Laios and Oidipous that set the stage for Sophokles' *Antigone* which continues the story after the death of Oidipous' and Jocasta's sons in their struggle to rule Thebes.

counsels, but, through some fear, keeps his lips locked, I hold, and have ever held, him most base. And if any[one] makes a friend of more account than his fatherland, that man has no place in my regard. For I—Zeus, who sees all things always, be my witness—would not be silent if I saw ruin, instead of safety, coming to the citizens. Nor would I ever deem the country's foe a friend to myself! Remembering this: that our country is the ship that bears us safe, and that only while she prospers in our voyage can we make true friends.

Such are the rules by which I guard this city's greatness. And in accord with them is the edict which I have now published to the [people] touching the sons of Oidipous: Eteokles, who has fallen fighting for our city, in all renown of arms, shall be entombed, and crowned with every rite that follows the noblest dead to their rest. But for his brother, Poluneikes, who came back from exile, and sought to consume utterly with fire the city of his fathers and the shrines of his fathers' gods, sought to taste of kindred blood, and to lead the remnant into slavery touching this man, it has been proclaimed to our people that none shall grace him with [burial] or [lamination], but leave him [uncovered], a corpse for birds and dogs to eat, a ghastly sight of shame.

Such the spirit of my dealing. And never, by deed of mine, shall the wicked stand in honor before the just; but whoso[ever] has good will to Thebes, he shall be honored of me, in his life and in his death.

LEADER

Such is your pleasure, Kreon, son of Menoikeus, touching this city's foe, and its friend; and you have power to take what [action] you will, both for the dead, and for us who live.

KREON

See, then, that you be guardians of the mandate.

LEADER

Lay the burden of this task on some younger man.

KREON

No, watchers of the corpse have been found.

LEADER

What, then, is this further charge that you would give?

KREON

That you side not with the breakers of these commands.

LEADER

No man is so foolish that he is enamored of death.

KREON

In truth, that is the [cost]; yet [profit] has [often] ruined men through their hopes.

[A Guard enters from the spectators' left]

GUARD

My lord, I will not say that I come breathless from speed, or that have plied a nimble foot; for often did my thoughts make me pause, and wheel round in my path, to return. My mind was holding large discourse with me: "Fool, why do you go to your certain doom?"

"Wretch, tarrying again? [But] if Kreon hears this from another, must not you smart for it?"

So debating, I went on my way with lagging steps, and thus a short road was made long. At last, however, it carried the day that I should come here, to you; and, [even if] my tale be [nothing], yet will I tell it; for I come with a good grip on one hope: that I can suffer nothing but what is my fate.

KREON

And what is it that disquiets you thus?

GUARD

I wish to tell you first about myself—I did not do the deed—I did not see the doer, it were not right that I should come to any harm.

KREON

You have a shrewd eye for your [target]; well do you fence yourself round against the blame; clearly you have some strange thing to tell.

GUARD

Yes, truly, [terrible] news makes one pause long.

KREON

Then tell it, will you, and so get you gone?

GUARD

Well, this is it. The corpse; someone has just given it burial, and gone away, after sprinkling thirsty dust on the flesh, with such other rites as piety requires.

KREON

What [did you say]? What living man has dared this deed?

GUARD

I know not; no stroke of pickaxe was seen there, no earth thrown up by mattock²²; the ground was hard and dry, unbroken, without track of wheels; the doer was one who had left no trace. And when the first day-watchman showed it to us, [great fear] fell on all. The dead man was veiled from us; not shut within a tomb, but lightly strewn with dust, as by the hand of one who shunned a curse. And no sign met the eye as though any beast of prey or any dog had come [near] him, or torn him.

Then [accusations] flew fast and loud among us, guard [suspecting] guard; and it would even have come to blows at last, nor was there any to hinder. Every man was the culprit, and no

²² A pick. A tool for breaking through hard soil.

one was convicted, but all [denied] knowledge of the deed. And we were ready to take red-hot iron in our hands, to walk through fire, to make oath by the gods that we had not done the deed, that we were not privy to the planning or the doing.

At last, when all our searching was fruitless, one spoke, who made us all bend our faces on the earth in fear. For we saw not how we could [oppose] him, or escape [punishment] if we obeyed. His counsel was that this deed must be reported to you, and not hidden. And this seemed best [to us all], and the lot doomed [me] to win this prize. So here I stand, [just] as unwelcome as unwilling, well I [know that] no man [welcomes] in the bearer of bad news.

LEADER

O king, my thoughts have long been whispering, can this deed, perchance, be even the work of gods?

KREON

Cease, before your words fill me utterly with wrath, lest you be found at once an old man and foolish! You say what [cannot be true]: that the gods have care for this corpse. Was it for high reward of trusty service that they sought to hide his nakedness? [The very one] who came to burn their pillared shrines and sacred treasures, to burn their land, and scatter its laws to the winds? Or do you [believe] the gods honor the wicked? It cannot be. No! From the first there were certain [people] in the town that muttered against me, chafing at this edict, wagging their heads in secret; and kept not their necks duly under the yoke, like men contented with my sway.

It is by them, well I know, that these have been beguiled and bribed to do this deed! Nothing so evil as money ever grew to be errant among men. [Greed] lays cities low, [it] drives men from their homes, [it] trains and warps honest souls till they set themselves to works of shame; [greed] still teaches [people] to practice villainies, and to know every [impious] deed.

But all the men who wrought this thing for hire have made it sure that, soon or late, they shall pay the price. Now, as Zeus still has my reverence, know this, I tell you on my oath: If you [do not] find the very author of this burial, and produce him before mine eyes, [one Hades] shall not be enough for you until hung up alive you have exposed this outrage. Henceforth you may [steal] with better knowledge [where] [profit] should be won, and learn that it is not well to love gain from every [one]. For you will find that ill-gotten wealth brings more men to ruin than to fame.

GUARD

May I speak? Or shall I just turn and go?

KREON

Know you not that now even your voice [gives] offence?

GUARD

Is [the pain] in the ears, or in the soul?

KREON

And why would you define the seat of my pain?

GUARD

[Because it is the] doer [that] vexes your [soul], but I, [only] yours ears.

KREON

Ah, you are a born babbler, it is well seen.

GUARD

[That may be], but [I was] never the doer of this deed.

KREON

Yes, and more! [You sold] your life for silver.

GUARD

Alas! It is sad, truly, that he who judges should misjudge.

KREON

Let your fancy play with 'judgment' as it will; but, if you show me not the doers of these things, you shall avow that dastardly gains work sorrows.

[Kreon goes into the palace]

GUARD

Well, may he be found! [That] 'twere best. But, be he caught or be he not—fortune must settle that—truly you will not see me here again! Saved, even now, beyond hope and thought, I owe the gods great thanks.

[The Guard goes out on the spectators' left]

CHORUS

Wonders are many, and none is more wonderful than [M]an; the power that crosses the white sea, driven by the stormy south-wind, making a path under surges that threaten to engulf him; and Gia [Earth], the eldest of the gods, the immortal, the unwearied, does he wear, turning the soil with the offspring of horses, as the ploughs go to and fro from year to year.

And the light-hearted race of birds, and the tribes of savage beasts, and the sea-brood of the deep, he snares in the meshes of his woven toils, he leads captive, [M]an excellent in wit. And he masters the beast whose lair is in the wilds, who roams the hills; he tames the horse of shaggy mane, he puts the yoke upon its neck, he tames the tireless mountain bull.

And speech, and wind-swift thought, and all the moods that mold a state, has he taught himself; and how to flee the arrows of the frost, when it is hard lodging under the clear sky, and the arrows of the rushing rain; yea, he has resource for all; without resource he meets nothing that must come: only against Thanatos [Death] shall he call for aid in vain; but from baffling maladies he has devised escapes.

Cunning beyond fancy's dream is the fertile skill which brings him, now to evil, now to good. When he honors the laws of the land, and that justice which he has sworn by the gods to uphold, proudly stands his city: no city has he who, for his rashness, dwells with sin. Never may he share my hearth, never think my thoughts, who does these things!

[Enter the Guard on the spectators' left, leading in Antigone]

LEADER

What portent from the gods is this? My soul is amazed. I know her! How can I deny that yon maiden is Antigone? O hapless, and child of hapless father, of Oidipous! What means this? You brought a prisoner? You, disloyal to the king's laws, and taken in folly?

GUARD

Here she is, the doer of the deed: we caught this girl burying him. But where is Kreon?

[Kreon enters hurriedly from the palace]

LEADER

Lo, he comes forth again from the house, at our need.

KREON

What is it? What has [happened], that makes my coming timely?

GUARD

O king, against nothing should men pledge their word; for the after-thought belies the first intent. I could have vowed that I should not soon be here again, scared by your threats, with which I had just been lashed. But, since the joy that surprises and transcends our hopes is like no other pleasure, I have come! Though, it is in breach of my sworn oath, bringing this maid, who was taken showing grace to the dead. This time there was no casting of lots. No, this luck has fallen to me, and to none else! And now, father, take her yourself, question her, examine her, as you will; but I have a right to free and final [acquittal] of this trouble.

KREON

And your prisoner here? How and [where] have you [captured] her?

GUARD

She was burying the man; [that is all there is to it].

KREON

Do you mean what you say? Do you speak aright?

GUARD

I saw her burying the corpse that you had forbidden to bury. Is that plain and clear?

KREON

And how was she seen? How taken in the act?

GUARD

It happened in this way. When we had come to the place, with those dread menaces of yours upon us, we swept away all the dust that covered the corpse, and [exposed] the dank body well. And then sat us down on the brow of the hill, to windward [side], heedful that the smell from him should not strike us. Every man was wide awake, and kept his neighbor alert with torrents of threats, if anyone should be careless of this task.

So it went, until the sun's bright orb stood in mid-heaven, and the heat began to burn. And then suddenly a whirlwind lifted from the earth [a] storm of dust, a trouble in the sky marring all the leafage of its woods; and the wide air was choked therewith. We closed our eyes, and bore the plague from the gods.

And when, after a long while, this storm had passed, the maid was seen. And she cried aloud with the sharp cry of a bird in its bitterness, even as when, within the empty nest, it sees the bed stripped of its nestlings. So she also, when she saw the corpse bare, lifted up a voice of wailing, and called down curses on the doers of that deed. And straightway she brought thirsty dust in her hands; and from a shapely [vessel] of bronze, held high, with thrice-poured drink-offering she crowned the dead.

We rushed forward when we saw it, and at once [pounced] upon our quarry, who was in no wise dismayed. Then we taxed her with her past and present doings; and she stood not on denial of [anything], [both] to my joy and to my pain. To have escaped from [troubles] one's self is a great joy; but it is painful to bring friends to ill. [No matter], all such things are of less account to me than mine own safety.

KREON

You. You whose face is bent to earth. Do you avow, or disavow, this deed?

ANTIGONE

I avow it; I make no denial.

KREON (to the Guard)

You can take you[rself wherever] you will, free and clear of a grave charge.

[Exit Guard]

(To Antigone) Now, tell me, not in many words, but briefly; knew you that an edict had forbidden this?

ANTIGONE

I knew it; could I help it? It was public.

KREON

And you did indeed dare to transgress that law?

ANTIGONE

Yes; for it was not Zeus that had published that edict; not such are the laws set among men

by the Justice who dwells with the gods below; nor deemed I that your decrees were of such [authority], that a mortal could override *the unwritten and unfailing statutes of heaven*. For *their life is not of today, or yesterday, but from all time*, and no man knows when they were first put forth.

Not through dread of any human pride could I answer to the gods for breaking these. Die I must, I knew that well (how should I not?) even without your edicts. But if I am to die before my time, I count that a gain: for when anyone lives, as I do, compassed about with evils, can such a one find [anything] but gain in death?

So for me to meet this doom is [a] trifling grief; but if I had suffered my mother's son to lie in death an unburied corpse, *that* would have grieved me; for this, I am not grieved [at all]. And if my present deeds are foolish in your sight, it may be that a foolish judge arraigns my folly.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

The maid shows herself [a] passionate child of [a] passionate father, and knows not how to bend before troubles.

KREON

Yet I would have you know that over-stubborn spirits are most often humbled; it is the stiffest iron, baked to hardness in the fire, that you shall often see snapped and [broken]; and I have known horses that show temper brought to order by a little curb; there is no room for pride when you are your neighbor's slave. This girl was already versed in insolence when she transgressed the laws that had been set forth; and, that done, lo, a second insult, to [enlarge] this, and exult in her deed.

Now [truly] I am no man—she is the man—if this victory shall rest with her, and bring no penalty. No! Be she [my] sister's child, or nearer to me in blood than any that worships Zeus at the altar of our house, she and her kinsfolk shall not avoid a doom most dire; for indeed I charge that other [one] with a like share in the plotting of this burial.

Summon her, for I saw her just now within, raving, and not mistress of her wits. So [often], before the deed, the mind stands self-convicted in its treason, when folks are plotting mischief in the dark. But [truly], this too is hateful, when one who has been caught in wickedness then seeks to make the crime a glory.

ANTIGONE

Would you do more than take and slay me?

KREON

No more, indeed; having that, I have all.

ANTIGONE

Why then do you delay? In your [words] there is [nothing] that pleases me, never may there be! And so my words must needs be unpleasing to you. And yet, for glory, [where] could I have been nobler than by giving burial to mine own brother? All here would own that they

thought it [good], were not their lips sealed by fear. But royalty, blest in so much besides, has the power to do and say what it will.

KREON

You differ from all these Thebans in that view.

ANTIGONE

These also share it; but they curb their tongues for you.

KREON

And are you not ashamed to act apart from them?

ANTIGONE

No; there is nothing shameful in piety to a brother.

KREON

Was it not a brother, too, that died in the opposite cause?

ANTIGONE

Brother by the same mother and the same father.

KREON

Why, then, do you render a grace that is impious in his sight?

ANTIGONE

The dead man will not say that he so deems it.

KREON

Yes, if you make him but equal in honor with the wicked.

ANTIGONE

It was his brother, not his slave, that perished.

KREON

Wasting this land; while he fell as its champion.

ANTIGONE

Nevertheless, *Hades desires these rites*.

KREON

But the good [do not deserve] a like portion with the evil.

ANTIGONE

Who knows but this seems blameless in the world below?

KREON

A foe is never a friend, not even in death.

ANTIGONE

It is not my nature to join in hating, but in loving.

KREON

Pass, then, to the world of the dead, and, if you must love, love them. While I live, no woman shall rule me.

[Enter Ismene from the house, led in by two attendants.]

CHORUS

Look there, Ismene comes forth, shedding such tears as fond sisters weep; a cloud upon her brow casts its shadow over her darkly-flushing face, and breaks in rain on her fair cheek.

KREON

And you, who, lurking like a viper in my house, [were] secretly draining my life-blood, while I knew not that I was nurturing two pests, to rise against my throne. Come, tell me now, will you also confess your part in this burial, or will you forswear all knowledge of it?

ISMENE

I have done the deed, if she allows my claim, and share the burden of the charge.

ANTIGONE

No! Justice will not suffer you to do that: you did not consent to the deed, nor did I give you part in it.

ISMENE

But, now that ills beset you, I am not ashamed to sail the sea of trouble at your side.

ANTIGONE

Whose was the deed, Hades and the dead are witnesses: a friend in words is not the friend that I love.

ISMENE

No, sister, reject me not, but let me die with you, and duly honor the dead.

ANTIGONE

[You will not share] my death, nor claim deeds to which you have not put your hand: my death will suffice.

ISMENE

And what life is dear to me, bereft of you?

ANTIGONE

Ask Kreon; all your care is for him.

ISMENE

Why vex me thus, when it avails you [nothing]?

ANTIGONE

Indeed, if I mock, it is with pain that I mock you.

ISMENE

Tell me, how can I serve you, even now?

ANTIGONE

Save yourself: I grudge not your escape.

ISMENE

Ah, woe is me! And shall I have no share in your fate?

ANTIGONE

[Your] choice was to live; mine, to die.

ISMENE

At least your choice was not made without my protest.

ANTIGONE

One world approved your wisdom; another, mine.

ISMENE

Howbeit, the offence is the same for both of us.

ANTIGONE

Be of good cheer; you live. But my life has long been given to death, that so I might serve the dead.

KREON

Lo, one of these maidens has newly shown herself foolish, as the other has been since her life began.

ISMENE

Yes, O king, such reason as nature may have given abides not with the unfortunate, but goes astray.

KREON

Yours did, when you chose vile deeds with the vile.

ISMENE

What life could I endure, without her presence?

KREON

No, speak not of her presence; she lives no more.

ISMENE

But will you slay the betrothed of yours own son?

KREON

No, there are other fields for him to plough.

ISMENE

But there can never be such love as bound him to her.

KREON

I like not an evil wife for my son.

ANTIGONE

Haemon, beloved! How your father wrongs you!

KREON

Enough, enough of you and of your marriage!

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

[Will] you indeed rob your son of this maiden?

KREON

It is Death that shall stay these bridals for me.

LEADER

It is determined, it seems, that she shall die.

KREON

Determined, yes, for you and for me.

(To the two attendants) No more delay servants, take them within! Henceforth they must be women, and not range at large; for [truly] even the bold seek to fly, when they see [Thanatos] now closing on their life.

[Exit attendants, guarding Antigone and Ismene, Kreon remains]

CHORUS

Blest are they whose days have not tasted of evil. For when a house has once been shaken from heaven, there the curse fails nevermore, passing from life to life of the race; even as, when the surge is driven over the darkness of the deep by the fierce breath of Thracian sea-winds, it rolls up the black sand from the depths, and there is sullen roar from wind-vexed headlands that front the blows of the storm.

I see that from olden time the sorrows in the house of the Labdakos²³ are heaped upon the sorrows of the dead; and generation is not freed by generation, but some god strikes them down, and the race has no deliverance.

For now that hope of which the light had been spread above the last root of the house of Oidipous—that hope, in turn, is brought low—by the blood-stained dust due to the gods infernal, and by folly in speech, and frenzy at the heart.

²³ Grandson of Kadmos the mythical founder of the polis of Thebes.

[Your] power, O Zeus, what human trespass can limit? That power which neither Hupnos [Sleep], the all-ensnaring, nor the untiring months of the gods can master; but you, a ruler to whom time brings not old age, dwell in the dazzling splendor of Olumpus.

And through the future, near and far, as through the past, shall this law hold good: Nothing that is vast enters into the life of mortals without a curse.

For that hope whose wanderings are so wide is to many men a comfort, but to many a false lure of giddy desires; and the disappointment comes on one who knoweth [nothing] till he burn his foot against the hot fire.

For with wisdom has some one given forth the famous saying, that evil seems good, soon or late, to him whose mind the god draws to mischief; and but for the brief space does he fare free of woe.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

But lo, Haemon, the last of your sons. Comes he grieving for the doom of his promised bride, Antigone, and bitter for the baffled hope of his marriage?

[Enter Haemon]

KREON

We shall know soon, better than seers could tell us. My son, hearing the fixed doom of your betrothed, are you come in rage against your father? Or have I your good will, act how I may?

HAEMON

Father, I am yours; and you, in your wisdom, trace for me rules which I shall follow. No marriage shall be deemed by me a greater gain than your good guidance.

KREON

Yes, this, my son, should be your heart's fixed law, *in all things to obey your father's will*. It is for this that men pray to see dutiful children grow up around them in their homes, that such may requite their father's foe with evil, and honor, as their father does, his friend. But he who begets unprofitable children, what shall we say that he has sown, but troubles for himself, and much triumph for his foes? Then do not you, my son, at pleasure's beck, dethrone your reason for a woman's sake; knowing that this is a joy that soon grows cold in clasping arms, an evil woman to share your bed and your home. For what wound could strike deeper than a false friend? No, with loathing, and as if she were yours enemy, let this girl go to find a husband in the house of Hades. For since I have taken her, alone of all the city, in open disobedience, I will not make myself a liar to my people, I will slay her.

So let her appeal as she will to the majesty of kindred blood. If I am to nurture mine own kindred in naughtiness, needs must I bear with it in aliens. He who does his duty in his own household will be found righteous in the [City] also. But if any one transgresses, and does violence to the laws, or thinks to dictate to his rulers, such a one can win no praise from me. No, whomsoever the city may appoint, that man must be obeyed, in little things and great, in

just things and unjust; and I should feel sure that one who thus obeys would be a good ruler no less than a good subject, and in the storm of spears would stand his ground where he was set, loyal and dauntless at his comrade's side.

But *disobedience is the worst of evils*. This it is that ruins cities; this makes homes desolate; by this, the ranks of allies are broken into head-long rout; but, of the lives whose course is fair, the greater part owes safety to obedience. Therefore, we must support the cause of order, and in no wise suffer a woman to [beat] us. *Better to fall from power, if we must, by a man's hand; then we should not be called weaker than a woman.*

LEADER

To us, unless our years have stolen our wit, you seem to say wisely what you say.

HAEMON

Father, the gods implant reason in [humans], the highest of all things that we call our own. Not mine the skill—far from me be the quest!—to say wherein you speak not aright; and yet another man, too, might have some useful thought. At least, it is my natural office to watch, on your behalf, all that men say, or do, or find to blame. For the dread of your frown forbids the citizen to speak such words as would offend yours ear; but can hear these murmurs in the dark, these moaning's of the city for this maiden; "no woman," they say, "ever merited her doom less, none ever was to die so shamefully for deeds so glorious as hers; who, when her own brother had fallen in bloody strife, would not leave him unburied, to be devoured by carrion dogs, or by any bird: deserves not she the meed of golden honor?"

Such is the darkling rumor that spreads in secret. For me, my father, no treasure is so precious as your welfare. What, indeed, is a nobler ornament for children than a prospering father's fair fame, or for father than [a] son's? Wear not, then, one mood only in yourself; think not that your word, and yours alone, must be right. For if any man thinks that he alone is wise, that in speech, or in mind, he has no peer, such a soul, when laid open, is ever found empty.

No, though a man be wise, it is no shame for him to learn many things, and to bend in season. Look you, beside the wintry torrent's course, how the trees that yield to it save every twig, while the stiff-necked perish root and branch? And even thus he who keeps the sheet of his sail taut, and never slackens it, upsets his boat, and finishes his voyage with keel uppermost.

No, forego your wrath; permit yourself to change. For if I, a younger man, may offer my thought, it were far best, I [believe], that men should be all-wise by nature; but, otherwise—and [often] the scale inclines not so—it is good also to learn from those who speak aright.

LEADER

Father, it is [good] that you should profit by his words, if he speaks [anything] in season, and you, Haemon, by your father's; for on both parts there has been wise speech.

KREON

Men of my age are we indeed to be schooled, then, by men of his?

HAEMON

In nothing that is not right; but if I am young, you should look to my merits, not to my years.

KREON

Is it a merit to honor the unruly?

HAEMON

I could wish no one to show respect for evil-doers.

KREON

Then is not she tainted with that malady?

HAEMON

Our Theban [people], with one voice, deny it.

KREON

Shall Thebes prescribe to me how I must rule?

HAEMON

See, there you have spoken like a youth indeed.

KREON

Am I to rule this land by other judgment than mine own?

HAEMON

That is no city which belongs to one man.

KREON

Is not the city held to be the ruler's?

HAEMON

You would make a good monarch of a desert.

KREON

This boy, it seems, is the woman's champion.

HAEMON

If you are a woman; indeed, my care is for *you*.

KREON

Shameless, at open feud with your father!

HAEMON

No, I see you offending against justice.

KREON

Do I offend, when I respect mine own prerogatives?

HAEMON

You do not respect them, when you trample on the gods' honors,

KREON

O dastard nature, yielding place to woman!

HAEMON

You will never find me yield to baseness.

KREON

All your words, at least, plead for that girl.

HAEMON

And for you, and for me, and for the gods below.

KREON

You can never marry her, on this side the grave.

HAEMON

Then she must die, and in death destroy another.

KREON

How! Does your boldness run to open threats?

HAEMON

What threat is it, to combat vain [resolutions]?

KREON

You shall rue your witless teaching of wisdom.

HAEMON

Were you not my father, I would have called you unwise.

KREON

You woman's slave, use not wheedling speech with me.

HAEMON

You would speak, and then hear no reply?

KREON

Say you so? Now, by the heaven above us, be sure of it, you shall smart for taunting me in this opprobrious strain. Bring forth that hated thing, that she may die forthwith in his presence—before his eyes—at her bridegroom's side!

HAEMON

No, not at my side—never think it—shall she perish; nor shall you ever set eyes more upon my face: rave, then, with such friends as can endure you.

[Exit Haemon]

LEADER

The man is gone, O king, in angry haste; a youthful mind, when stung, is fierce.

KREON

Let him do, or dream, more than man, good speed to him! But he shall not save these two girls from their doom.

LEADER

Do you indeed intend to slay both?

KREON

Not her whose hands are pure, you say well.

LEADER

And by what doom mean you to slay the other?

KREON

I will take her where the path is loneliest, and hide her, living, in rocky vault, with so much food set forth as piety prescribes, that the city may avoid a public stain. And there, praying to Hades, the only god whom she worships, perchance she will obtain release from death; or else will learn, at last, though late, that it is lost labor to revere the dead.

[Exit Kreon, into the palace]

CHORUS

Love, unconquered in the fight, Love, who make havoc of wealth, who keep your vigil on the soft cheek of a maiden; you roam over the sea, and among the homes of dwellers in the wilds; no immortal can escape you, nor any among men whose life is for a day; and he to whom you have come is mad.

The just themselves have their minds warped by you to wrong, for their ruin: it is you that have stirred up this present strife of kinsmen; victorious is the love-kindling light from the eyes of the fair bride; it is a power enthroned in sway beside the eternal laws; for there the goddess Aphrodite is working her unconquerable will.

[Antigone is led out of the palace by two of Kreon's attendants who will take her to her tomb]

But now I also am carried beyond the bounds of loyalty, and can no more keep back the streaming tears, when I see Antigone thus passing to the bridal chamber where all are laid to rest.

[The following lines between Antigone and the Chorus are chanted responsively.]

ANTIGONE

See me, citizens of my fatherland, setting forth on my last way, looking my last on the sunlight that is for me no more; no, Hades who gives sleep to all leads me living to Axeron's

shore;²⁴ who have had no portion in the chant that brings the bride, nor has any song been mine for the crowning of bridals; whom the lord of the Dark Lake shall wed.

CHORUS

Glorious, therefore, and with praise, you depart to that deep place of the dead: wasting sickness has not smitten you; you have not found the wages of the sword; no, mistress of yours own fate, and still alive, you shall pass to Hades, as no other of mortal kind has passed.

ANTIGONE

I have heard in other days how dread a doom befell our Phrygian guest, the daughter of Tantalos,²⁵ on the Sipylian heights; I how, like clinging ivy, the growth of stone subdued her; and the rains fail not, as men tell, from her wasting form, nor fails the snow, while beneath her weeping lids the tears bedew her bosom; and most like to hers is the fate that brings me to my rest.

CHORUS

Yet she was a goddess, you know, and born of gods; we are mortals, and of mortal race. But it is great renown for a woman who has perished that she should have shared the doom of the godlike, in her life, and afterward in death.

ANTIGONE

Ah, I am mocked! In the name of our fathers' gods, can you not wait till I am gone, must you taunt me to my face, O my city, and you, her wealthy sons? Ah, fount of Dirke,²⁶ and you holy ground of Thebes whose chariots are many; you, at least, will bear me witness, in what fort, unwept of friends, and by what laws I pass to the rock-closed prison of my strange tomb, ah me unhappy! [I] who have no home on the earth or in the shades, no home with the living or with the dead.

CHORUS

You have rushed forward to the utmost verge of daring; and against that throne where justice sits on high you have fallen, my daughter, with a grievous fall. But in this ordeal you are paying, haply, for your father's sin.

ANTIGONE

You have touched on my bitterest thought, awaking the ever-new lament for my father and for all the doom given to us, the famed house of Labdakos. Alas for the horrors of the mother's bed! Alas for the wretched mother's slumber at the side of her own son, and my father! From what manner of parents did I take my miserable being! And to them I go thus, accursed, unwed, to share their home. Alas, my brother, ill-starred in your marriage, in your death you have undone my life!

²⁴ The "river of sorrow", one of the five rivers of Hades.

²⁵ A mythological figure who sacrificed his son and cooked his body to feed to the gods on Olumpos. He was punished by being cast into Tartaros, the outer most region of the other world where he was suspended between a river which always fell before he could drink, and a tree whose low hanging fruit was always out of reach.

²⁶ An eponymous name for Thebes.

CHORUS

Reverent action claims a certain praise for reverence; but an offence against power cannot be brooked by him who has power in his keeping. [Your] self-willed temper has wrought your ruin.

ANTIGONE

Unwept, unfriended, without marriage-song, I am led forth in my sorrow on this journey that can be delayed no more. No longer, hapless one, may I behold yon day-star's sacred eye; but for my fate no tear is shed, no friend makes moan.

[Enter Kreon, from the palace]

KREON

Know you not that songs and wailings before death would never cease, if it profited to utter them? Away with her, away! And when you have enclosed her, according to my word, in her vaulted grave, leave her alone, forlorn, whether she wishes to die, or to live a buried life in such a home. Our hands are clean as touching this maiden. But this is certain: she shall be deprived of her sojourn in the light.

ANTIGONE

Tomb, bridal-chamber, eternal prison in the caverned rock, whither go to find mine own, those many who have perished, and whom Persephone²⁷ has received among the dead! Last of all shall I pass thither, and far most miserably of all, before the term of my life is spent. But I cherish good hope that my coming will be welcome to my father, and pleasant to you, my mother, and welcome, brother, to you; for, when you died, with mine own hands I washed and dressed you, and poured drink-offerings at your graves; and now, Polunikes, it is for tending your corpse that I win such recompense as this.

And yet I honored you, as the wise will deem, rightly. Never, had been a mother of children, or if a husband had been moldering in death, would I have taken this task upon me in the city's despite. What law, you ask, is my warrant for that word? The husband lost, another might have been found, and child from another, to replace the first-born: but, father and mother hidden with Hades, no brother's life could ever bloom for me again. Such was the law whereby I held you first in honor; but Kreon deemed me guilty of error therein, and of outrage, ah brother mine! And now he leads me thus, a captive in his hands; no bridal bed, no bridal song has been mine, no joy of marriage, no portion in the nurture of children; but thus, forlorn of friends, unhappy one, I go living to the vaults of death.

And what law of heaven have I transgressed? Why, hapless one, should I look to the gods any more, what ally should I invoke, when by piety I have earned the name of impious? No, then, if these things are pleasing to the gods, when I have suffered my doom, I shall come to know my sin; but if the sin is with my judges, I could wish them no fuller measure of evil than they, on their part, mete wrongfully to me.

²⁷ Persephone, also known as Kore, was queen of Hades.

CHORUS

Still the same tempest of the soul vexes this maiden with the same fierce gusts.

KREON

Then for this shall her guards have cause to rue their slowness.

ANTIGONE

Ah me! That word has come very near to death.

KREON

I can cheer you with no hope that this doom is not thus to be fulfilled.

ANTIGONE

O city of my fathers in the land of Thebes! O you gods, eldest of our race! They lead me hence now, now they tarry not! Behold me, princes of Thebes, the last daughter of the house of your kings, see what I suffer, and from whom, because I feared to cast away the fear of Heaven!

[Exit Antigone, led by guards]

CHORUS

Even thus endured Danae in her beauty to change the light of day for brass-bound walls; and in that chamber, secret as the grave, she was held close prisoner; yet was she of a proud lineage, O my daughter, and charged with the keeping of the seed of Zeus, that fell in the golden rain.

But dreadful is the mysterious power of Fate: there is no deliverance from it by wealth or by war, by fenced city, or dark, sea-beaten ships.

And bonds tamed the son of Dryas, swift to wrath, that king of the Edonians; so paid he for his frenzied taunts, when, by the will of Dionusos, he was pent in a rocky prison. There the fierce exuberance of his madness slowly passed away. That man learned to know the god, whom in his frenzy he had provoked with mockeries; for he had sought to quell the god-possessed women, and the Bacxanian fire; and he angered the Muses that love the flute.

And by the waters of the Dark Rocks, the waters of the twofold sea, are the shores of Bosphorus, and Thracian Salmudessos; where Ares, neighbor to the city, saw the accurst, blinding wound dealt to the two sons of Phineus by his fierce wife, the wound that brought darkness to those vengeance-craving orbs, smitten with her bloody hands, smitten with her shuttle for a dagger.

Pining in their misery, they bewailed their cruel doom, those sons of a mother hapless in her marriage; but she traced her descent from the ancient line of the Erextheus; and in far-distant caves she was nursed amid her father's storms, that child of Boreas, swift as a steed over the steep hills, a daughter of gods; yet upon her also the gray Fates bore hard, my daughter.

[Enter Teiresias, led by a Boy]

TEIRESIAS

Princes of Thebes, we have come with linked steps, both served by the eyes of one; for thus, by a guide's help, the blind must walk.

KREON

And what, aged Teiresias, are your tidings?

TEIRESIAS

I will tell you; and do you hearken to the seer.

KREON

Indeed, it has not been my [way] to slight your counsel.

TEIRESIAS

Therefore, did you steer our city's course aright.

KREON

I have felt, and can attest, your benefits.

TEIRESIAS

Mark that now, once more, you stand on Fate's fine edge.

KREON

What means this? How I shudder at your message!

TEIRESIAS

You will learn, when you hear what my warnings are. As I took my place on mine old seat of augury, where all birds have been wont to gather within my ken, I heard a strange voice among them; they were screaming with dire, feverish rage, that drowned their language in jargon; and I knew that they were rending each other with their talons, murderously; the whirr of wings told no doubtful tale.

Forthwith, in fear, I essayed burnt sacrifice on a duly kindled altar: but from my offerings the Fire-god showed no flame; a dank moisture, oozing from the thigh-flesh, trickled forth upon the embers, and smoked, and sputtered; the gall was scattered to the air; and the streaming thighs lay bared of the fat that had been wrapped round them.

Such was the failure of the rites by which I vainly asked a sign, as from this boy I learned; for he is my guide, as I am guide to others. And it is thy counsel that has brought this sickness on our [City]. For the altars of our city and of our hearths have been tainted, one and all, by birds and dogs, with carrion from the hapless corpse, the son of Oidipous: and, therefore, the gods no more accept prayer and sacrifice at our hands, or the flame of meat-offering; nor does any bird give a clear sign by its shrill cry, for they have tasted the fatness of a slain man's blood.

Think, then, on these things, my son. All men are liable to err; but when an error has been made, that man is no longer witless or unable who heals the ill into which he has fallen, and remains not stubborn.

Self-will, we know, incurs the charge of folly. No, allow the claim of the dead; stab not the fallen; what prowess is it to slay the slain anew? I have sought your good, and for your good I speak: and never is it sweeter to learn from a good counselor than when he counsels for yours own gain.

KREON

Old man, you all shoot your shafts at me, as archers at the butts; [You] must needs practice on me with seer-craft also; yes, the seer-tribe has long trafficked in me, and made me their merchandise. Gain your gains, drive your trade, if you list, in the silver-gold of Sardis and the gold of India; but you shall not hide that man in the grave, no, though the eagles of Zeus should bear the carrion morsels to their Master's throne—no, not for dread of that defilement will I suffer his burial: for well I know that no mortal can defile the gods. But, aged Teiresias, the wisest fall with shameful fall, when they clothe shameful thoughts in fair words, for lucre's [money's] sake.

TEIRESIAS

Alas! Do[es] any man know, does any consider...

KREON

Whereof? What general truth do you announce?

TEIRESIAS

How precious, above all wealth, is good counsel.

KREON

As folly, I think, is the worst mischief.

TEIRESIAS

Yet you are tainted with that distemper.

KREON

I would not answer the seer with a taunt.

TEIRESIAS

But you do, in saying that I prophesy falsely.

KREON

Well, the prophet-tribe was ever fond of money.

TEIRESIAS

And the race bred of tyrants loves base gain.

KREON

Know you that your speech is spoken of your king?

TEIRESIAS

I know it; for through me you have saved Thebes.

KREON

You are a wise seer; but you love evil deeds.

TEIRESIAS

You will rouse me to utter the dread secret in my soul.

KREON

Out with it! Only speak it not for gain.

TEIRESIAS

Indeed, methinks, I shall not, as touching you.

KREON

Know that you shall not trade on my resolve.

TEIRESIAS

Then know you—yes, know it well—that you shall not live through many more courses of the sun's swift chariot, before one begotten of your own loins shall have been given by you, a corpse for corpses; because you have thrust children of the sunlight to the shades, and ruthlessly lodged a living soul in the grave; but keep in this world one who belongs to the gods infernal, a corpse unburied, unhonoured, all unhallowed. In such you have no part, nor have the gods above, but this is a violence done to them by you. Therefore, the avenging destroyers lie in wait for you, the Furies of Hades and of the gods, that you may be taken in these same ills.

And mark well if I speak these things as a hireling. A time not long to be delayed shall awaken the wailing of men and of women in your house. And a tumult of hatred against you stirs all the cities whose mangled sons had the burial-rite from dogs, or from wild beasts, or from some winged bird that bore a polluting breath to each city that contains the hearths of the dead.

Such arrows for your heart—since you provoke me—have I launched at you, archer-like, in my anger, sure arrows, of which you shall not escape the smart. Boy, lead me home, that he may spend his rage on younger men, and learn to keep a tongue more temperate, and to bear within his breast a better mind than now he bears.

[Exit Teiresias, led by Boy]

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

The man has gone, O King, with dread prophecies. And, since the hair on this head, once dark, has been white, I know that he has never been a false prophet to our city.

KREON

I, too, know it well, and am troubled in soul. It is dire to yield; but, by resistance, to smite my pride with ruin. This, too, is a dire choice.

LEADER

Son of Menoikeus, it behooves you to take wise counsel.

KREON

What should I do then? Speak and I will obey.

LEADER

Go you, and free the maiden from her rocky chamber, and make a tomb for the unburied dead.

KREON

And this is your counsel? You would have me yield?

LEADER

Yes, King, and with all speed; for swift harms from the gods cut short the folly of men.

KREON

Ah me, it is hard, but I resign my cherished resolve, I obey. We must not wage a vain war with destiny.

LEADER

Go, you, and do these things; leave them not to others.

KREON

Even as I am I'll go: on, on, my servants, each and all of you, take axes in your hands, and hasten to the ground that you see yonder! Since our judgment has taken this turn, I will be present to unloose her, as myself bound her. My heart misgives me, *it is best to keep the established laws*, even to life's end.

[Exit Kreon and his servants]

CHORUS

O you of many names, glory of the Kadmeian bride, offspring of loud-thundering Zeus! You who watch over famed Italy, and reign, where all guests are welcomed, in the sheltered plain of Eleusinian Demeter! O Bacchoss, dweller in Thebes, metropolis of Bacchants, by the softly-gliding stream of Ismenus, on the soil where the fierce dragon's teeth were sown!

You have been seen where torch-flames glare through smoke, above the crests of the twin peaks, where move the Korukion nymphs, your votaries, hard by Kastalia's stream.

You come from the ivy-mantled slopes of Nusa's hills, and from the shore green with many-clustered vines, while your name is lifted up on strains of more than mortal power, as you visit the ways of Thebes.

Thebes of all cities, you hold first in honor, you and your mother whom the lightning smote; and now, when all our people is captive to a violent plague, come you with healing feet over the Parnassian height, or over the moaning strait!

O you with whom the stars rejoice as they move, the stars whose breath is fire; O master of the voices of the night; son begotten of Zeus; appear, O king, with yours attendant Thuiads, who in night-long frenzy dance before you, the giver of good gifts, Iakxos!

[Enter Messenger]

MESSENGER

Dwellers by the house of Kadmos and of Amphion, there is no estate of mortal life that I would ever praise or blame as settled. Fortune raises and Fortune humbles the lucky or unlucky from day to day, and no one can prophesy to men concerning those things which are established. For Kreon was blest once, as I count bliss; he had saved this land of Kadmos from its foes; he was clothed with sole dominion in the land; he reigned, the glorious father of princely children. And now all has been lost. For when a man has forfeited his pleasures, I count him not as living, I hold him but a breathing corpse. Heap up riches in your house, if you will; live in kingly state; yet, if there be no gladness therewith, I would not give the shadow of a vapor for all the rest, compared with joy.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

And what is this new grief that you have to tell for our princes?

MESSENGER

Death; and the living are guilty for the dead.

LEADER

And who is the slayer? Who the stricken? Speak!

MESSENGER

Haemon has perished; his blood has been shed by no stranger.

LEADER

By his father's hand, or by his own?

MESSENGER

By his own, in wrath with his father for murder.

LEADER

O prophet, how true, then, have you proved your word!

MESSENGER

These things stand thus; you must consider of the rest.

LEADER

Lo, I see the hapless Eurudike, Kreon's wife, approaching; she comes from the house by chance, haply, or because she knows the tidings of her son.

[Enter Eurudike from the palace]

EURUDIKE

People of Thebes, I heard your words as I was going forth to salute the goddess Pallas²⁸ with my prayers. Even as I was loosing the fastenings of the gate, to open it, the message of a household woe smote on mine ear: I sank back, terror-stricken, into the arms of my handmaids, and my senses fled. But say again what the tidings were; I shall hear them as one who is no stranger to sorrow.

MESSENGER

Dear lady, I will witness of what I saw, and will leave no word of the truth untold. Why, indeed, should I soothe you with words in which must presently be found false? Truth is ever best. I attended your lord as his guide to the furthest part of the plain, where the body of Poluneikes, torn by dogs, still lay unpitied. We prayed the goddess of the roads, and Plouton, in mercy to restrain their wrath; we washed the dead with holy washing; and with freshly-plucked boughs we solemnly burned such relics as there were. We raised a high mound of his native earth; and then we turned away to enter the maiden's nuptial chamber with rocky couch, the caverned mansion of the bride of Death. And, from afar off, one of us heard a voice of loud wailing at that bride's unhallowed bower; and came to tell our master Kreon.

And as the king drew nearer, doubtful sounds of a bitter cry floated around him; he groaned, and said in accents of anguish, 'Wretched that I am, can my foreboding be true? Am I going on the woeful way that ever I went? My son's voice greets me. Go, my servants, haste you nearer, and when you have reached the tomb, pass through the gap, where the stones have been wrenched away, to the cell's very mouth, and look. And see if it is Haemon's voice that I know, or if mine ear is cheated by the gods.'

This search, at our despairing master's word, we went to make; and in the furthest part of the tomb we [saw] her hanging by the neck, slung by a thread-wrought halter of fine linen: while he was embracing her with arms thrown around her waist, bewailing the loss of his bride who is with the dead, and his father's deeds, and his own ill-starred love.

But his father, when he saw him, cried aloud with a dread cry and went in, and called to him with a voice of wailing: "Unhappy, what deed have you done! What thought has come to you? What manner of mischance has marred your reason? Come forth, my child! I pray you—I implore!"

But the boy glared at him with fierce eyes, spat in his face, and, without a word of answer, drew his cross-hilted sword: as his father rushed forth in flight, he missed his aim; then, hapless one, struggled with himself, he straightway leaned with all his weight against his sword, and drove it, half its length, into his side; and, while sense lingered, he clasped the maiden to his faint embrace, and, as he gasped, sent forth on her pale cheek the swift stream of the oozing blood.

Corpse enfolding corpse he lies; he has won his nuptial rites, poor youth, not here, yet in the halls of Death; and he has witnessed to mankind that, of all curses which cleave to man, ill counsel is the sovereign curse.

²⁸ A title for the goddess Athena. She is often referred to as Pallas Athena.

[Exit Eurudike]

LEADER

What would you [divine] from this? The lady has turned back, and is gone, without a word, good or evil.

MESSENGER

I, too, am startled; yet I nourish the hope that, at these sore tidings of her son, she cannot deign to give her sorrow public vent, but in the privacy of the house will set her handmaids to mourn the household grief. For she is not untaught of discretion, that she should err.

LEADER

I know not; but to me, at least, a strained silence seems to portend peril, no less than vain abundance of lament.

MESSENGER

Well, I will enter the house, and learn whether indeed she is not hiding some repressed purpose in the depths of a passionate heart. Yes, you say well: excess of silence, too, may have a perilous meaning.

[Exit MESSENGER, Enter Kreon with attendants, carrying the shrouded body of HAEMON on bier. The following lines between Kreon and the Chorus chant responsively]

CHORUS

Lo, yonder the king himself draws near, bearing that which tells too clear a tale, the work of no stranger's madness, if we may say it, but of his own misdeeds.

KREON

Woe for the sins of a darkened soul, stubborn sins, fraught with death! Ah, [you] behold us, the father who has slain, the son who has perished! Woe is me, for the wretched blindness of my counsels! Alas, my son, you have died in your youth, by a timeless doom, woe is me! Your spirit has fled, not by your folly, but by mine own!

CHORUS

Ah me, how all too late you seem to see the right!

KREON

Ah me, I have learned the bitter lesson! But then, methinks, oh then, some god smote me from above with crushing weight, and hurled me into ways of cruelty, woe is me, overthrowing and trampling on my joy! Woe, woe, for the troublous toils of men!

[Enter Messenger]

MESSENGER

Father, you have come, methinks, as one whose hands are not empty, but who has store laid up besides; you bear yonder burden with you, and you are soon to look upon the woes within your house.

KREON

And what worse ill is yet to follow upon ills?

MESSENGER

[Your] queen has died, true mother of yon corpse—ah, hapless lady by blows newly dealt.

KREON

Oh Hades, all-receiving whom no sacrifice can appease! Have you, then, no mercy for me? O you herald of evil, bitter tidings, what word do you utter? Alas, I was already as dead, and you have smitten me anew! What say you, my son? What is this new message that you bringest-woe, woe is me! Of a wife's doom, of slaughter headed on slaughter?

CHORUS

You can behold: it is no longer hidden within.

[The doors of the palace are opened, and the corpse of Euridike is disclosed.]

KREON

Ah me, yonder I behold a new, a second woe! What destiny, ah what, can yet await me? I have but now raised my son in my arms, and there, again, I see a corpse before me! Alas, alas, unhappy mother! Alas, my child!

MESSENGER

There, at the altar, self-stabbed with a keen knife, she suffered her darkening eyes to close, when she had wailed for the noble fate of Megareus who died before, and then for his fate who lies there, and when, with her last breath, she had invoked evil fortunes upon you, the slayer of your sons.

KREON

Woe, woe! I thrill with dread. Is there none to strike me to the heart with two-edged sword? Oh miserable that I am, and steeped in miserable anguish!

MESSENGER

Yes, both this son's doom, and that other's, were laid to your charge by her whose corpse you see.

KREON

And what was the manner of the violent deed by which she passed away?

MESSENGER

Her own hand struck her to the heart, when she had learned her son's sorely lamented fate.

KREON

Ah me, this guilt can never be fixed on any other of mortal kind, for my acquittal! I, even I, was your slayer, wretched that I am, I own the truth. Lead me away, O my servants, lead me hence with all speed, whose life is but as death!

CHORUS

[Your] counsels are good, if there can be good with ills; brief is best, when trouble is in our path.

KREON

Oh, let it come, let it appear, that fairest of fates for me, that brings my last day, yes, best fate of all! Oh, let it come, that I may never look upon tomorrow's light.

CHORUS

These things are in the future; present tasks claim our care: the ordering of the future rests where it should rest.

KREON

All my desires, at least, were summed in that prayer.

CHORUS

Pray you no more; for *mortals have no escape from destined woe*.

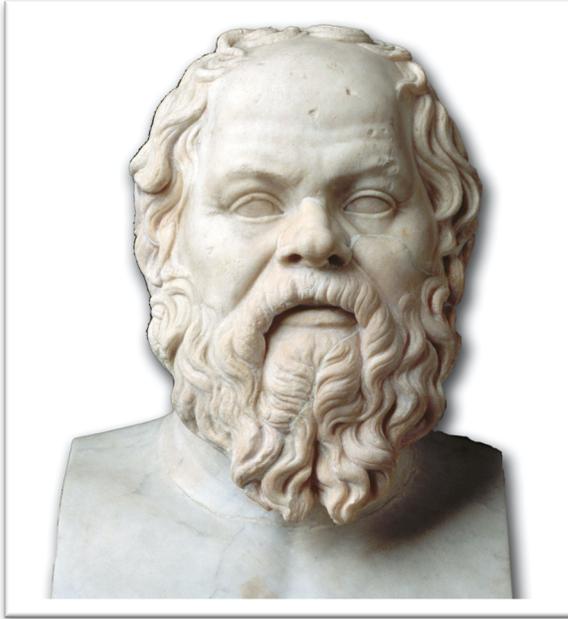
KREON

Lead me away, I pray you; a rash, foolish man; who have slain you, ah my son, unwittingly, and you, too, my wife—unhappy that I am! I know not which way I should bend my gaze, or where I should seek support; for all is amiss with that which is in my hands, and yonder, again, a crushing fate has leapt upon my head.

[Exit Kreon, into the palace]

LEADER

Wisdom is the supreme part of happiness; and reverence towards the gods must be inviolate. Great words of prideful men are ever punished with great blows, and, in old age, teach the chastened to be wise.



EUTHUPHRO **By: PLATO**

Translated by: BENJAMIN JOWETT
Additions, corrections, and footnotes by Barry F. Vaughan²⁹

Persons of the Dialogue: Sokrates and Euthuphro

Scene: The Porch of the King Archon, Athens

²Euthuphro: Why have you left the Lyceum, Sokrates? And what are you doing in the Porch of the King Archon?³⁰ Surely you cannot be concerned in a suit before the King, like myself?

Sokrates: Not in a suit, Euthuphro; impeachment is the word which the Athenians use.

Euthuphro: What?! I suppose that someone has been prosecuting you, for I cannot believe that you are the prosecutor of another.

Sokrates: Certainly not!

Euthuphro: Then, someone else [is] prosecuting you?

Sokrates: Yes.

Euthuphro: And, who is he?

Sokrates: A young man who is little known, Euthuphro; and I hardly know him: his name is Meletos, and he is of the deme of Pitthis. Perhaps you may remember his appearance; he has a beak, and long straight hair, and a beard which is ill grown.

²⁹ This text is adapted from the Project Gutenberg's Crito, by Plato, www.gutenberg.org. For the full text visit the Project Gutenberg website. This edited version is intended for academic or personal use and may not be sold or used for profit.

I have changed spellings of proper names to more accurately match the Greek text as opposed to the more traditional Latinized spellings which were dominant in Jowett's time. I have also changed UK spellings to US spellings where appropriate, as well as made clarifications in translation (noted with brackets) and have added explanatory footnotes.

³⁰ Athens had been a democracy since 510 BCE when the dictator Hippias was overthrown by a popular uprising led by Kleisthenes. However, the title of "King Archon" was maintained for the officer who oversaw the high court of Athens where capital cases were heard.

Euthuphro: No, I do not remember him, Sokrates. But what is the charge which he brings against you?

Sokrates: What's the charge? Well, a very serious charge, which shows a good deal of character in the young man, and for which he is certainly not to be despised. He says he knows how the youth are corrupted and who are their corruptors. I fancy that he must be a wise man, and seeing that I am the reverse of a wise man, he has found me out, and is going to accuse me of corrupting his young friends. And of this our mother the [Polis] is to be the judge. Of all our political men he is the only one who seems to me to begin in the right way, with the cultivation of virtue in youth; like a good husbandman, he makes the young shoots his first care, and clears away us who are the destroyers of ³them. This is only the first step; he will afterwards attend to the elder branches; and if he goes on as he has begun, he will be a very great public benefactor.

Euthuphro: I hope that he may; but I rather fear, Sokrates, that the opposite will turn out to be the truth. My opinion is that in attacking you he is simply aiming a blow at the foundation of the [Polis]. But in what way does he say that you corrupt the young?

Sokrates: He brings a wonderful accusation against me, which at first hearing excites surprise: he says that I am a poet or maker of gods, and that I invent new gods and deny the existence of old ones; this is the ground of his indictment.

Euthuphro: I understand, Sokrates; he means to attack you about the familiar [voice] which occasionally, as you say, comes to you. He thinks that you are an [inventor of religion], and he is going to have you up before the court for this. He knows that such a charge is readily received by the world, as I myself know too well; for when I speak in the assembly about divine things, and foretell the future to them, they laugh at me and think me a madman. Yet every word that I say is true. But they are jealous of us all; and we must be brave and go at them.

Sokrates: Their laughter, friend Euthuphro, isn't a matter of much consequence. For a man may be thought wise; but the Athenians, I suspect, do not much trouble themselves about him until he begins to impart his wisdom to others, and then for some reason or other, perhaps, as you say, from jealousy, they are angry.

Euthuphro: I am never likely to try their temper in this way.

Sokrates: I dare say not, for you are reserved in your behavior, and seldom impart your wisdom. But I have a benevolent habit of pouring out myself to everybody, and would even pay for a listener, and I am afraid that the Athenians may think me too talkative. Now if, as I was saying, they would only laugh at me, as you say that they laugh at you, the time might pass gaily enough in the court; but perhaps they may be in earnest, and then what the end will be you soothsayers only can predict.

Euthuphro: I dare say that the affair will end in nothing, Sokrates, and that you will win your cause; and I think that I shall win my own.

Sokrates: And what is your suit, Euthuphro? Are you the [prosecutor] or the defendant?

Euthuphro: I am the [prosecutor].

Sokrates: Of whom?

⁴**Euthuphro:** You will think me mad when I tell you.

Sokrates: Why, has the fugitive wings?

Euthuphro: Nay, he isn't very [active] at his time of life.

Sokrates: Who is he?

Euthuphro: My father.

Sokrates: Your father?! My good man!

Euthuphro: Yes!

Sokrates: And of what is he accused?

Euthuphro: Of murder, Sokrates.

Sokrates: By Herakles, Euthuphro! How little does the common herd know of the nature of right and truth. A man must be extraordinary, and have made great strides in wisdom, before he could have seen his way to bring such an [case].

Euthuphro: By Zeus, Sokrates, he must.

Sokrates: I suppose that the man whom your father murdered was one of your relatives? Clearly he was; for if he had been a stranger you would never have thought of prosecuting him.

Euthuphro: I am amused, Sokrates, at your making a distinction between one who is a [relative] and one who isn't; for surely the pollution³¹ is the same in either case, if you knowingly associate with the murderer when you ought to [cleanse] yourself and him by [prosecuting] him.

³¹ The Greek term here is *miasma*-μῑα̅σ̅μ̅α̅ which can be translated 'stain', 'pollution', 'sin', 'taint'. However, none of these English terms quite captures the full implications of the Greek term. *Miasma* was thought to be a kind of infection of the soul contracted through acts contrary to the will of the gods, especially sacrilege and murder. If not expiated via sacrifice *miasma* could spread beyond the wrongdoer to infect other members of the household of the offender and even later generations.

The real question is whether the murdered man has been justly slain. If justly, then your duty is to let the matter alone; but if unjustly, then even if the murderer lives under the same roof with you and eats at the same table, proceed against him.

Now the man who is dead was a poor dependent of mine who worked for us as a field laborer on our farm in Naxos: one day in a fit of drunken passion he got into a quarrel with one of our house [slaves] and slew him. My father bound him hand and foot and threw him into a ditch, and then sent to Athens to ask of a [seer] what he should do with him. Meanwhile he never attended to him and took no care about him, for he regarded him as a murderer; and thought that no great harm would be done even if he did die. Now this was just what happened. For such was the effect of cold and hunger and chains upon him, that before the messenger returned from the [seer], he was dead.

And [now] my father and family are angry with me for [defending] the murderer and prosecuting my father. They say that he [my father] did not kill him, and that if he did, the dead man was a murderer [anyway], and I ought not to [be concerned for him]; [they say] a son is impious who prosecutes [his] father. Which shows, Sokrates, how little they know what the gods think about piety and impiety.

Sokrates: Good heavens, Euthuphro! And is your knowledge of religion and of things pious and impious so very exact, that, supposing the circumstances to be as you state them, you are not afraid lest you too may be doing an impious thing in bringing an action against your father?

Euthuphro: [What makes me better than other men], Sokrates, is exact[ly my] knowledge of all ⁵such matters. What should I be good for without it?

Sokrates: Rare friend! I think that I cannot do better than be your [student]. Then before the trial with Meletos [begins] I shall challenge him, and say that I have always had a great interest in religious questions, and now, as he charges me with rash imaginations and innovations in religion, I have become your disciple.

“You, Meletos,” as I shall say to him, “acknowledge Euthuphro to be [an expert on religion], and sound in his opinions; and if you approve of him you ought to approve of me, and not have me into court; but if you disapprove, you should begin by indicting him who is my teacher, and who will be the ruin, not of the young, but of the old; that is to say, of myself whom he instructs, and of his old father whom he admonishes and chastises.”

And if Meletos refuses to listen to me, but will go on, and will not shift the indictment from me to you, I cannot do better than repeat this challenge in the court.

Euthuphro: Yes, indeed, Sokrates! And if he attempts to indict me I am mistaken if I do not find a flaw in him; the court shall have a great deal more to say to him than to me.

Sokrates: And I, my dear friend, knowing this, am desirous of becoming your disciple. For

I observe that no one appears to notice you—not even this Meletos. But his sharp eyes have found me out at once, and he has indicted me for impiety. And therefore, I adjure you to tell me the nature of piety and impiety, which you said that you knew so well, and of murder, and of other offences against the gods. What *are* they? Isn't piety in every action always the same? And *impiety*—is it not always *the opposite of piety*, and also the same with itself, having, as impiety, one notion which includes whatever is impious?

Euthuphro: To be sure, Sokrates.

Sokrates: [So], what *is* piety, and what *is* impiety?

Euthuphro: *Piety is doing as I am doing*; that is to say, prosecuting any one who is guilty of murder, sacrilege, or of any similar crime—whether he be your father or mother, or whoever he may be—that makes no difference; and not to prosecute them is impiety.

And please consider, Sokrates, *what a notable proof* I will give you of the truth of my words, a proof which I have already given to others: of the principle, I mean, that the impious, whoever he may be, ⁶ought not to go unpunished. For do not men regard Zeus as the best and most righteous of the gods, and yet they admit that he bound his father (Kronos) because he wickedly devoured his sons, and that he too had punished his own father (Oranos) for a similar reason, in a nameless manner.³² And yet when I proceed against my father, they are angry with me. So inconsistent are they in their way of talking when the gods are concerned, and when I am concerned.

Sokrates: May not this be the reason, Euthuphro, why I am charged with impiety—that I cannot [abide] these stories about the gods? And [that], I suppose, [is why] people think me [wicked]. But, as you who are well informed about them approve of them, I cannot do better than assent to your superior wisdom. What else can I say, confessing as I do, that I know nothing about them? Tell me, for the love of Zeus, whether you really believe that they are true.³³

Euthuphro: Yes, Sokrates! And things [even] more [amazing], of which the world is in ignorance.

Sokrates: And do you really believe that the gods, fought with one another, and had [fierce] quarrels, battles, and the like, as the poets say, and as you may see represented in the works of great artists? The temples are full of them; and notably the robe of Athena, which is

³² The story of how Kronos overthrew his father, Oranos, and how Zeus in turn overthrew his father—Kronos—is found in the Greek creation myth by Hesiod: The Theogony. You can read Hesiod's poem in Chapter 1 above.

³³ This is a particularly interesting passage where while he does not outright say he does not believe these stories about the gods, he clearly implies skepticism. While he defers here to Euthuphro's "superior wisdom" in these matters, it is clear from the following passages that Sokrates thinks it would be impossible for the gods to disagree about most things. See 7bff below.

carried up to the Acropolis at the great Panathenaea, is embroidered with them.³⁴ Are all these tales of the gods true, Euthuphro?

Euthuphro: Yes, Sokrates; and, as I was saying, I can tell you, if you would like to hear them, many other things about the gods which would quite amaze you.

Sokrates: I dare say; and you shall tell me at some other time when I have leisure. But at present I would rather hear from you a more precise answer, which you have not as yet given, my friend, to the question, “What is *piety*?” When asked, you only replied, “Doing as [I am] do[ing], charging [my] father with murder.”

Euthuphro: And what I said was true, Sokrates.

Sokrates: No doubt, Euthuphro; but you would admit that there are many *other* pious acts?

Euthuphro: There are.

Sokrates: Remember that I did not ask you to give me two or three *examples* of piety, but to explain the [*that*] which makes all pious things pious. Do you not recollect that there was one idea which made the impious impious, and the pious pious?

Euthuphro: I remember.

Sokrates: Tell me what is the nature of this idea, and then I shall have a standard to which I may look, and by which I may measure actions, whether yours or those of any one else, and then I shall be able to say that such and such an action is pious, such another impious.

Euthuphro: I will tell you, if you like.

Sokrates: I should *very* much like.

⁷**Euthuphro:** Piety, then, is *that which is dear to the gods*, and impiety is that which isn’t dear to them.

Sokrates: Very good, Euthuphro; you have now given me the sort of answer which I wanted. But whether what you say is true or not I cannot as yet tell, although I make no doubt that you will prove the truth of your words.

Euthuphro: Of course.

Sokrates: Come, then, and let us examine what we are saying. That thing or person which is [loved by] the gods is pious, and that thing or person which is [despised by] the gods is impious, these two being the opposites of one another. Was not that said?

³⁴ The Panathenaea (literally, “all Athena”) was the major Athenian holiday celebrated every four years in the month of June.

Euthuphro: It was.

Sokrates: And well said?

Euthuphro: Yes, Sokrates, I thought so; it was certainly said.

Sokrates: And further, Euthuphro, the gods were admitted to have [quarrels] and [fights] and [disagreements]?

Euthuphro: Yes, that was also said.

Sokrates: And what sort of [disagreement] creates [quarrels] and anger? Suppose for example that you and I, my good friend, differ about a number; do differences of this sort make us enemies and set us at variance with one another? Do we not go at once to arithmetic, and put an end to them by [calculating the answer]?

Euthuphro: True.

Sokrates: Or suppose that we differ about [sizes], do we not quickly end the differences by measuring?

Euthuphro: Very true.

Sokrates: And we end a controversy about heavy and light [things] by resorting to a weighing machine?

Euthuphro: To be sure.

Sokrates: But what [disputes] are there which cannot be decided [this way], and which, therefore, make us angry and set us at [odds] with one another? I [t seems] the answer doesn't occur to you at the moment, and therefore I will suggest that these [fights] arise when the [dispute is over] the just and unjust, good and evil, [and what is] honorable and dishonorable. Are not these the points about which men differ, and about which when we are unable satisfactorily to decide our differences, you and I and all of us quarrel, when we do quarrel?

Euthuphro: Yes, Sokrates, the nature of the differences about which we quarrel is such as you describe.

Sokrates: And the quarrels [between] the gods, noble Euthuphro, when they occur, are of a like nature?

Euthuphro: Certainly they are.

Sokrates: They have differences of opinion, as you say, about [what is] good and evil, just and unjust, honorable and dishonorable: there would have been no quarrels among them, if

there had been no such differences, would there?

Euthuphro: No, you are quite right.

Sokrates: Doesn't every man love that which he [believes is] noble and just and good, and hate the opposite of them?

Euthuphro: Very true.

⁸**Sokrates:** But, as you say, people regard the same things—some [thinking them] just and others unjust—about *these* [things] they [argue]; and [therefore] wars and fighting [arise] among them.

Euthuphro: Very true.

Sokrates: Then the same things are hated by [some] gods and loved by the [others], and [the same things] are both hateful *and* dear to them?

Euthuphro: True.

Sokrates: And upon this view the same things, Euthuphro, will be [both] pious *and* also impious?

Euthuphro: I should suppose.

Sokrates: Then, my friend, I remark with surprise that you have not answered the question which I asked. For I certainly did not ask you to tell me what action is *both* pious and impious: but now it would seem that what is loved by the gods is also hated by them. And therefore, Euthuphro, in [prosecuting] your father you may very likely be doing what is agreeable to Zeus but disagreeable to Kronos or Oranus, and what is [loved by] Hephaestus but [hated by] Hera, and there may be other gods who have similar differences of opinion.

Euthuphro: But I believe, Sokrates, that all the gods would agree [about] the propriety of punishing a murderer: there would be no difference of opinion about *that*.

Sokrates: Well, but speaking of men, Euthuphro, did you ever hear any one arguing that a murderer or any sort of evil-doer ought to be let off?

Euthuphro: I [would] say that these are the questions which they are *always* arguing [about], especially in courts of law: they commit all sorts of crimes, and there isn't anything which they will not do or say in their own defence.

Sokrates: But, do they admit their [own] guilt, Euthuphro, and [*then*] say that they ought not to be punished?

Euthuphro: No! They do not.

Sokrates: Then there are some things which they do not venture to say and do: for they do not argue that the guilty are to be *unpunished*, but [rather] they deny [that they *are* guilty], do they not?

Euthuphro: Yes.

Sokrates: Then they do not argue that the [wicked] should not be punished, but they argue about who the [wicked] *is*, and what he *did*, and *when*?

Euthuphro: True.

Sokrates: And the gods [would be] in the same [position], if as you assert they quarrel about [what is] just and unjust, and some of them say while others deny that injustice is done among them. For surely neither god nor man will ever venture to say that the doer of injustice isn't to be punished?

Euthuphro: That is true, Sokrates, in the main.

Sokrates: But they [disagree] about the particulars—[both] gods and men alike—and, *if* they dispute at all, they dispute about some act which is called in question, and which by some is affirmed to be just [and] by others to be unjust. Isn't that true?

Euthuphro: Quite true.

Sokrates: Well then, my dear friend Euthuphro, do tell me, for my better instruction and information, what proof have you that in the opinion of *all* the gods a servant who is guilty of murder, and is put in chains by the master of the dead man, and dies because he is put in chains before he who bound him can learn from the interpreters of the gods what he ought to do with him, dies unjustly; and that on behalf of such a one a son *ought* to proceed against his father and accuse him of murder. How would you show that *all the gods absolutely agree* in approving of his act? Prove to me that they do, and I will applaud your wisdom as long as I live.

Euthuphro: It will be a difficult task; but I could make the matter very dear indeed to you.

Sokrates: I understand; you mean to say that I am not [as bright] as the judges: for to them you will be sure to prove that the act is unjust, and [therefore] hateful to the gods.

Euthuphro: Yes indeed, Sokrates; at least if they will listen to me.

Sokrates: But they will be sure to listen if they find that you are a good speaker. There was a notion that came into my mind while you were speaking; I said to myself: "Well, and what if Euthuphro *does* prove to me that all the gods regarded the death of the *thete* as unjust, how do I know anything more of the nature of piety and impiety? For granting that this action *may* be hateful to the gods, still piety and impiety are not *defined* by these distinctions, for

that which is hateful to the gods has been shown to be also pleasing and dear to them."

And therefore, Euthuphro, I do not ask you to prove this; I will suppose, if you like, that all the gods condemn and abominate such an action. But I will amend the definition so far as to say that *what all the gods hate is impious, and what they love pious or holy; and what some of them love and others hate is both or neither*. Shall this be our definition of piety and impiety?

Euthuphro: Why not, Sokrates?

Sokrates: Why not! Certainly, as far as I am concerned, Euthuphro, there is no reason why not. But whether this admission will greatly assist you in the task of instructing me as you promised, is a matter for you to consider.

Euthuphro: Yes, I should say that *what all the gods love is pious and holy, and the opposite which they all hate, impious*.

Sokrates: Ought we to enquire into the truth of this, Euthuphro, or simply to accept the mere statement on our own authority and that of others? What do you say?

Euthuphro: We should enquire; and I believe that the statement will stand the test of enquiry.

¹⁰**Sokrates:** We shall know better, my good friend, in a little while. The point which I first wish to understand is whether [piety]—[that which is holy]—is loved by the gods *because* it's [pious], or [is it pious] because it's loved [by] the gods.

Euthuphro: I do not understand your meaning, Sokrates.

Sokrates: I will endeavor to explain: we speak of 'carrying' and we speak of 'being carried', of 'leading' and 'being led', 'seeing' and 'being seen'. You know that in all such cases there is a difference, and you know also in what the difference lies?

Euthuphro: I think that I understand.

Sokrates: And isn't 'that which is loved' distinct from 'that which loves'?

Euthuphro: Certainly.

Sokrates: Well now tell me, is 'that which is carried' in this state of 'carried' *because* it's being carried, or for some other reason?

Euthuphro: No; that is the reason.

Sokrates: And the same is true of what is led and of what is seen?

Euthuphro: True.

Sokrates: And a thing isn't 'seen' *because* it's visible, but conversely, [it's] visible because it's seen; nor is a thing led *because* it's in the state of being led, or carried *because* it's in the state of being carried, but the converse [true]. And now I think, Euthuphro, that my meaning will be intelligible; and my meaning is, that *any state of action or passion implies previous action or passion*. It doesn't *become* because it's becoming, but it's in a state of becoming because it becomes; neither does it suffer because it's in a state of suffering, but it's in a state of suffering because it suffers. Do you not agree?

Euthuphro: Yes.

Sokrates: Isn't that which is loved in some state either of becoming or suffering?

Euthuphro: Yes.

Sokrates: And the same holds as in the previous instances; the state of being loved *follows the act* of being loved, and not the act the state.

Euthuphro: Certainly.

Sokrates: And what do you say of piety, Euthuphro: isn't piety—according to your definition— loved by all the gods?

Euthuphro: Yes.

Sokrates: *Because* it's holy, or for some *other* reason?

Euthuphro: No, that is the reason.

Sokrates: It is loved *because* it's holy, [its] not holy because it's loved?

Euthuphro: Yes.

Sokrates: And that which is [desired by] the gods is loved by them, and is in a state to be loved [by] them *because* it's loved [by] them?

Euthuphro: Certainly.

Sokrates: Then that which is dear to the gods, Euthuphro, isn't holy, nor is that which is holy loved [by] god, as you affirm; but they are two different things.

Euthuphro: How do you mean, Sokrates?

Sokrates: I mean to say that [piety] has been acknowledged by us to be loved [by] god *because* it's holy, [it is] not holy *because* it's loved [by god].

Euthuphro: Yes.

Sokrates: [On the other hand] that which is dear to the gods is dear to them *because* it's loved by them, [it is] not loved by them *because it's dear to them*.

Euthuphro: True.

Sokrates: [So], friend Euthuphro, if that which is [pious] is the same [as] that which is dear to god, and is loved because it's holy, then that which is dear to god would have been loved [because it ¹¹was] dear to god; but if that which [is] dear to god is dear to him *because* [it's] loved by him, then that which is holy would have been holy *because [it was] loved* by him. But now you see that the reverse is the case, and that they are quite different from one another. For one 'the god loved' (θεοφιλες – *theophiles*) is of a kind to be loved *because it's loved*, and the other is loved because it's *of a kind* (οσιον – *osion*) *to be loved*. Thus you appear to me, Euthuphro, when I ask you what is the *essence* of [piety], to [only be offering] an *attribute* and not the *essence*—the attribute of being loved by all the gods.

But you still refuse to explain to me the [essence] of [piety]. And therefore, if you please, I will ask you not to hide your treasure, but to tell me once more what holiness or piety *really is*, whether [it's] dear to the gods or not (for that is a matter about which we will not quarrel), and [also tell me] what impiety [is]?

Euthuphro: I really do not know, Sokrates, how to express what I mean. For somehow or other our arguments, on whatever ground we rest them, seem to turn [a]round and walk away from us.

Sokrates: Your [statements], Euthuphro, are like the handiwork of my ancestor Daidalos³⁵ and if I were the [speaker] or [maker] of them, you might say that my arguments walk away and will not remain fixed where they are placed because I am a descendant of his. But now, since *these notions are your own*, you must find some other [joke], for they certainly, as you yourself allow, show an inclination to be on the move.

Euthuphro: [No], Sokrates, I shall *still* say that you are the Daidalos who sets arguments in motion; not I, but you make them move or go round, for they would never have stirred, as far as I am concerned.

Sokrates: Then I must be a *greater* than Daidalos: for whereas he only made his own inventions move, I move those of other people as well! And the beauty of it is, that I would

³⁵ Daidalos is a mythical figure in Greek culture most noted for his creation of the labyrinth of Crete and the tragic story of his son Ikaros who's wax wings melted when he flew too close to the sun. Athenians, like all Classical Greeks, traced their tribal lineages back to mythical figures. Daidalos had been appropriated in Athens and held to be the great-grandson of Eretheos, the mythical founder and first king of Athens. Thus, Sokrates, an Athenian, can claim to be descended from Daidalos. Daidalos was also associated with tool-making and industrious invention. Sokrates' reference to his statues "walking away" reflects Daidalos' supposed mechanical innovations.

rather not. For I would give the wisdom of Daidalos, and the wealth of Tantalos,³⁶ to be able to detain them and keep them fixed.

But enough of this! As I perceive that you are lazy, I will myself endeavor to show you how you might instruct me in the nature of piety; and I hope that you will not grudge your labor.

Tell me, then, isn't that which is pious [also] *just*?

Euthuphro: Yes.

¹²**Sokrates:** And is all [that] is just [also] pious? Or, is that which is pious all just, but that which is just, only [a] part, and not all, pious?

Euthuphro: I do not understand you, Sokrates.

Sokrates: And yet, I know that you are as much wiser than I am, as you are younger. But, as I was saying, revered friend, the abundance of your wisdom makes you lazy. Please exert yourself, for there is no difficulty in understanding me. What I mean I [can] explain [with] an illustration. The poet sings:

*Of Zeus, the author and creator of all these things, You will not tell: for where there is fear there is also reverence.*³⁷

Now I disagree with this poet. Shall I tell you in what respect?

Euthuphro: By all means.

Sokrates: I [would] not say that "where there is fear there is also reverence." For I am sure that many [people] fear poverty and disease, and [similar] evils. But, I do not [think] that they [revere] the [things they] fear.

Euthuphro: Very true.

Sokrates: But where[ver] reverence is, *there* [you find] fear. For he who has a feeling of reverence and shame about the commission of any action, fears and is afraid of [a bad] reputation.

Euthuphro: No doubt.

³⁶ Tantalos is a mythical figure associated with the underworld. He was a demigod who incurred the wrath of Zeus and was punished by banishment to Tartaros where he stood in a pool of water, under a fruit tree. When he grew hungry, the branches of the tree would withdraw from him so he could never reach the fruit. When he grew thirsty, the water would retreat so he could never quench his thirst. Sokrates' reference to the "wealth" of Tantalos could refer to the fact that he was never able to consume the wealth (the fruit and water) he had at his disposal and thus he was always "wealthy". It could also be a reference to one of the sins for which he was supposedly punished, stealing a golden dog made by the god Hephaestos. Or, it might simply refer to the bounty of the underworld (i.e., gold and silver) with which he is associated.

³⁷ Stasinos of Cyprus (c. 800 BCE), purported author of the epic poem Kupria.

Sokrates: [Therefore], we are wrong in saying that where[ever] there is fear there is also reverence. [Rather] we *should* say, where[ever] there is reverence, there is also fear. But there isn't always reverence where there is fear; for fear is a more extended notion, and *reverence is a part of fear*, just as the odd is a part of number, and number is a more extended notion than the odd. I suppose that you follow me now?

Euthuphro: Quite well.

Sokrates: That was the sort of question which I meant when I asked whether the just is always pious, or the pious always just; and whether there may not be justice where there isn't piety. For justice is the more extended notion [and] piety is only a part. Do you [disagree]?

Euthuphro: No, I think that you are quite right.

Sokrates: Then, if piety is a *part* of justice, I suppose that we should enquire [into] what part?

If you had pursued the enquiry in the previous cases—for instance, if you had asked me what is an even number, and what part of number the even is, I should have had no difficulty in replying, “a number which represents a [geometrical] figure having two equal sides.” Do you not agree?

Euthuphro: Yes, I quite agree.

Sokrates: In like manner, I want you to tell me what *part* of justice piety [is], that I may be able to tell Meletos not to do me injustice, or indict me for impiety, as I am now adequately instructed by you in the nature of piety, and its opposite.

Euthuphro: Piety, Sokrates, appears to me to be that part of justice which [cares for]³⁸ the gods, as the other part of justice [cares for] men.

Sokrates: That is good, Euthuphro; yet still there is a little point about which I should like to have ¹³further information. What is the meaning of ‘care for’? The term ‘care’ can hardly be used in the same sense when applied to the gods as when applied to other things. For instance, horses are said to require ‘care’, and not every person is able to [care for] them, but only a person [knowledgeable]³⁹ in horsemanship. [Isn't that right]?

³⁸ The Greek term here is *θραπειαν-thrapeian* from which the English word ‘therapy’ is derived. Jowett follows Fowler in translating it as ‘attention’. I agree with Grube that ‘care’ is a far better translation. One might “pay attention” to something or someone without having the kind of commitment to improvement which is clearly indicated by the context of Sokrates’ analogies of horsemen, herdsmen and dog trainers.

³⁹ The Greek term here is *επισταται-epistatai*, which is a cognate of *επισταμαι-epistamai*, which means ‘to know’ or ‘be knowledgeable’ to the point of practical application. Having an interest in something, even having a fascination or love of something does not bestow this kind of expertise. One might be fascinated with, or even love, horses and also fail to have the kind of knowledge required to make them an equestrian.

Euthuphro: Certainly.

Sokrates: [So] horsemanship is the [knowledge] of [caring for] horses?

Euthuphro: Yes.

Sokrates: Nor is everyone qualified to [care for] dogs, but only the huntsman?

Euthuphro: True.

Sokrates: And I should also conceive that the [knowledge]of the huntsman is the [knowledge]of attending to dogs?

Euthuphro: Yes.

Sokrates: As the [knowledge] of the ox-herd is the [knowledge]of attending to oxen?

Euthuphro: Very true.

Sokrates: In like manner piety and reverence is the art of [caring for] the gods? That would be your meaning, Euthuphro?

Euthuphro: Yes.

Sokrates: And isn't [care (*therapeia*)] always designed *for the good or benefit of* that to which the attention is given? As in the case of horses, you may observe that when attended to by the [equestrian's] art they are benefited and improved, are they not?

Euthuphro: True.

Sokrates: As the dogs are benefited by the huntsman's [knowledge], and the oxen by the art of the ox herd, and all other things are tended or attended for their good and not for their [harm]?

Euthuphro: Certainly, not for their [harm].

Sokrates: But for their [benefit]?

Euthuphro: Of course.

Sokrates: Then does holiness—which has been defined [as caring for] the gods—benefit or improve them? Would you say that when you do a [pious] act you make any of the gods better?

Euthuphro: No! That was certainly *not* what I meant.

Sokrates: And I, Euthuphro, never [thought] you did. I asked you the question about the nature of the [care], because I thought that you did *not*.

Euthuphro: You do me justice, Sokrates; that isn't the sort of [care] I mean.

Sokrates: Good! But I must still ask *what is* this [care] to the gods which is called 'piety'?

Euthuphro: It is such, Sokrates, as [slaves] show to their masters.

Sokrates: I understand—a sort of [assistance] to the gods.

Euthuphro: Exactly.

Sokrates: Medicine is also a sort of [assistance] or service, having in view the attainment of some object—would you not say of health?

Euthuphro: I [would]!

Sokrates: Again, there is an art which [assists] the ship-builder with a view to the attainment of some result?

Euthuphro: Yes, Sokrates, with a view to the building a ship.

Sokrates: As there is an art which [assists] the house-builder: with a view to the building of a house?

Euthuphro: Yes.

Sokrates: And now tell me, my good friend, about the art which [assists] the gods: what work does that help to accomplish? You must surely know if, as you say, you are of all [living] men the one who is [most knowledgeable] in religion.

Euthuphro: And I speak the truth, Sokrates.

Sokrates: Tell me then, oh [please] tell me—what is that [good] work which the gods do [with] our [assistance]?

Euthuphro: Many and fair, Sokrates, are the works which they do.

¹⁴**Sokrates:** Why, so are those of a general, my friend. But the chief of them is easily told. Would you not say that victory in war is the chief of them?

Euthuphro: Certainly.

Sokrates: "Many and fair", are also the works of the husbandman, if I am not mistaken; but his chief work is the production of food from the earth?

Euthuphro: Exactly.

Sokrates: And of the many and fair things done by the gods, which is the chief or principal one?

Euthuphro: I have told you already, Sokrates, that to learn all these things accurately will be very tiresome. Let me simply say that piety or holiness is learning how to please the gods in word and deed, by prayers and sacrifices. Such piety, is the salvation of families and Cities, just as the impious, which is displeasing to the gods, is their ruin and destruction.

Sokrates: I think you could have answered the question I asked in fewer words, Euthuphro, if you had chosen. But I see that you are not disposed to [teach] me—clearly not. Why else, when we reached the [conclusion], did you turn, aside? Had you only answered me I [would] have truly learned [from] you the nature of piety.

Now, as the asker of a question is necessarily dependent on the answerer, whither he leads—I must follow and can only ask again, what is the pious, and what is piety? Do you mean that they are a sort of [expertise] of praying and sacrificing?

Euthuphro: Yes, I do.

Sokrates: And sacrificing is giving to the gods, and prayer is asking of the gods?

Euthuphro: Yes, Sokrates.

Sokrates: Upon this view, then, piety is [being expert in] asking and giving?

Euthuphro: You understand me capitally, Sokrates.

Sokrates: Yes, my friend. The reason is that I am a [follower] of your [expertise], and give my mind to it, and nothing which you say will be wasted upon me. Please then, tell me, what is the nature of this service to the gods? Do you mean that we [make] requests and give gifts to them?

Euthuphro: Yes, I do.

Sokrates: Isn't the right way of asking, to ask them what we [desire]?

Euthuphro: Certainly.

Sokrates: And the right way of giving is to give to them in return what they want [from] us. There would be no [point] in an art which gives to [someone] that which he doesn't want.

Euthuphro: Very true, Sokrates.

Sokrates: Then piety, Euthuphro, is an art which gods and men have [for] doing business with one another?

Euthuphro: That is an expression which you may use, if you like.

Sokrates: But I have no particular liking for anything *but* the truth. I wish, however, that you ¹⁵would tell me *what benefit accrues* to the gods from our gifts. There is no doubt about what they give to us; for there is no good thing which they do not give; but *how we can give any good thing to them in return is far from being equally clear*. If they give everything and we give nothing, that must be an [enterprise] in which we have the advantage of them!

Euthuphro: And do you imagine, Sokrates, that any benefit accrues to the gods from our gifts?

Sokrates: But if not, Euthuphro, what is the meaning of ‘gifts’, which are conferred by us upon the gods?

Euthuphro: What else, but tributes of honor; and, as I was just now saying, what pleases them?

Sokrates: Piety, then, is pleasing to the gods, but not beneficial or dear to them?

Euthuphro: I should say that nothing could be clearer.

Sokrates: Then once more the assertion is repeated: piety is [what is pleasing] to the gods?

Euthuphro: Certainly.

Sokrates: And when you say this, can you wonder at your words not standing firm, but walking away? Will you accuse *me* of being the Daidalos who makes them walk away, not perceiving that there is another and far greater artist than Daidalos who makes them go round in a circle, and he is yourself; for the argument, as you will perceive, comes round to the same point. Were we not saying that the holy or pious was *not the same* with that which is loved of the gods? Have you forgotten?

Euthuphro: I quite remember.

Sokrates: And [now you are] saying that what is loved of the gods is holy; and isn’t this the same as what is dear to them—do you see?

Euthuphro: True.

Sokrates: Then either we were wrong in [our] former assertion; or, if we were right then, we are wrong now.

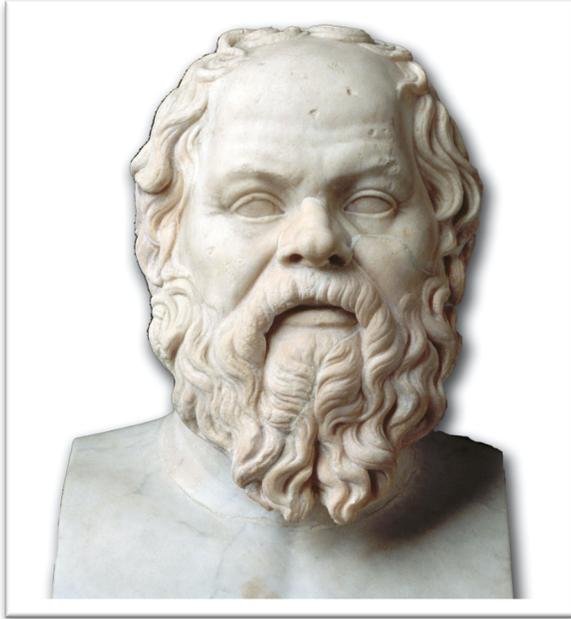
Euthuphro: One of the two must be true.

Sokrates: Then we must begin again and ask, What *is* piety? That is an enquiry which I shall never be weary of pursuing as far as in me lies; and I entreat you not to scorn me, but to apply your mind to the utmost, and tell me the truth. For, if *any* man knows, you are he; and therefore I must detain you, like Proteus,⁴⁰ until you tell. If you had not certainly known the nature of piety and impiety, I am confident that you would never, on behalf of a serf, have charged your aged father with murder. You would not have run such a risk of doing wrong in the sight of the gods, and you would have had too much respect for the opinions of men. I am sure, therefore, that you know the nature of piety and impiety. Speak out then, my dear Euthuphro, and do not hide your knowledge.

Euthuphro: Another time, Sokrates; for I am in a hurry, and must go now.

¹⁶**Sokrates:** Alas my companion! Will you leave me in despair? I was hoping that you would instruct me in the nature of piety and impiety; and then I might have cleared myself of Meletos and his indictment. I would have told him that I had been enlightened by Euthuphro, and had given up rash innovations and speculations, in which I indulged only through ignorance, and that now I am about to lead a better life.

⁴⁰ Probably a reference to Proteus of Egypt from Herodotos' The History, where he gives a version of the abduction of Helen by Paris. Paris' ship is blown off course and lands in Egypt. Proteus is the king of Egypt who detains Paris and demands an explanation of his actions.



KRITO **By: PLATO**

Translated by: BENJAMIN JOWETT

Additions, corrections, and footnotes by Barry F. Vaughan⁴¹

Persons of the Dialogue: Sokrates and Krito

Scene: Sokrates' Prison Cell, Athens

⁴³**Sokrates:** Why have you come at this hour, Krito?
It must be quite early.

Krito: Yes, certainly.

Sokrates: What is the exact time?

Krito: The dawn is breaking.

Sokrates: I wonder the keeper of the prison would let you in.

Krito: He knows me because I often come, Sokrates; moreover, I have done him a kindness.

Sokrates: And are you only just come?

Krito: No, I came some time ago.

Sokrates: Then why did you sit and say nothing, instead of awakening me at once?

Krito: Why, indeed, Sokrates, I myself would rather not have all this sleeplessness and sorrow. But I have been wondering at your peaceful slumbers, and that was the reason why I did not awaken you, because I wanted you to be out of pain. I have always thought you happy in the calmness of your temperament; but never did I see the like of the easy, cheerful way in which you bear this calamity.

Sokrates: Why, Krito, when a man has reached my age he ought not to be repining at the prospect of death.

⁴¹ This text is adapted from the Project Gutenberg's Crito, by Plato, www.gutenberg.org. For the full text visit the Project Gutenberg website. This edited version is intended for academic or personal use and may not be sold or used for profit.

I have changed spellings of proper names to more accurately match the Greek text as opposed to the more traditional Latinized spellings which were dominant in Jowett's time. I have also changed UK spellings to US spellings where appropriate, as well as made clarifications in translation (noted with brackets) and have added explanatory footnotes.

Krito: And yet other old men find themselves in similar misfortunes, and age does not prevent them from repining.

Sokrates: That may be. But you have not told me why you come at this early hour.

Krito: I come to bring you a message which is sad and painful; not as I believe, to yourself, but to all of us who are your friends, and saddest of all to me.

Sokrates: What! I suppose that the ship has come from Delos,⁴² on the arrival of which I am to die?

Krito: No, the ship has not actually arrived, but she will probably be here today, as persons who have come from Sunium tell me that they left her there; and therefore tomorrow, Sokrates, will be the last day of your life.

Sokrates: Very well, Krito; if such is the will of God, I am willing; but my belief is that there will be a delay of a day.

⁴⁴**Krito:** Why do you say this?

Sokrates: I will tell you. I am to die on the day after the arrival of the ship?

Krito: Yes; that is what the authorities say.

Sokrates: But I do not think that the ship will be here until tomorrow; this I gather from a vision which I had last night, or rather only just now, when you fortunately allowed me to sleep.

Krito: And what was the nature of the vision?

Sokrates: There came to me the likeness of a woman, fair and comely, clothed in white raiment, who called to me and said: Oh, Sokrates—"The third day hence, to Phthia shalt thou go."⁴³

Krito: What a singular dream, Sokrates!

Sokrates: There can be no doubt about the meaning, Krito, I think.

⁴² The Island of Delos was the home of a temple of Apollo and the center of an Apollo cult common to Ionian Greeks. The Delia were a series of religious festivals celebrated on the island and served to build bonds of trust between the members of the Delian League, or Ionian Alliance. Around 426 BCE Athens took a central role in conducting the festivals each year. During the period of the festival it was considered sacrilegious to shed blood, thus executions had to be delayed until after the festival concluded. Sokrates' trial concluded on the eve of the festival which is why he was being held in jail after his trial.

⁴³ Homer, *Illiad*, IX.363. Phthia was the homeland of Axilles and the Murmidones.

Krito: Yes: the meaning is only too clear. But, oh, my beloved Sokrates, let me entreat you once more to take my advice and escape. For if you die I shall not only lose a friend who can never be replaced, but there is another evil: people who do not know you and me will believe that I might have saved you if I had been willing to give money, but that I did not care. Now, can there be a worse disgrace than this—that I should be thought to value money more than the life of a friend? For the many will not be persuaded that I wanted you to escape, and that you refused.

Sokrates: But why, my dear Krito, should we care about the opinion of the many? Good men, and they are the only persons who are worth considering, will think of these things truly as they happened.

Krito: But do you see, Sokrates, that the opinion of the many must be regarded, as is evident in your own case, because they can do the very greatest evil to anyone who has lost their good opinion.

Sokrates: I only wish, Krito, that they could; for then they could also do the greatest good, and that would be well. But the truth is, that they can do neither good nor evil: they cannot make a man wise or make him foolish; and whatever they do is the result of chance.

Krito: Well, I will not dispute about that; but please to tell me, Sokrates, whether you are not acting out of regard to me and your other friends: are you not afraid that if you escape hence we may get into trouble with the informers for having stolen you away, and lose either the whole or a great part of our property; or that even a worse evil may happen to us? ⁴⁵Now, if this is your fear, be at ease; for in order to save you, we ought surely to run this or even a greater risk; be persuaded, then, and do as I say.

Sokrates: Yes, Krito, that is one fear which you mention, but by no means the only one.

Krito: Fear not. There are persons who at no great cost are willing to save you and bring you out of prison; and as for the informers, you may observe that they are far from being exorbitant in their demands; a little money will satisfy them. My means, which, as I am sure, are ample, are at your service, and if you have a scruple about spending all mine, here are strangers who will give you the use of theirs; and one of them, Simmias the Theban, has brought a sum of money for this very purpose; and Kebes and many others are willing to spend their money too. I say, therefore, do not on that account hesitate about making your escape, and do not say, as you did in the court, that you will have a difficulty in knowing what to do with yourself if you escape. For men will love you in other places to which you may go, and not in Athens only; there are friends of mine in Thessaly, if you like to go to them, who will value and protect you, and no Thessalian will give you any trouble.

Nor can I think that you are justified, Sokrates, in betraying your own life when you might be saved; this is playing into the hands of your enemies and destroyers; and moreover I should say that you were betraying your children; for you might bring them up and educate them; instead of which you go away and leave them, and they will have to take their chance; and if they do not meet with the usual fate of orphans, there will be small thanks to you. No man

should bring children into the world who is unwilling to persevere to the end in their nurture and education. But you are choosing the easier part, as I think, not the better and manlier, which would rather have become one who professes virtue in all his actions, like yourself.

And, indeed, I am ashamed not only of you, but of us who are your friends, when I reflect that this entire business of yours will be attributed to our want of courage. The trial need never have come on, or might have been brought to another issue; and the end of all, which is the crowning absurdity, will seem to have been permitted by us, ⁴⁶through cowardice and baseness, who might have saved you, as you might have saved yourself, if we had been good for anything (for there was no difficulty in escaping); and we did not see how disgraceful, Sokrates, and also miserable all this will be to us as well as to you. Make your mind up then, or rather have your mind already made up, for the time of deliberation is over, and there is only one thing to be done, which must be done, if at all, this very night, and which any delay will render all but impossible; I beseech you therefore, Sokrates, to be persuaded by me, and to do as I say.

Sokrates: Dear Krito, your zeal is invaluable, if a right one; but if wrong, *the greater the zeal the greater the evil*; and therefore we ought to consider whether these things shall be done or not. For I am and always have been one of those natures who must be guided by reason, whatever the reason may be which upon reflection appears to me to be the best; and now that this fortune has come upon me, I cannot put away the reasons which I have before given: the principles which I have hitherto honored and revered I still honor, and unless we can find other and better principles on the instant, I am certain not to agree with you; no, not even if the power of the multitude could inflict many more imprisonments, confiscations, deaths, frightening us like children with hobgoblin terrors. But what will be the fairest way of considering the question? Shall I return to your old argument about the opinions of men? Some of which are to be regarded, and others, as we were saying, are not to be regarded. Now were we right in maintaining this before I was condemned? And has the argument which was once good now proved to be talk for the sake of talking; in fact an amusement only, and altogether vanity? That is what I want to consider with your help, Krito: whether, under my present circumstances, the argument appears to be in any way different or not; and is to be allowed by me or disallowed. That argument, which, as I believe, is maintained by many who assume to be authorities, was to the effect, as I was saying, that the opinions of some men are to be regarded, and of other men not to be regarded.

Now you, Krito, are a disinterested person who are not going to die tomorrow—at least, there is no ⁴⁷human probability of this, and you are therefore not liable to be deceived by the circumstances in which you are placed. Tell me, then, whether I am right in saying that some opinions, and the opinions of some men only, are to be valued, and other opinions, and the opinions of other men, are not to be valued. I ask you whether I was right in maintaining this?

Krito: Certainly.

Sokrates: The good are to be regarded, and not the bad?

Krito: Yes.

Sokrates: And the opinions of the wise are good, and the opinions of the unwise are evil?

Krito: Certainly.

Sokrates: And what was said about another matter? Was the disciple in gymnastics supposed to attend to the praise and blame and opinion of every man, or of one man only—his physician or trainer, whoever that was?

Krito: Of one man only.

Sokrates: And he ought to fear the censure and welcome the praise of that one only, and not of the many?

Krito: That is clear.

Sokrates: And he ought to live and train, and eat and drink in the way which seems good to his single master who has understanding, rather than according to the opinion of all other men put together?

Krito: True.

Sokrates: And if he disobeys and disregards the opinion and approval of the one, and regards the opinion of the many who have no understanding, will he not suffer evil?

Krito: Certainly he will.

Sokrates: And what will the evil be, whither tending and what affecting, in the disobedient person?

Krito: Clearly, affecting the body, that is what is destroyed by the evil.

Sokrates: Very good. And is not this true, Krito, of other things which we need not separately enumerate? In the matter of just and unjust, fair and foul, good and evil, which are the subjects of our present consultation, ought we to follow the opinion of the many and to fear them; or the opinion of the one man who has understanding, and whom we ought to fear and reverence more than all the rest of the world: and whom deserting we shall destroy and injure that principle in us which may be assumed to be improved by justice and deteriorated by injustice; is there not such a principle?

Krito: Certainly there is, Sokrates.

Sokrates: Take a parallel instance: if, acting under the advice of men who have no understanding, we destroy that which is improvable by health and deteriorated by disease—when that has been destroyed, I say, would life be worth having? And that is—the body?

Krito: Yes.

Sokrates: Could we live, having an evil and corrupted body?

Krito: Certainly not.

Sokrates: And will life be worth having, if that higher part of man be depraved, which is improved by justice and deteriorated by injustice? ⁴⁸Do we suppose that principle, whatever it may be in man, which has to do with justice and injustice, to be inferior to the body?

Krito: Certainly not.

Sokrates: More honored, then?

Krito: Far more honored.

Sokrates: Then, my friend, we must not regard what the many say of us: but what he, the one man who has understanding of just and unjust, will say, and what the truth will say. And therefore you begin in error when you suggest that we should regard the opinion of the many about just and unjust, good and evil, honorable and dishonorable. Well, someone will say, "But the many can kill us."

Krito: Yes, Sokrates; that will clearly be the answer.

Sokrates: That is true: but still I find with surprise that the old argument is, as I conceive, unshaken as ever. And I should like to know whether I may say the same of another proposition—that not life, but a good life, is to be chiefly valued?

Krito: Yes, that also remains.

Sokrates: And a good life is equivalent to a just and honorable one—that holds also?

Krito: Yes, that holds.

Sokrates: From these premises I proceed to argue the question whether I ought or ought not to try to escape without the consent of the Athenians: and if I am clearly right in escaping, then I will make the attempt; but if not, I will abstain. The other considerations which you mention, of money and loss of character, and the duty of educating children, are, as I hear, only the doctrines of the multitude, who would be as ready to call people to life, if they were able, as they are to put them to death—and with as little reason. But now, since the argument has thus far prevailed, the only question which remains to be considered is, whether we shall do rightly either in escaping or in suffering others to aid in our escape and paying them in money and thanks, or whether we shall not do rightly; and if the latter, then death or any other calamity which may ensue on my remaining here must not be allowed to enter into the calculation.

Krito: I think that you are right, Sokrates; how then shall we proceed?

Sokrates: Let us consider the matter together, and do you either refute me if you can, and I will be convinced; or else cease, my dear friend, from repeating to me that I ought to escape against the wishes of the Athenians: for I am extremely desirous to be persuaded by you, but not against my own better judgment. ⁴⁹And now please to consider my first position, and do your best to answer me.

Krito: I will do my best.

Sokrates: Are we to say that we are never intentionally to do wrong, or that in one way we ought and in another way we ought not to do wrong, or is doing wrong always evil and dishonorable, as I was just now saying, and as has been already acknowledged by us? Are all our former admissions which were made within a few days to be thrown away? And have we, at our age, been earnestly discoursing with one another all our life long only to discover that we are no better than children? Or are we to rest assured, in spite of the opinion of the many, and in spite of consequences whether better or worse, of the truth of what was then said, that injustice is always an evil and dishonor to him who acts unjustly? Shall we affirm that?

Krito: Yes.

Sokrates: Then we must do no wrong?

Krito: Certainly not.

Sokrates: Nor when injured, injure in return, as the many imagine; for we must injure no one at all?

Krito: Clearly not.

Sokrates: Again, Krito, may we do evil?

Krito: Surely not, Sokrates.

Sokrates: And what of doing evil in return for evil, which is the morality of the many—is that just or not?

Krito: Not just.

Sokrates: For doing evil to another is the same as injuring him?

Krito: Very true.

Sokrates: Then we ought not to retaliate or render evil for evil to anyone, whatever evil we

may have suffered from him. But I would have you consider, Krito, whether you really mean what you are saying. For this opinion has never been held, and never will be held, by any considerable number of persons; and those who are agreed and those who are not agreed upon this point have no common ground, and can only despise one another when they see how widely they differ. Tell me, then, whether you agree with and assent to my first principle, that neither injury nor retaliation nor warding off evil by evil is ever right. And shall that be the premise of our argument? Or do you decline and dissent from this? For this has been of old and is still my opinion; but, if you are of another opinion, let me hear what you have to say. If, however, you remain of the same mind as formerly, I will proceed to the next step.

Krito: You may proceed, for I have not changed my mind.

Sokrates: Then I will proceed to the next step, which may be put in the form of a question: ought a man to do what he admits to be right, or ought he to betray the right?

Krito: He ought to do what he *thinks* right.

Sokrates: But if this is true, what is the application? In leaving the prison against the will of the Athenians, do I wrong any, ⁵⁰or rather do I not wrong those whom I ought least to wrong? Do I not desert the principles which were acknowledged by us to be just? What do you say?

Krito: I cannot tell, Sokrates, for I do not know.

Sokrates: Then consider the matter in this way: imagine that I am about to play [hooky] (you may call the proceeding by any name which you like), and the Laws and the government come and interrogate me: "Tell us, Sokrates," they say; "what are you about? Are you going by an act of yours to overturn us—the Laws and the whole [Polis], as far as in you lies? Do you imagine that a [Polis] can subsist and not be overthrown, in which the decisions of Law have no power, but are set aside and overthrown by individuals?"

What will be our answer, Krito, to these and the like words? Anyone, and especially a clever rhetorician, will have a good deal to urge about the evil of setting aside the Law which requires a sentence to be carried out; and we might reply, "Yes; but the [Polis] has injured us and given an unjust sentence." Suppose I say that?

Krito: Very good, Sokrates.

Sokrates: "And was that our agreement with you?" the Law would say. "Or, were you to abide by the [judgments] of the [Polis]?" And if I were to express astonishment at their saying this, the Law would probably add: "Answer, Sokrates, instead of opening your eyes: you are in the habit of asking and answering questions. Tell us what complaint you have to make against us which justifies you in attempting to destroy us and the [Polis]? In the first place did we not bring you into existence? Your father married your mother by our aid and begat you. Say whether you have any objection to urge against those of us who regulate marriage?"

“None,” I should reply.

"Or against those of us who regulate the system of nurture and education of children in which you were trained? Were not the Laws, who have the charge of this, right in commanding your father to train you in music and gymnastic?"

“Right,” I should reply.

"Well, then, since you were brought into the world and nurtured and educated by us, can you deny in the first place that *you are our child and slave*, as your fathers were before you? And if this is true you are not on equal terms with us; nor can you think that you have a right to do to us what we are doing to you. ⁵¹Would you have any right to strike or revile or do any other evil to a father or to your master, if you had one, when you have been struck or reviled by him, or received some other evil at his hands? You would not say this? And because we think right to destroy you, do you think that you have any right to destroy us in return, and your country as far as in you lies? And will you, oh professor of true virtue, say that you are justified in this? Has a philosopher like you failed to discover that our country is more to be valued and higher and holier far than mother or father or any ancestor, and more to be regarded in the eyes of the gods and of men of understanding, also to be soothed, and gently and reverently entreated when angry, even more than a father, and if not persuaded, obeyed? And when we are punished by her, whether with imprisonment or stripes, the punishment is to be endured in silence; and if she leads us to wounds or death in battle, thither we follow as is right; neither may anyone yield or retreat or leave his rank, but whether in battle or in a court of law, or in any other place, he must do what his [Polis] and his country order him; or he must change their view of what is just: and if he may do no violence to his father or mother, much less may he do violence to his [Polis]."

What answer shall we make to this, Krito? Do the Laws speak truly, or do they not?

Krito: I think that they do.

Sokrates: Then the Laws will say: "Consider, Sokrates, if this is true, that in your present attempt you are going to do us wrong. For, after having brought you into the world, and nurtured and educated you, and given you and every other citizen a share in every good that we had to give, we further proclaim and give the right to every Athenian, that if he does not like us when he has come of age and has seen the ways of the city, and made our acquaintance, he may go where he pleases and take his goods with him; and none of us Laws will forbid him or interfere with him. Any of you who does not like us and the [Polis], and who wants to go to a colony or to any other [Polis], may go where he likes, and take his goods with him. But he who has experience of the manner in which we order justice and administer the [Polis], and still remains, has entered into an implied contract that he will do as we command him. And he who disobeys us is, as we maintain, thrice wrong: first, because in disobeying us he is disobeying his parents; secondly, because we are the authors of his education; thirdly, because he has made an agreement with us that he will duly obey our commands; and he neither obeys them nor convinces us that our commands are wrong;

and we do not rudely impose them, but give him the alternative of obeying or convincing us; that is what we offer, and he does neither. These are the sort of accusations to which, as we were saying, you, Sokrates, will be exposed if you accomplish your intentions; you, above all other Athenians."

Suppose I ask, why is this? They will justly retort upon me that I above all other men have acknowledged the agreement. "There is clear proof," they will say, "Sokrates, that we and the city were not displeasing to you. Of all Athenians you have been the most constant resident in the city, which, as you never leave, you may be supposed to love. For you never went out of the city either to see the games, except once when you went to the Isthmus, or to any other place unless when you were on military service; nor did you travel as other men do. Nor had you any curiosity to know other Cities or their laws: your affections did not go beyond us and our [Polis]; we were your special favorites, and you acquiesced in our government of you; and this is the [Polis] in which you begat your children, which is a proof of your satisfaction. Moreover, you might, if you had liked, have fixed the penalty at banishment in the course of the trial—the [Polis] which refuses to let you go now would have let you go then. But you pretended that you preferred death to exile, and that you were not grieved at death. And now you have forgotten these fine sentiments, and pay no respect to us, the Laws, of whom you are the destroyer; and are doing what only a miserable slave would do, running away and turning your back upon the compacts and agreements which you made as a citizen. And first of all answer this very question: Are we right in saying that you agreed to be governed according to us in deed, and not in word only? Is that true or not?"

How shall we answer that, Krito? Must we not agree?

Krito: There is no help, Sokrates.

Sokrates: Then will they not say: "You, Sokrates, are breaking the covenants and agreements which you made with us at your leisure, not in any haste or under any compulsion or deception, but having had seventy years to think of them, during which time you were at liberty to leave the city, if we were not to your mind, or if our covenants appeared to you to be unfair. ⁵³You had your choice, and might have gone either to Lakedaemon or Krete, which you often praise for their good government, or to some other [Greek] or foreign [Polis]. Whereas you, above all other Athenians, seemed to be so fond of the [Polis], or, in other words, of us her Laws (for who would like a [Polis] that has no Law), that you never stirred out of her: the halt, the blind, the maimed, were not more stationary in her than you were. And now you run away and forsake your agreements. Not so, Sokrates, if you will take our advice; do not make yourself ridiculous by escaping out of the [Polis]."

"For just consider, if you transgress and err in this sort of way, what good will you do, either to yourself or to your friends? That your friends will be driven into exile and deprived of citizenship, or will lose their property, is tolerably certain; and you yourself, if you fly to one of the neighboring cities, as, for example, Thebes or Megara, both of which are well-governed cities, will come to them as an enemy, Sokrates, and their government will be against you, and all patriotic citizens will cast an evil eye upon you as a subverter of the Laws, and you will confirm in the minds of the judges the justice of their own condemnation

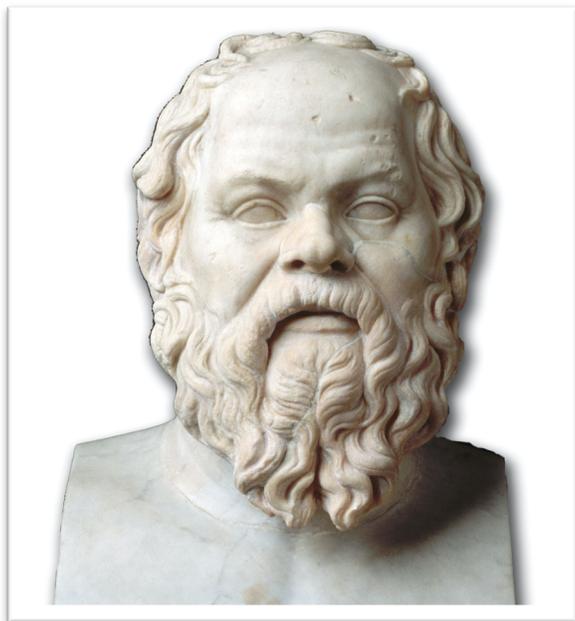
of you. For he who is a corrupter of the Laws is more than likely to be corrupter of the young and foolish portion of mankind. Will you then flee from well-ordered cities and virtuous men, and is existence worth having on these terms? Or will you go to them without shame, and talk to them, Sokrates? And what will you say to them? What you say here about virtue and justice and institutions and Laws being the best things among men? Would that be decent of you? Surely not. But if you go away from well-governed Cities to Krito's friends in Thessaly, where there is great disorder and license, they will be charmed to have the tale of your escape from prison, set off with ludicrous particulars of the manner in which you were wrapped in a goatskin or some other disguise, and metamorphosed as the fashion of runaways is—that is very likely; but will there be no one to remind you that in your old age you violated the most sacred Laws from a miserable desire of a little more life? Perhaps not, if you keep them in a good temper; but if they are out of temper you will hear many degrading things; you will live, but how? As the flatterer of all men, and the servant of all men; and doing what? Eating and drinking in Thessaly, having gone abroad in order that you may get a dinner. And where will be your fine sentiments about justice and virtue then? ⁵⁴Say that you wish to live for the sake of your children, that you may bring them up and educate them—will you take them into Thessaly and deprive them of Athenian citizenship? Is that the benefit which you would confer upon them? Or are you under the impression that they will be better cared for and educated here if you are still alive, although absent from them; for that your friends will take care of them? Do you fancy that if you are an inhabitant of Thessaly they will take care of them, and if you are an inhabitant of the other world they will not take care of them? [No], but if they who call themselves friends are truly friends, they surely will.

"Listen, then, Sokrates, to us who have brought you up. Think not of life and children first, and of justice afterwards, but of justice first, that you may be justified before the princes of the world below. For neither will you nor any that belong to you be happier or holier or [more just] in this life, or happier in another, if you do as Krito bids. Now you depart in innocence, a sufferer and not a doer of evil; a victim, not of the Laws, but of men. But if you go forth, returning evil for evil, and injury for injury, breaking the covenants and agreements which you have made with us, and wronging those whom you ought least to wrong, that is to say, yourself, your friends, your country, and us, we shall be angry with you while you live, and our brethren, the Laws in the world below, will receive you as an enemy; for they will know that you have done your best to destroy us. Listen, then, to us and not to Krito."

This is the voice which I seem to hear murmuring in my ears, like the sound of the flute in the ears of the mystic; that voice, I say, is humming in my ears, and prevents me from hearing any other. And I know that anything more which you may say will be in vain. Yet speak, if you have anything to say.

Krito: I have nothing to say, Sokrates.

Sokrates: Then let me follow the intimations of the will of God.



PROTAGORAS⁴⁴

By: Plato

Translated by: Benjamin Jowett

Editing, additions, corrections, and footnotes by Barry F. Vaughan

Persons of the dialogue: Sokrates (who is the narrator of the Dialogue to his Companion), Hippokrates, Alkibiades, Krinas, Protagoras, Hippias, Prodikos, Kallias

Scene: The House of Kallias

Protagoras (c. 490-c. 420 BCE) of the polis Abdera, in the northern region of Greece known as Thrace, was a professional teacher of wisdom. He would travel from city to city and, for a fee, would teach about civic virtue (i.e., how to be a good citizen

and human).

Most of what we know about Protagoras' views come from the works of Plato and it is important to remember that Plato did not agree with what he understood his teachings to entail. Plato, through the character 'Sokrates', calls him a 'sophist' (σοφιστῆ-sophiste) which literally means "wise man". And though the 'Sokrates' of Plato's dialogues often refers to him as being among the "wisest" of people he has met, it is clear that this is meant to be taken ironically as Sokrates will either refute or reduce Protagoras' arguments to absurdity.

*It is difficult to know exactly what Protagoras taught, but it is safe to say that he believed that virtue (ἀρεταί-aretai - i.e., human excellence) was something that could be acquired through instruction. That means that it must be, or depend, on some kind of knowledge. It is also clear that Protagoras believed that moral virtue, like civic law, was based on custom (νόμος-nomos) and not an absolute natural (or supra-natural) law (φύσις-phasis). In other words, he was a moral relativist. His most famous quote is: "Of all things, the measure is man; of the things that are, **that** they are, and of things that are not, [and] how they are not."⁴⁵*

In this dialogue, Sokrates will explore what kind of knowledge is or entails virtue, and whether or not it can be taught. In an ironic twist, Sokrates and Protagoras will switch positions with Sokrates concluding that not only is virtue a kind of knowledge, but that one and the same knowledge is the essence of all the cardinal virtues

⁴⁴ This text is adapted from the Project Gutenberg's Apology of Sokrates, by Plato, www.gutenberg.org. For the full text visit the Project Gutenberg website. This edited version is intended for academic or personal use and may not be sold or used for profit.

I have changed spellings of proper names to more accurately match the Greek text as opposed to the more traditional Latinized spellings which were dominant in Jowett's time. I have also changed UK spellings to US spellings where appropriate, as well as made clarifications in translation (noted with brackets) and have added explanatory footnotes.

⁴⁵ DK80b1. For an explanation of the DK (Diels-Kranz) numbering system for Pre-Socratic sources, see the "Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy" (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/diels-kr/>). For a good introduction and overview of views attributed to Protagoras see, The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and the Sophists, Robin Waterfield, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 205-221.

(i.e., temperance, piety, justice, wisdom, and courage). This Socratic position is often called the "Unity of Virtue".⁴⁶

The Scene

^{314e}When we entered, we found Protagoras taking a walk in the cloister; and next to him, on one side, were walking Kallias, the son of Hipponikos, and Paralos, the son of Perikles, who, by the mother's side, is his half-brother, and Xarmides, the son of Glaukon. On the other side of him were Xanthippus, the other son of Perikles, Philippides, the son of Philomelus; also Antimoerus of Mende, who of all the disciples of Protagoras is the most famous, and intends to make sophistry his profession.

A train of listeners followed him; the greater part of them appeared to be foreigners, whom Protagoras had brought with him out of the various cities visited by him in his journeys, he, like Orpheus, attracting them his voice, and they following. I should mention also that there were some Athenians in the company. Nothing delighted me more than the precision of their movements: they never got into his way at all; but when he and those who were with him turned back, then the band of listeners parted regularly on either side; he was always in front, and they wheeled round and took their places behind him in perfect order.

After him, as Homer says, "I lifted up my eyes and saw" Hippias the Elean sitting in the opposite cloister on a chair of state, and around him were seated on benches Eruximayos, the son of Akumenos, and Phaedrus the Myrrhinusian, and Andron the son of Androtion, and there were strangers whom he had brought with him from his native city of Elis, and some others: they were putting to Hippias certain physical and astronomical questions, and he, *ex cathedra*,⁴⁷ was determining their several questions to them, and discoursing of them.

Also, "my eyes beheld Tantalos"; for the Kean was at Athens: he had been lodged in a room which, in the days of Hipponikos, was a storehouse; but, as the house was full, Kallias had cleared this out and made the room into a guest-chamber. Now Prodikos was still in bed, wrapped up in sheepskins and bed-clothes, of which there seemed to be a great heap; and there was sitting by him on the couches near, Pausanias of the deme of Kerameis, and with Pausanias was a youth quite young, who is certainly remarkable for his good looks, and, if I am not mistaken, is also of a fair and gentle nature. I thought that I heard him called Agathon, and my suspicion is that he is the beloved of Pausanias. There was this youth, and also there were the two Adeimantuses, one the son of Kepis, and the other of Leukolophides, and some others. ³¹⁶ I was very anxious to hear what Prodikos was saying, for he seems to me to be an all-wise and inspired man; but I was not able to get into the inner circle, and his fine deep voice made an echo in the room which rendered his words inaudible.

⁴⁶ I have edited this version of the text by so that we begin with Socrates encountering Protagoras. The actual prologue of the dialogue (309a-314) I have placed at the end as an appendix. The subject of the that section is, "what *is* a Sophist?" Also note that I have excluded the digression from 335d to 349 in this edition. See page 113 below.

⁴⁷ Latin, "from the chair". The translator is using this Latin phrase, which refers to papal pronouncements that are equated to divine revelations in Catholic teaching, to emphasize the purported authority with which the various sophists would speak.

No sooner had we entered than there followed us Alkibiades the beautiful, as you say, and I believe you; and also Kritias the son of Kallaesxros.

On entering we stopped a little, in order to look about us, and then walked up to Protagoras, and I said: Protagoras, my friend Hippokrates and I have come to see you.

Do you wish, he said, to speak with me alone, or in the presence of the company?

Whichever you please, I said; you shall determine when you have heard the purpose of our visit.

And what is your purpose, he [asked]?

I must explain, I said, that my friend Hippokrates is a native Athenian; he is the son of Apollodoros, and of a great and prosperous house, and he is himself in natural ability quite a match for anybody of his own age. I believe that he aspires to political [greatness]; and this he thinks that conversation with you is most likely to procure for him. And now you can determine whether you would wish to speak to him of your teaching alone or in the presence of the company.

Thank you, Sokrates, for your consideration of me. For certainly a stranger finding his way into great cities, and persuading the flower of the youth in them to leave company of their kinsmen or any other acquaintances, old or young, and live with him, under the idea that they will be improved by his conversation, ought to be very cautious; great jealousies are aroused by his proceedings, and he is the subject of many enmities and conspiracies. Now the art of the Sophist is, as I believe, of great antiquity; but in ancient times those who practiced it, fearing this odium [i.e., bad reputation], veiled and disguised themselves under various names, some under that of poets, as Homer, Hesiod, and Simonides, some, of hierophants⁴⁸ and prophets, as Orpheus and Musaeus, and some, as I observe, even under the name of gymnastic-masters, like Ikkos of Tarentum, or the more recently celebrated Herodikos, now of Selumbria and formerly of Megara, who is a first-rate Sophist. Your own Agathokles pretended to be a musician, but was really an eminent Sophist; also Pythokleides [of Keios]; and there were many others;³¹⁷ and all of them, as I was saying, adopted these arts as veils or disguises because they were afraid of the [bad reputation] which they would incur.

But that is not my way, for I do not believe that they [accomplished] their purpose, which was to deceive [the rulers of their cities], who were not blinded by them; and as [for ordinary] people, they have no understanding, and only repeat what their rulers tell them. Now to run away, and to be caught in running away, is the very height of folly, and also greatly increases the exasperation of mankind; for they regard him who runs away as a rogue, in addition to any other objections which they have to him; and therefore I take an entirely opposite course, and acknowledge myself to be a Sophist and *instructor of mankind*; such an open acknowledgement appears to me to be a better sort of caution than concealment. Nor do I neglect other precautions, and therefore I hope, as I may say, by the favor of heaven that

⁴⁸ In Ancient Greece, a hierophant (ιεροφάντες-*ierophantes* – “those who show the holy”) was a person who initiated acolytes into the secrets of a religious system like the Eleusinian Mysteries.

no harm will come of the acknowledgment that *I am a Sophist*. And I have been now many years in the profession—for all my years when added up are many: there is no one here present of whom I might not be the father. Wherefore, I should much prefer conversing with you, if you want to speak with me, in the presence of the company.

As I suspected that he would like to have a little display and glorification in the presence of Prodikos and Hippias, and would gladly show us to them in the light of his admirers, I said: But why should we not summon Prodikos and Hippias and their friends to hear us?

Very good, he said.

Suppose, said Kallias, that we hold a council in which you may sit and discuss. This was agreed upon, and great delight was felt at the prospect of hearing wise men talk; we ourselves took the chairs and benches, and arranged them by Hippias, where the other benches had been already placed. Meanwhile Kallias and Alkibiades got Prodikos out of bed and brought in him and his companions.

Protagoras' Curriculum

When we were all seated, Protagoras said: Now that the company are assembled, Sokrates, tell me about the young man of whom you were just now speaking.

³¹⁸I replied: I will begin again at the same point, Protagoras, and tell you once more the purport of my visit: this is my friend Hippokrates, who is desirous of making your acquaintance; he would like to know what will happen to him if he associates with you. I have no more to say.

Protagoras answered: Young man, if you associate with me, on the very first day you will return home a better man than you came, and better on the second day than on the first, and better every day than you were on the day before.

When I heard this, I said: Protagoras, I do not at all wonder at hearing you say this; even at your age, and with all your wisdom, if any one were to teach you what you did not know before, you would become better no doubt: but please answer in a different way—I will explain how by an example. Let me suppose that Hippokrates, instead of desiring your acquaintance, wished to become acquainted with the young man Zeuxippus of Heraclea, who has lately been in Athens, and he had come to him as he has come to you, and had heard him say, as he has heard you say, that every day he would grow and become better if he associated with him: and then suppose that he were to ask him, "In what shall I become better, and in what shall I grow?"

Zeuxippus would answer, "In painting."

And suppose that he went to Orthagoras the Theban, and heard him say the same thing, and asked him, "In what shall I become better day by day?" He would reply, "In flute-playing."

Now *I want you to make the same sort of answer to this young man and to me*, who am asking questions on his account. When you say that on the first day on which he associates with you he will return home a better man, and on every day will grow in like manner—***In what***, Protagoras, will he be better, and *about what*?

When Protagoras heard me say this, he replied: You ask questions fairly, and I like to answer a question which is fairly put. If Hippokrates comes to me he will not experience the sort of drudgery with which other Sophists are in the habit of insulting their pupils; who, when they have just escaped from the arts, are taken and driven back into them by these teachers, and made to learn calculation, and astronomy, and geometry, and music (he gave a look at Hippias as he said this); but if he comes to me, he will learn that which he comes to learn.³¹⁹ And this is ***prudence in affairs, private as well as public***; he will learn to *order his own house* in the best manner, and he will be able to *speak and act for the best in the affairs of the city*.

Do I understand you, I said; and is your meaning that you teach *the art of politics*, and that you promise to make men good citizens?

That, Sokrates, is exactly the [claim] which I make.

Can Virtue be Taught?

Then, I said, you do indeed possess a noble art, if there is no mistake about this; for I will freely confess to you, Protagoras, that *I have a doubt whether this art is capable of being taught*, and yet I know not how to disbelieve your assertion. And I ought to tell you why I am of the opinion that this art cannot be taught or communicated by man to man. I say that the Athenians are a [well informed] people, and indeed they are esteemed to be such by the other Greeks.

I observe that when we [meet] together in the assembly, and the matter in hand relates to building, the builders are summoned as advisers; when the question is one of shipbuilding, then the ship-wrights; and the like of other arts which they think capable of being taught and learned. And if some person offers to give them advice who is not supposed by them to have any skill in the art, even though he be good-looking, and rich, and noble, they will not listen to him, but laugh and hoot at him, until either he is clamored down and retires of himself; or if he persist, he is dragged away or put out by the constables at the command of the prytanes.⁴⁹ This is their way of behaving about professors of the arts. But when the question is an affair of state, then everybody is free to have a say—carpenter, tinker, cobbler, sailor, passenger; rich and poor, high and low—any one who likes gets up, and no one reproaches him, as in the former case, with not having learned, and having no teacher, and yet giving

⁴⁹ A Prytaneis (πρυτανείας-*prutaneis*) was a quasi-religious political office responsible for calling to order, and keeping order in the Athenian assembly (ἐκκλησία-*ekklesia*). Since Athens was a direct democracy, all citizens were expected to participate in debate and vote on matters of public policy. This was accomplished through representatives of each “tribe” of Athens who were randomly selected to serve for one-tenth of each year. The prytanes were elected by the representatives to serve as executive committee members for each term of the assembly.

advice; evidently because they are under the impression that this sort of knowledge cannot be taught.

And not only is this true of the state, but of individuals [as well]; the best and wisest of our citizens are unable to impart their political wisdom to others: as for example, Perikles,⁵⁰ the father of these young men, ³²⁰who gave them excellent instruction in all that could be learned from masters, in his own [area] of politics neither taught them, nor gave them teachers; but they were allowed to wander at their own free will in a sort of hope that they would [discover] virtue [on their own]. Or take another example: there was Kleinias the younger brother of our friend Alkibiades, of whom this very same Perikles was the guardian; and he being in fact under the apprehension that Kleinias would be corrupted by Alkibiades, took him away, and placed him in the house of Ariphton to be educated; but before six months had elapsed, Ariphton sent him back, not knowing what to do with him.

And I could mention numberless other instances of persons who were good themselves, and never yet made any one else good, whether friend or stranger. Now I, Protagoras, having these examples before me, *am inclined to think that virtue cannot be taught*. But then again, when I listen to your words, I waver; and am disposed to think that there must be something in what you say, because I know that you have great experience, and learning, and invention. And I wish that you would, if possible, *show me a little more clearly that virtue can be taught*. Will you be so good?

That I will [gladly do], Sokrates. But what would you like? Shall I, as an elder, speak to you as younger men in a myth, or shall I argue out the question?

To this several of the company answered that he should choose for himself.

Well, then, he said, I think that the myth will be more interesting.

Protagoras' Myth of Creation⁵¹

Once upon a time there were gods only, and no mortal creatures. But when the time came that these also should be created, the gods fashioned them out of earth and fire and various mixtures of both elements in the interior of the earth; and when they were about to bring them into the light of day, they ordered Prometheus⁵² and Epimetheus to equip them, and to distribute to them severally their proper qualities. Epimetheus said to Prometheus: "Let me distribute, and do you inspect." This was agreed, and Epimetheus made the distribution. There were some to whom he gave strength without swiftness, while he equipped the weaker

⁵⁰ Perikles (c. 495-429 BCE) was widely thought to be the greatest political leader of Athens during the Classical period. He is responsible for rebuilding the city after it was destroyed during the second Persian War. His vision of a fully engaged citizenry also led him to enact political reforms that shifted power away from the old aristocratic families making Athens a genuine democracy.

⁵¹ The characters in Protagoras' myth are all derived from older poets, most notably Hesiod. You can read Hesiod's poem and the most popular Greek creation myth, Theogony ("birth of the gods") on my website: (<http://www.mesacc.edu/~barsp59601/text/201/notes/text/theogeny.html>).

⁵² The names 'Prometheus' and 'Epimetheus' were generally understood to mean "forethought" and "afterthought" from the Greek prefixes 'pro' and 'epi' during the Classical period. It is clear from the context of Protagoras' myth that this is his understanding of the names' meaning.

with swiftness; some he armed, and others he left unarmed; ³²¹and devised for the latter some other means of preservation, making some large, and having their size as a protection, and others small, whose nature was to fly in the air or burrow in the ground; this was to be their way of escape. Thus he compensat[ed] them [to prevent] any [species] from becoming extinct. And when he had provided against their destruction by one another, he contrived also a means of protecting them against the seasons of heaven; clothing them with close hair and thick skins sufficient to defend them against the winter cold and able to resist the summer heat, so that they might have a natural bed of their own when they wanted to rest; also he furnished them with hoofs and hair and hard and callous skins under their feet. Then he gave them varieties of food-herb of the soil to some, to others fruits of trees, and to others roots, and to some again he gave other animals as food. And some he made to have few young ones, while those who were their prey were very prolific; and in this manner the race was preserved.

Thus did Epimetheus, who, not being very wise, forgot that he had distributed among the brute animals all the qualities which he had to give—and when he came to [humans], who [were] still unprovided, he was terribly perplexed. Now while he was in this perplexity, Prometheus came to inspect [his brother's] distribution, and he found that the other animals were suitably furnished, but that [humans] alone [were] naked and shoeless, and had neither beds, nor [means] of defence.

The appointed hour was approaching when [humans] in [their] turn [were] to go forth into the light of day; and Prometheus, not knowing how he could [save humanity], stole the [wisdom] of Hephaestus and Athena,⁵³ and fire with [it] ([it] could neither have been acquired nor used without fire), and gave them to [humanity]. Thus [humans] had the wisdom necessary to [sustain] life, but [they did not have knowledge of politics]; for that was in the keeping of Zeus. Prometheus did not have the power to enter the citadel of heaven, where Zeus dwelt, who moreover had terrible sentinels. [Instead, he entered] by stealth into the workshop of Athena and Hephaestus, in which they used to practice their favorite arts, and carried off Hephaestus' art of working by fire, and also the art of Athena, and gave them to [human kind]. ³²²And in this way [humanity] was supplied with the means of life. But Prometheus is said to have been afterwards prosecuted for theft, [because of] the blunder of Epimetheus.

Now [humanity], having [some] of the divine attributes, was at first the only one of the animals who had any gods, because he alone was of their [nature]; and he would raise altars and images of them. He was not long in inventing articulate speech and names; and he also constructed houses and clothes and shoes and beds, and drew sustenance from the earth. Thus provided, mankind at first lived dispersed, and there were no cities. But the consequence was that they were destroyed by the wild beasts, for they were utterly weak in comparison of them, and their art was only sufficient to provide them with the means of life, and did not enable them to carry on war against the animals: food they had, but not as yet the art of government, of which the art of war is a part.

⁵³ The 'wisdom' of Hephaestus and Athena is generally understood to be technology, or tool making.

After a while the desire of self-preservation gathered them into cities; but when they were gathered together, having no art of government, they [treated] one another [wickedly], and [the cities fell to] destruction. Zeus feared that the entire race would be exterminated, and so he sent Hermes to them, bearing reverence and justice to be the ordering principles of cities and the bonds of friendship and conciliation. Hermes asked Zeus how he should impart *justice* and [*awareness of shame*] among men—should he distribute them as the arts are distributed; that is to say, to a favored few only, one skilled individual having enough of medicine or of any other art for many unskilled ones?

"Shall this be the manner in which I am to distribute *justice* and [*moral awareness*] among men, or shall I give them to all?"

"To all," said Zeus; "I should like them all to have a share; for cities cannot exist, if a few only share in the virtues, as in the arts. And further, make a law by my order, that he who has no part in [*moral awareness*] and *justice* shall be put to death, for he is a plague of the [city]."

And this is the reason, Sokrates, why the Athenians and mankind in general, when the question relates to carpentering or any other mechanical art, allow but a few to share in their deliberations; and when any one else interferes, then, as you say, they object, if he be not of the favored few; which, as I reply, is very natural. But when they meet to deliberate about political virtue,⁵⁴ which proceeds only by way of *justice* and [*political virtue*], they are patient enough of any man who speaks of them, as is also natural, because they think that every man *ought* to share in this sort of virtue, and that [cities] could not exist if this were otherwise. I have explained to you, Sokrates, the reason of this phenomenon.

Protagoras' Argument that Virtue is Knowledge

And that you may not suppose yourself to be deceived in thinking that all men regard every man as having a share of justice and of every other political virtue, let me give you a further proof, which is this: In other cases, as you are aware, if a man says that he is a good flute-player, or skillful in any other art in which he has no skill, people either laugh at him or are angry with him, and his relations think that he is mad and go and admonish him. But when [justice] is in question, or some other political virtue, even if they know that he is dishonest, yet, if the man comes forward publicly and tells the truth about his dishonesty, then, what in the other case was held by them to be good sense, they now deem to be madness. They say that all men *ought* to profess honesty, *whether they are honest or not*. And [a person must be out of their mind to publically confess wrongdoing]. Their notion is, that [people] must have some degree of honesty, and if [not, they] ought not to be in the world.⁵⁴

I have been showing that they are right in admitting every man as a counselor about this sort of virtue, as they are of opinion that every man is a partaker of it. And I will now endeavor

⁵⁴ Protagoras' point seems to be that since everybody agrees that we *ought* to be truthful, it is better *to appear* to be truthful in other people's eyes, i.e., lie when you can get away with it, than to be caught and punished for not being truthful. There are two important points here: 1) the line between appearance and reality is, for Protagoras, a matter of interpretation, and 2) morality is relative to the individual and is *not* based on an objective standard.

to show further that they do not conceive this virtue to be given by nature, or to grow spontaneously, but to be a thing which may be taught; and which comes to a man by taking pains. No one would instruct, no one would rebuke, or be angry with those whose calamities they suppose to be due to nature or chance; they do not try to punish or to prevent them from being what they are; they [just] pity them. Who is so foolish as to chastise or instruct the ugly, or the diminutive, or the feeble? And for this reason, because he knows that good and evil of this kind is the work of nature and of chance; whereas if a man is wanting in those good qualities which are attained by study and exercise and teaching, and has only the contrary evil qualities, other men are angry with him, and punish and reprove him—of these evil qualities one is *impiety*, another *injustice*,³²⁴ and they may be described generally as the very opposite of *political virtue*.

In such cases any [person] will be angry with another, and reprimand him—clearly because he thinks that by study and learning, the virtue in which the other is deficient may be acquired. If you will think, Sokrates, of the nature of punishment, you will see that in the opinion of mankind *virtue may be acquired*; no one punishes the [wicked] under the notion, or for the reason, that he has done wrong, only the unreasonable fury of a beast acts in that manner. But *he who desires to inflict rational punishment does not retaliate for a past wrong which cannot be undone*; he has regard to the future, and [desires] that the man who is punished, and he who sees him punished, may be deterred from doing wrong again. He *punishes for the sake of prevention*, thereby clearly implying that *virtue is capable of being taught*. This is the notion of all who retaliate upon others either privately or publicly. And the Athenians, too, your own citizens, like other men, punish and take vengeance on all whom they regard as evil doers; and hence, we may infer them to be of the number of those who think that virtue may be acquired and taught. Thus far, Sokrates, I have shown you clearly enough, if I am not mistaken, that your countrymen are right in admitting the tinker and the cobbler to advise about politics, and also that they deem virtue to be capable of being taught and acquired.

There yet remains one difficulty which [you] raised about the sons of good men: why do good men not teach their sons the *knowledge* which is gained from teachers, and make them wise in that, but do nothing towards improving them in the *virtues* which distinguish themselves? And here, Sokrates, I will leave the myth and resume the argument.

Please consider: is there or is there not some one quality of which all citizens must partake, if there is to be a city at all? In the answer to this question is contained the only solution of your difficulty; there is no other. For if there [is] any such quality, and this quality or unity is not the art of the carpenter, or the smith, or the potter, but *justice* and *temperance* and [*piety*] and,³²⁵ in a word, [human] *virtue*—if this is the quality of which all men must be partakers, and which is the very condition of their learning or doing anything else, and if he who is [lacking] in this, whether he be a child only or a grown-up man or woman, must be taught and punished, until by punishment he becomes better, and he who rebels against instruction and punishment is either exiled or condemned to death under the idea that he is incurable—if what I am saying [is] true, good men have their sons taught other things and not this, consider how they think virtue [can be] taught and cultivated both in private and public. And, notwithstanding, they have their sons taught lesser matters, ignorance of which does not

involve the punishment of death: but greater things, of which the ignorance may cause death and exile to those who have no training or knowledge of them—yes, and confiscation as well as death, and, in a word, may be the ruin of families—those things, I say, they are supposed not to teach them—not to take the utmost care that they should learn. How improbable is this, Sokrates!

Education and admonition commence in the first years of childhood, and last to the very end of life. Mother and nurse and father and tutor are vying with one another about the improvement of the child as soon as ever he is able to understand what is being said to him: he cannot say or do anything without their setting forth to him that this is just and that is unjust; this is honorable, that is dishonorable; this is holy, that is unholy; do this and abstain from that. And if he obeys, well and good; if not, he is straightened by threats and blows, like a piece of bent or warped wood.

At a later stage they send him to teachers, and enjoin them to see to his manners even more than to his reading and music; and the teachers do as they are desired. And when the boy has learned his letters and is beginning to understand what is written, as before he understood only what was spoken, they put into his hands the works of great poets, which he reads sitting on a bench at school; in these are contained many admonitions, and many tales, and praises, and [tributes] of ancient famous men, which he is required to learn by heart, ³²⁶in order that he may imitate or emulate them and desire to become like them.

Then, again, the teachers of the lyre take similar care that their young disciple is *temperate* and gets into no mischief; and when they have taught him the use of the lyre, they introduce him to the poems of other excellent poets, who are the lyric poets; and these they set to music, and make their harmonies and rhythms quite familiar to the children's souls, in order that they may learn to be more gentle, and harmonious, and rhythmical, and so more fitted for speech and action; for the life of man in every part has need of harmony and rhythm.

Then they send them to the master of gymnastic, in order that their bodies may better minister to the virtuous mind, and that they may not be compelled through bodily weakness to play the coward in war or on any other occasion. This is what is done by those who have the means, and those who have the means are the rich. Their children begin to go to school soonest and leave off latest. When they have done with masters, the [city] compels them to learn the laws, and live after the pattern which they furnish, and not after their own fancies; and just as in learning to write, the writing-master first draws lines with a style for the use of the young beginner, and gives him the tablet and makes him follow the lines, so the city draws the laws, which were the invention of good lawgivers living in the olden time; these are given to the young man, in order to guide him in his conduct whether he is commanding or obeying; and he who transgresses them is to be corrected, or, in other words, called to account, which is a term used not only in your country, but also in many others, seeing that justice calls men to account. Now when there is all this care about virtue private and public, why, Sokrates, do you still wonder and doubt whether virtue can be taught? Cease to wonder, for the opposite would be far more surprising!

But why then do the sons of good fathers often turn out ill? There is nothing very [perplexing] in this; for, as I have been saying, the existence of a state implies that virtue is not any man's private possession. If so—and nothing can be truer—then I will further ask you to imagine, as an illustration, some other pursuit or branch of knowledge which may be assumed equally to be the condition of the existence of a state. Suppose that there could be no state unless we were all flute-players, as far as each had the capacity, and everybody was freely teaching everybody the art, both in private and public, and reproving the bad player as freely and openly as every man now teaches justice and the laws, not concealing them as he would conceal the other arts, but imparting them—for all of us have a mutual interest in the *justice* and *virtue* of one another, and this is the reason why every one is so ready to teach justice and the laws—suppose, I say, that there were the same readiness and liberality among us in teaching one another flute-playing. Do you imagine, Sokrates, that the sons of good flute players would be more likely to be good than the sons of bad ones? I think not. Would not their sons grow up to be distinguished or undistinguished according to their own natural capacities as flute-players, and the son of a good player would often turn out to be a bad one, and the son of a bad player to be a good one, all flute-players would be good enough in comparison of those who were ignorant and unacquainted with the art of flute-playing? In like manner I would have you consider that he who appears to you to be the worst of those who have been brought up in laws and humanities, *would appear to be* a just man and a master of justice if he were to be *compared with men who had no education*, or courts of justice, or laws, or any restraints upon them which compelled them to practice virtue—with the savages, for example, whom the poet Pherekrates exhibited on the stage at the last year's Lenaeon festival. If you were living among men such as the man-haters in his Chorus, you would be only too glad to meet with Eurybates⁵⁵ and Phrynonidas,⁵⁶ and you would sorrowfully long to revisit the rascality of this part of the world. You, Sokrates, are discontented, and why? Because all men are teachers of virtue, *each one according to his ability*; and you say, Where are the teachers? You might as well ask, “Who teaches Greek?”³²⁸ For of that too there will not be any teachers found. Or you might ask, “Who is to teach the sons of our artisans this same art which they have learned of their fathers?”

He and his fellow-workmen have taught them to the best of their ability—but who will carry them further in their arts? And you would certainly have a difficulty, Sokrates, in finding a teacher of them; but there would be no difficulty in finding a teacher of those who are wholly ignorant. And this is true of virtue or of anything else; if a man is better able than we are to promote virtue ever so little, we must be content with the result.

A teacher of this sort I believe myself to be, and *above all other men* to have the knowledge which makes a man noble and good; and I give my pupils their money's worth, and even more, as they themselves confess. Therefore, I have introduced the following mode of payment: When a man has been my pupil, if he likes he pays my price, but there is no compulsion. If he does not like, he has only to go into a temple and take an oath of the value of the instructions, and he pays no more than he declares to be their value.

⁵⁵ From Homer's *Illiad*, the herald of the Hellenic forces. Symbolically, the herald of war.

⁵⁶ A well known wicked character. In contemporary culture, one might use Mr. Burns from “The Simpsons,” or Cartman from “Southpark.”

Such is my myth, Sokrates, and such is the argument by which I endeavor to show that *virtue may be taught*, and that this is the opinion of the Athenians...

Protagoras ended, and in my ear

*So charming left his voice, that I the while
Thought him still speaking; still stood fixed to hear.*

At length, when the truth dawned upon me, that he had really finished, not without difficulty I began to collect myself, and looking at Hippokrates, I said to him: O son of Apollodoros, how deeply grateful I am to you for having brought me hither; I would not have missed the speech of Protagoras for a great deal. For I used to imagine that no human care could make men good; but I know better now.

Yet, I have still one very small difficulty which I am sure that Protagoras will easily explain, as he has already explained so much.

³²⁹If a man were to go and consult Perikles or any of our great speakers about these matters, he might perhaps hear as fine a discourse; but then when one has a question to ask of any of them, like books, they can neither answer nor ask; and if any one challenges the least particular of their speech, they go ringing on in a long harangue, like brazen pots, which when they are struck continue to sound unless some one puts his hand upon them; whereas our friend Protagoras cannot only make a good speech, as he has already shown, but when he is asked a question he can answer briefly; and when he asks he will wait and hear the answer; and this is a very rare gift.

Now I, Protagoras, want to ask of you a little question, which if you will only answer, I shall be quite satisfied. You were saying that virtue can be taught—that I will take upon your authority, and there is no one to whom I am more ready to trust. But I marvel at one thing about which I should like to have my mind set at rest. You were speaking of Zeus sending **justice** and [**piety**] to men; and several times while you were speaking, **justice**, and **temperance**, and [**piety**], and all these qualities, were described by you as if together they made up *virtue*. Now I want you to tell me truly whether virtue is one [thing], of which justice and temperance and holiness are parts, or whether all these are *only the names of one and the same thing*: that is the doubt which still lingers in my mind.

There is no difficulty, Sokrates, in answering that the qualities of which you are speaking are *the parts of virtue*, which is one [thing].

And are they parts, I said, in the same sense in which mouth, nose, and eyes, and ears, are the parts of a face; or are they like the parts of gold, which differ from the whole and from one another only in being larger or smaller?

I should say that they differed, Sokrates, in the first way; they are related to one another as *the parts of a face* are related to the whole face.

And do men have some one part and some another part of virtue? Of if a man has one part, must he also have all the others?

By no means, he said; for many a man is brave and not just, or just and not wise.

You would not deny, then, that **courage** and **wisdom** are *also parts of virtue*?

³³⁰Most undoubtedly they are, he answered; and wisdom is the noblest of the parts.

And they are *all different from one another*? I said.

Yes.

And has each of them a distinct function like the parts of the face—the eye, for example, is not like the ear, and has not the same functions; and the other parts are none of them like one another, either in their functions, or in any other way? I want to know whether the comparison holds concerning the parts of virtue. Do they also differ from one another in themselves and in their functions? For that is clearly what the simile would imply.

Yes, Sokrates, you are right in supposing that they differ.

Then, I said, no other part of virtue is like [wisdom], or like justice, or like courage, or like temperance, or like holiness?

No, he answered.

Well then, I said, suppose that you and I enquire into their natures. And first, you would agree with me that justice is of the nature of a thing, would you not? That is my opinion: would it not be yours also?

Mine also, he said.

And suppose that some one were to ask us, saying, "O Protagoras, and you, Sokrates, what about this thing which you were calling justice, is it just or unjust?"—and I were to answer, just: would you vote with me or against me?

With you, he said.

Thereupon I should answer to him who asked me, that justice is of the nature of the just: would not you?

Yes, he said.

And suppose that he went on to say: "Well now, is there also such a thing as holiness? "we should answer, "Yes," if I am not mistaken?

Yes, he said.

Which you would also acknowledge to be a *thing*—should we not say so?

He assented.

"And is this a sort of *thing* which is of the nature of the holy, or of the nature of the unholy?" I should be angry at his putting such a question, and should say, "Peace, man; nothing can be holy if holiness is not holy." What would you say? Would you not answer in the same way?

Certainly, he said.

And then after this, suppose that he came and asked us, "What were you saying just now? Perhaps I may not have heard you rightly, but you seemed to me to be saying that the parts of virtue were not the same as one another." ³³¹I should reply, "You certainly heard that said, but not, as you imagine, by me; for I only asked the question; Protagoras gave the answer." And suppose that he turned to you and said, "Is this true, Protagoras? and do you maintain that one part of virtue is unlike another, and is this your position?"—how would you answer him?

I could not help acknowledging the truth of what he said, Sokrates.

Well then, Protagoras, we will assume this; and now supposing that he proceeded to say further, "Then holiness is not of the nature of justice, nor justice of the nature of holiness, but of the nature of unholiness; and holiness is of the nature of the not just, and therefore of the unjust, and the unjust is the unholy": how shall we answer him? I should certainly answer him on my own behalf that justice is holy, and that holiness is just; and I would say in like manner on your behalf also, if you would allow me, that justice is either the same with holiness, or very nearly the same; and above all I would assert that justice is like holiness and holiness is like justice; and I wish that you would tell me whether I may be permitted to give this answer on your behalf, and whether you would agree with me.

He replied, *I cannot simply agree*, Sokrates, to the proposition that *justice is holy* and that *holiness is just*, for ***there appears to me to be a difference between them***. But what matter, if you please I please; and let us *assume*, if you will I, that justice is holy, and that holiness is just.

Pardon me, I replied! I do not want this "if you wish" or "if you will" sort of conclusion to be proven, but I want you and me to be proven: I mean to say that the conclusion will be best proven if there be no *'if'*.

Well, he said, I admit that justice bears a resemblance to holiness, for there is always some point of view in which everything is like every other thing; white is in a certain way like black, and hard is like soft, and the most extreme opposites have some qualities in common; even the parts of the face which, as we were saying before, are distinct and have different functions, are still in a certain point of view similar, and one of them is like another of them.

And you may prove that they are like one another on the same principle that all things are like one another; and yet things which are like in some particular ought not to be called alike, nor things which are unlike in some particular, however slight, unlike.

And do you think, I said in a tone of surprise, that justice and holiness have but a small degree of likeness?

³³²Certainly not; any more than I agree with what I understand to be your view.

Well, I said, as you appear to have a difficulty about this, let us take another of the examples which you mentioned instead. Do you admit the existence of folly?

I do.

And is not wisdom the very *opposite* of folly?

That is true, he said.

And when men act rightly and advantageously they seem to you to be temperate?

Yes, he said.

And temperance makes them temperate?

Certainly.

And [those] who do not act rightly act *foolishly*, and in acting thus [they] are not temperate?

I agree, he said.

Then to act foolishly is the *opposite* of acting temperately?

He assented.

And foolish actions are done by folly, and temperate actions by temperance?

He agreed.

And that [which] is done strongly is done by strength, and that which is weakly done, by weakness?

He assented.

And that which is done with swiftness is done swiftly, and that which is done with slowness, slowly?

He assented again.

And that which is done in the same manner, is done by the same; and that which is done in an opposite manner by the opposite?

He agreed.

Once more, I said, is there anything beautiful?

Yes.

To which the only opposite is the ugly?

There is no other.

And is there anything good?

There is.

To which the only opposite is the evil?

There is no other.

And [in sounds] there is the [high pitched]?

True.

To which the only opposite is the [low pitched]?

There is no other, he said, but that.

Then *every opposite has one opposite only* and no more?

He assented.

Then now, I said, let us recapitulate our admissions. First of all we admitted that everything has one opposite and not more than one?

We did so.

And we admitted also that what was done in opposite ways was done by opposites?

Yes.

And that which was done foolishly, as we further admitted, was done in the opposite way to that which was done temperately?

Yes.

And that which was done temperately was done by temperance, and that which was done foolishly by folly?

He agreed.

And that which is done in opposite ways is done by opposites?

Yes.

And one thing is done by temperance, and quite another thing by folly?

Yes.

And in opposite ways?

Certainly.

And therefore by [rule of] opposites—*folly is the opposite of temperance*?

Clearly.

And do you remember that *folly has already been acknowledged by us to be the opposite of wisdom*?

He assented.

And we said that everything has only one opposite?

Yes.

³³³Then, Protagoras, *which of the two assertions shall we renounce?* One says that everything has but one opposite; the other that wisdom is distinct from temperance, and that both of them are parts of virtue; and that they are not only distinct, but dissimilar, both in themselves and in their functions, like the parts of a face. Which of these two assertions shall we renounce? For both of them together are certainly not in harmony; they do not accord or agree: for how can they be said to agree if everything is assumed to have only one opposite and not more than one, and yet folly, which is one, has clearly the two opposites wisdom and temperance? Is not that true, Protagoras? What else would you say?

He assented, but with great reluctance.

Then *temperance and wisdom are the same*, as before *justice and holiness appeared to us to be nearly the same*. And now, Protagoras, I said, we must finish the enquiry, and not faint. Do you think that an unjust man can be temperate in his injustice?

I should be ashamed, Sokrates, he said, to acknowledge this.

And shall I argue with them or with you? I replied.

I would rather, he said, that you should argue with the many first, if you will.

Whichever you please, if you will only answer me and say whether you are of their opinion or not. My object is to *test the validity of the argument*; and yet the result may be that I who ask and you who answer may both be put on our trial.

Protagoras at first made a show of refusing, as he said that the argument was not encouraging; at length, he consented to answer.

Now then, I said, begin at the beginning and answer me. You think that some men are temperate, and yet unjust?

Yes, he said; let that be admitted.

And temperance is good sense?

Yes.

And good sense is good counsel in doing injustice?

Granted.

If they succeed, I said, or if they do not succeed?

If they succeed.

And you would admit the existence of good [things]?

Yes.

And is the good that which is [beneficial] for man?

Yes, indeed, he said: and there are some things which may be [harmful], and yet I call them good.

I thought that Protagoras was getting ruffled and excited; he seemed to be setting himself in an attitude of war. Seeing this, I minded my business, and gently said:

³³⁴When you say, Protagoras, that things inexpedient are good, do you mean [harmful] for humans only, or [harmful] altogether? Do you call the latter good?

Certainly not the last, he replied! For I know of many things—meats, drinks, medicines, and ten thousand other things, which are [harmful] for man, and some which are [beneficial]; and some which are neither [beneficial] nor [harmful] for humans, but only for horses; and some for oxen only, and some for dogs; and some for no animals, but only for trees; and some for the roots of trees and not for their branches, as for example, manure, which is a good thing when laid about the roots of a tree, but utterly destructive if thrown upon the shoots and young branches; or I may instance olive oil, which is mischievous to all plants, and generally most injurious to the hair of every animal with the exception of man, but beneficial to human hair and to the human body generally; and even in this application (so various and changeable is the nature of the benefit), that which is the greatest good to the outward parts of a man, is a very great evil to his inward parts: and for this reason physicians always forbid their patients the use of oil in their food, except in very small quantities, just enough to extinguish the disagreeable sensation of smell in meats and sauces.

When he had given this answer, the company cheered him!

And I said: Protagoras, I have a wretched memory, and when any one makes a long speech to me I never remember what he is talking about. As then, if I had been deaf, and you were going to converse with me, you would have had to raise your voice; so now, having such a bad memory, I will ask you to cut your answers shorter, if you would take me with you.

What do you mean, he said: how am I to shorten my answers? Shall I make them too short?

Certainly not, I said.

But short enough?

Yes, I said.

Shall I answer what appears to me to be short enough, or what appears to you to be short enough?

I have heard, I said, that you can speak and teach others to speak about the same things at ³³⁵such length that words never seemed to fail, or with such brevity that no one could use fewer of them. Please therefore, if you talk with me, to adopt the latter or more compendious method.

Sokrates, he replied, many a battle of words have I fought, and if I had followed the method of disputation which my adversaries desired, as you want me to do, I should have been no better than another, and the name of Protagoras would have been nowhere.

I saw that he was not satisfied with his previous answers, and that he would not play the part of answerer any more if he could help; and I considered that there was no call upon me to

continue the conversation; so I said: Protagoras, I do not wish to force the conversation upon you if you had rather not, but when you are willing to argue with me in such a way that I can follow you, then I will argue with you. Now you, as is said of you by others and as you say of yourself, are able to have discussions in shorter forms of speech as well as in longer, for you are a master of wisdom; but I cannot manage these long speeches: I only wish that I could. You, on the other hand, who are capable of either, ought to speak shorter as I beg you, and then we might converse. But I see that you are disinclined, and as I have an engagement which will prevent my staying to hear you at greater length (for I have to be in another place), I will depart; although I should have liked to have heard you.

^{335d}Thus I spoke, and was rising from my seat, when Kallias seized me by the right hand, and in his left hand caught hold of this old cloak of mine. He said: we cannot let you go, Sokrates, for if you leave us there will be an end of our discussions: I must therefore beg you to remain, as there is nothing in the world that I should like better than to hear you and Protagoras discourse. Do not deny the company this pleasure....



^{349a}And I should like once more to have my memory refreshed by you about the questions which I was asking you at first, and also to have your help in considering them. If I am not mistaken the question was this: Are wisdom and temperance and courage and justice and holiness five names of the same thing? Or has each of the names a separate underlying *essence* and corresponding thing having a peculiar function, no one of them being like any other of them?

And you replied that the five [terms] were *not the names of the same thing*, but that each of them had a separate [end], and that all these [ends] were *parts* of virtue, *not in the same way that the parts of gold are like each other* and the whole of which they are parts, but [like] the parts of the face are unlike the whole of which they are parts and one another, and have each of them a distinct *function*. I should like to know whether this is still your opinion; or if not, I will ask you to define your meaning, and I shall not take you to task if you now make a different statement. For I dare say that you may have said what you did only in order to make trial of me.

I answer, Sokrates, he said, that all these qualities are *parts* of virtue, and that *four out of the five are to some extent similar*, and that the fifth of them, which is courage, *is very different from the other four*, as I prove in this way: You may observe that many men are utterly unrighteous, unholy, intemperate, ignorant, who are nevertheless remarkable for their courage.

Stop! I said; I should like to think about that. When you speak of brave men, do you mean the confident, or another sort of nature?

Yes, he said. I mean the [fearless], ready to go at that which others are afraid to approach.

In the next place, you would affirm virtue to be a good thing, of which you yourself [are] a teacher.

Yes, he said; I should say the best of all things, if I am in my right mind.

And is it partly good and partly bad, or *wholly good*?

Wholly good, and in the highest degree!

³⁵⁰Tell me then; who are they who have confidence when diving into a well?

I should say, divers.

And the reason [for] this is that they have knowledge [of diving into wells]?

Yes, that is the reason.

And who have confidence when fighting on horseback—the skilled [riders] or the unskilled?

The skilled.

And who when fighting with light shields—the peltasts or the nonpeltasts?

The peltasts. And that is true of all other things, he said, if that is your point: *those who have knowledge are more confident than those who have no knowledge*, and they are more confident after they have learned than before.

And have you not seen persons utterly ignorant, I said, of these things, and yet confident about them?

Yes, he said, I have seen such persons *far too confident*.

And are not these confident persons also courageous?

In that case, he replied, courage would be a [bad] thing, for the men of whom we are speaking are surely [crazy].

Then who are the courageous? Are they not the confident?

Yes, he said, to that statement I adhere.

And those, I said, who are thus *confident without knowledge* are *really not courageous*, but [crazy]; and in that case the wisest are also the most confident, and being the most confident are also the bravest, and upon that view again wisdom will be courage.

[No], Sokrates, he replied! You are mistaken in your [memory] of what [I said]. When you asked me, I certainly *did* say that the courageous are confident; but I was never asked whether the confident are courageous. If you had asked me, I should have answered, "Not all

of them!" What I *did* [say has] not proved to be false, although you proceeded to show that those who have knowledge are more courageous than they were before they had knowledge, and more courageous than others who have no knowledge. [We] were then led on to think that *courage is the same as wisdom*.

But in this way of arguing you might come to imagine that strength *is* wisdom. You might begin by asking whether the strong are [capable], and I should say, "Yes". And then [you might ask] whether those who *know* how to wrestle are not more *able* to wrestle than those who do not know how to wrestle, and more able after than before they had learned. And [again I would agree]. And when I had admitted this, you might use my admissions in such a way as to prove that upon my view wisdom *is* strength; whereas in that case I should not have admitted, any more than in the other [case], that the [capable] are strong, although I have admitted that the strong are [capable]. ³⁵¹For *there is a difference between ability and strength*; the former is given by knowledge as well as by madness or rage, but strength comes from nature and a healthy state of the body. [Similarly] I say of **confidence** and **courage**, that *they are not the same*; and I argue that *the courageous are confident, but not all [who are] confident [are] courageous*. For confidence may be given to men by art, and also, like ability, by madness and rage. But courage comes to them from nature and the healthy state of the soul.

I said, You would admit, Protagoras, that some men live well and others ill?

He assented.

And do you think that a [person] lives well who lives in pain and grief?

He does not.

But if he lives pleasantly to the end of his life, will he not in that case have lived well?

He will.

Then to live pleasantly is a good, and to live unpleasantly an evil?

Yes, he said, if the pleasure [is] good and honorable.

And do you, Protagoras, like the rest of the world, call some pleasant things evil and some painful things good? For I am rather disposed to say that things are good in as far as they are pleasant, if they have no consequences of another sort, and in as far as they are painful they are bad.

I do not know, Sokrates, he said, whether I can venture to assert in that unqualified manner that the pleasant is the good and the painful the evil. Having regard not only to my present answer, but also to the whole of my life, I shall be safer, if I am not mistaken, in saying that there are *some pleasant things which are not good*, and that there are *some painful things*

which are good, and some which are not good, and that there are some which are neither good nor evil.

And you would call pleasant, I said, the things which participate in pleasure or create pleasure?

Certainly, he said.

Then my meaning is, that in as far as they are pleasant they are good; and my question would imply that pleasure is a good in-itself.

According to your favorite mode of speech, Sokrates, "Let us reflect about this," he said; and if the reflection is to the point, and the result proves that pleasure and good are really the same, then we will agree; but if not, then we will argue.

And would you wish to begin the enquiry?

I said; or shall I begin?

You ought to take the lead, he said; for you are the author of the discussion.

May I employ an illustration? I asked.

³⁵²Suppose someone who is enquiring into the health or some other bodily quality of another—he looks at his face and at the tips of his fingers, and then he says, "Uncover your chest and back to me that I may have a better view"—that is the sort of thing which I desire in this speculation.

Having seen what your opinion is about good and pleasure, I am minded to say to you: Uncover your *mind* to me, Protagoras, and reveal your opinion about knowledge, that I may know whether you agree with the rest of the world.

Now the rest of the world are of opinion that knowledge is a principle not of strength, or of rule, or of command. Their notion is that a man may have knowledge, and yet that the knowledge which is in him may be overmastered by anger, or pleasure, or pain, or love, or perhaps by fear—just as if knowledge were a slave, and might be dragged about anyhow. Now, is that *your* view? Or *do you think that knowledge is a noble and commanding thing, which cannot be overcome*, and will not allow a man, **if he only knows the difference of good and evil**, to do anything which is contrary to knowledge, but that wisdom will have strength to help him?

I agree with you, Sokrates, said Protagoras; and not only so, but I, above all other men, am bound to say that *wisdom and knowledge are the highest human [attributes]*.

Good, I said; and true!

But are you aware that the majority of the world [do not agree with us]? [[People] commonly [think it is possible] to know the things which are best [for them], and [at the same time] not do them when they [could]?

And most [people] whom I have asked [to explain] this have said, that *when men act contrary to knowledge they are overcome by pain, or pleasure*, or some of those affections which I was just now mentioning.

Yes, Sokrates, he replied. That is not the only point about which mankind are in error.

³⁵³Suppose, then, that you and I endeavor to instruct and inform them what is the nature of this affection which they call "being overcome by pleasure," and which they affirm to be the reason why they do not always do what is best. When we say to them: Friends, you are mistaken, and are saying [something that is false].

They would probably reply, "Sokrates and Protagoras, if this affection of the soul is not to be called *being overcome by pleasure*, pray, what is it, and by what name would you [call] it?"

But why, Sokrates, should we trouble ourselves about the opinion of the many, who just say anything that happens to occur to them?

I believe, I said, that they may be of use in helping us to discover *how courage is related to the other parts of virtue*. If you are disposed to abide by our agreement, that I should show the way in which, as I think, our recent difficulty is most likely to be cleared up, do you follow; but if not, never mind.

You are quite right, he said; and I would have you proceed as you have begun.

Well then, I said, let me suppose that they repeat their question,

"What account do you give of that which, in our way of speaking, is termed *being overcome by pleasure*?" I should answer thus: Listen, and Protagoras and I will endeavor to show you. When men are 'overcome' by eating and drinking and other sensual desires which are pleasant, and they, knowing them to be evil, nevertheless indulge in them, would you not say that they were 'overcome' by pleasure?

They will not deny this.

And suppose that you and I were to go on and ask them again: "In what way do you say that they are evil—in that they are pleasant and give pleasure at the moment, or because they cause disease and poverty and other like evils in the future? Would they still be evil, if they had no attendant evil *consequences*, simply because they give the consciousness of pleasure of whatever nature?"

Would they not answer that they are *not* evil on account of the pleasure which is immediately given by them, but *on account of the consequences*—diseases and the like?

I believe, said Protagoras, that the world in general would answer as you do.

“And in causing diseases do they not cause pain? And in causing poverty do they not cause pain?” They would agree to that also, if I am not mistaken?

Protagoras assented.

Then I should say to them, in my name and yours: ³⁵⁴ “Do you think them evil for any other reason, except because they end in pain and rob us of other pleasures?”

There again, they would agree?

We both of us thought that they would.

And then I should take the question from the opposite point of view, and say: "Friends, when you speak of goods being painful, do you not mean remedial goods, such as gymnastic exercises, and military service, and the physician's use of burning, cutting, drugging, and starving? Are these the things which are good but painful?"

They would assent to me?

He agreed.

"And do you call them good because they occasion the greatest immediate suffering and pain; or because, afterwards, they bring health and improvement of the bodily condition and the salvation of states and power over others and wealth?"

They would agree to the latter alternative, if I am not mistaken?

He assented.

"Are these things good for any other reason except that they end in pleasure, and get rid of and avert pain? Are you looking to any other standard but pleasure and pain when you call them good?"

They would acknowledge that they were not?

I think so, said Protagoras.

"And do you not pursue after pleasure as a good, and avoid pain as an evil?"

He assented.

"Then *you think that pain is an evil and pleasure is a good*: and even pleasure you deem an evil, when it robs you of greater pleasures than it gives, or causes pains greater than the

pleasure. If, however, you call pleasure an evil in relation to some other end or standard, you will be able to show us that standard. But you have none to show."

I do not think that they have, said Protagoras.

"And have you not a similar way of speaking about pain? You call pain a good when it takes away greater pains than those which it has, or gives pleasures greater than the pains: then if you have some standard other than pleasure and pain to which you refer when you call actual pain a good, you can show what that is. But you cannot."

True, said Protagoras.

Suppose again, I said, that the world says to me: "Why do you spend many words and speak in many ways on this subject?"

"Excuse me, friends," I should reply; "but in the first place there is a difficulty in explaining the meaning of the [phrase] *overcome by pleasure*; ³⁵⁵and the whole argument turns upon this. And even now, if you see any possible way in which evil can be explained as other than pain, or good as other than pleasure, you may still retract."

"Are you satisfied, then, at having a life of pleasure which is without pain? If you are, and if you are unable to show any good or evil which does not end in pleasure and pain, hear the consequence: If what you say is true, then the argument is absurd which affirms that a man often does evil knowingly, when he might abstain, because he is seduced and overpowered by pleasure. [Similarly], when you say that a man knowingly refuses to do what is good because he is overcome at the moment by pleasure. And that this is ridiculous will be evident if only we give up the use of various names, such as pleasant and painful, and good and evil. As there are two things, let us call them by two names: first, good and evil, and then pleasant and painful.

Assuming this, let us go on to say that a man does evil knowing that he does evil. But some one will ask, "Why?" Because he is 'overcome', is the first answer. "And by what is he overcome?" the enquirer will proceed to ask. And we shall not be able to reply "By pleasure," for the name of pleasure has been exchanged for that of good. In our answer, then, we shall only say that he is overcome.

"By what?" he will reiterate.

"By the good," we shall have to reply; indeed we shall. No, but our questioner will rejoin with a laugh, if he [is] one of the swaggering sort.

"That is too ridiculous, that a man should do what he knows to be evil when he ought not, because he is overcome by good. Is that," he will ask, "because the good was worthy or not worthy of conquering the evil?"

And in answer to that we shall clearly reply, "Because it was not worthy; for if it had been worthy, then he who, as we say, was *overcome by pleasure*, would not have been wrong.

"But how," he will reply, "can the good be unworthy of the evil, or the evil of the good? Is not the real explanation that *they are out of proportion* to one another, either as greater and smaller, or more and fewer?"

This we cannot deny.

"And when you speak of *being overcome*—what do you mean," he will say, "but that you choose the *greater evil in exchange for the lesser good*?"

Admitted.

And now substitute the [terms] 'pleasure' and 'pain' for 'good' and 'evil', and say, not as before, that a man does what is evil *knowingly*, but that he does what is painful knowingly, ³⁵⁶and because he is 'overcome' by pleasure, which is unworthy to overcome. What measure is there of the relations of pleasure to pain other than excess and defect, which means that they become greater and smaller, and more and fewer, and differ in degree? For if any one says: "Yes, Sokrates, but immediate pleasure differs widely from future pleasure and pain— To that I should reply: "And do they differ in anything but in pleasure and pain?"

There can be no other measure of them.

"And do you, like a skillful weigher, put into the balance the pleasures and the pains, and their nearness and distance, and weigh them, and then say which outweighs the other. If you weigh pleasures against pleasures, you of course take the more and greater; or if you weigh pains against pains, you take the fewer and the less; or if pleasures against pains, then you choose that course of action in which the painful is exceeded by the pleasant, whether the distant by the near or the near by the distant; and you avoid that course of action in which the pleasant is exceeded by the painful. Would you not admit, my friends, that this is true?"

I am confident that they cannot deny this.

He agreed with me.

"Well then," I shall say, "if you agree so far, be so good as to answer me a question: Do not the same magnitudes appear larger to your sight when near, and smaller when at a distance? They will acknowledge that. And the same holds of thickness and number; also sounds, which are in themselves equal, are greater when near, and lesser when at a distance."

They will grant that also.

"Now suppose happiness to consist in doing or choosing the greater, and in not doing or in avoiding the less, what would be the saving principle of human life? ³⁵⁷Would not *the art of measuring* be the saving principle; or would the power of appearance? Is not the latter that

deceiving art which makes us wander up and down and take the things at one time of which we repent at another, both in our actions and in our choice of things great and small? But the art of measurement would *do away with the effect of appearances*, and, showing the **truth**, would fain teach the soul at last to find rest in the truth, and would thus save our life.”

Would not mankind generally acknowledge that the art which accomplishes this result is the art of measurement?

Yes, he said, the art of measurement.

Suppose, again, the salvation of human life to depend on the choice of odd and even, and on the knowledge of when a man ought to choose the greater or less, either in reference to themselves or to each other, and whether near or at a distance; what would be the saving principle of our lives? Would not knowledge—a *knowledge of measuring*, when the question is one of excess and defect, and a knowledge of number, when the question is of odd and even? The world will assent, will they not?

Protagoras himself thought that they would.

Well then, my friends, I say to them; seeing that the salvation of human life has been found to consist in the right choice of pleasures and pains—in the choice of the more and the fewer, and the greater and the less, and the nearer and remoter, must not this measuring be a consideration of their excess and defect and equality in relation to each other?

This is undeniably true.

And this, as possessing measure, must *undeniably also be [a skill] and [a kind of knowledge]*?

They will agree, he said.

“The nature of that [skill] or [knowledge] will be a matter of future consideration; but the existence of such a science furnishes a demonstrative answer to the question which you asked of me and Protagoras. At the time when you asked the question, if you remember, both of us were agreeing that there was nothing mightier than knowledge, and that knowledge, in whatever existing, must have the advantage over pleasure and all other things; and then you said that pleasure often got the advantage even over a man who has knowledge; and we refused to allow this, and you rejoined: O Protagoras and Sokrates, what is the meaning of *being overcome by pleasure* if not this?—tell us what you call such a state—if we had immediately and at the time answered, ‘Ignorance’, you would have laughed at us. But now, in laughing at us, you will be laughing at yourselves: for you also admitted that men err in their choice of pleasures and pains; that is, in their choice of good and evil, from defect of knowledge; and you admitted further, that they err, not only from defect of knowledge in general, but of that particular knowledge which is called measuring. And you are also aware that the erring act which is done without knowledge is done in ignorance.

³⁵⁸This, therefore, is the meaning of being *overcome by pleasure*—ignorance, and that the greatest. And our friends Protagoras and Prodikos and Hippias declare that they are the physicians of ignorance; but you, who are under the mistaken impression that ignorance is not the cause, and that the art of which I am speaking cannot be taught, neither go yourselves, nor send your children, to the Sophists, who are the teachers of these things—you take care of your money and give them none; and the result is, that you are the worse off both in public and private life—Let us suppose this to be our answer to the world in general: And now I should like to ask you, Hippias, and you, Prodikos, as well as Protagoras (for the argument is to be yours as well as ours), whether you think that I am speaking the truth or not?

They all thought that what I said was entirely true.

Then you agree, I said, that the pleasant is the good, and the painful evil. And here I would beg my friend Prodikos not to introduce his distinction of names, whether he is disposed to say pleasurable, delightful, joyful. However, by whatever name he prefers to call them,

I will ask you, most excellent Prodikos, to answer in my sense of the words.

Prodikos laughed and assented, as did the others.

Then, my friends, what do you say to this? Are not all actions honorable and useful, of which the tendency is to make life painless and pleasant? The honorable work is also useful and good?

This was admitted.

Then, I said, if the pleasant is the good, nobody does anything under the idea or conviction that some other thing would be better and is also attainable, when he might do the better. And this inferiority of a man to himself is merely ignorance, as the superiority of a man to himself is wisdom.

They all assented.

And is not ignorance the having a false opinion and being deceived about important matters?

To this also they unanimously assented.

Then, I said, no man voluntarily pursues evil, or that which he thinks to be evil. To prefer evil to good is not in human nature; and when a man is compelled to choose one of two evils, no one will choose the greater when he may have the less.

All of us agreed to every word of this.

Well, I said, there is a certain thing called fear or terror; and here, Prodikos, I should particularly like to know whether you would agree with me in defining this fear or terror as expectation of evil.

Protagoras and Hippias agreed, but Prodikos said that this was fear and not terror.

Never mind, Prodikos, I said; but let me ask whether, if our former assertions are true, a man will pursue that which he fears when he is not compelled? Would not this be in flat contradiction to the admission which has been already made, that he thinks the things which he fears to be evil; and no one will pursue or voluntarily accept that which he thinks to be evil?

³⁵⁹That also was universally admitted.

Then, I said, these, Hippias and Prodikos, are our premises; and I would beg Protagoras to explain to us how he can be right in what he said at first. I do not mean in what he said quite at first, for his first statement, as you may remember, was that whereas there were five parts of virtue none of them was like any other of them; each of them had a separate function. To this, however, I am not referring, but to the assertion which he afterwards made that of the *five virtues* four were nearly akin to each other, but that the fifth, which was courage, differed greatly from the others. And of this he gave me the following proof. He said: You will find, Sokrates, that some of the most impious, and unrighteous, and intemperate, and ignorant of men are among the most courageous; which proves that courage is very different from the other parts of virtue. I was surprised at his saying this at the time, and I am still more surprised now that I have discussed the matter with you. So I asked him whether by the brave he meant the confident. Yes, he replied, and the impetuous or goers.

(You may remember, Protagoras, that this was your answer.)

He assented.

Well then, I said, tell us against what are the courageous ready to go—against the same dangers as the cowards?

No, he answered.

Then against something different?

Yes, he said.

Then do cowards go where there is safety, and the courageous where there is danger?

Yes, Sokrates, so men say.

Very true, I said. But I want to know against what do you say that the courageous are ready to go—against dangers, believing them to be dangers, or not against dangers?

No, said he; the former case has been proved by you in the previous argument to be impossible.

That, again, I replied, is quite true. And if this has been rightly proven, then no one goes to meet what he thinks to be dangers, since the want of self-control, which makes men rush into dangers, has been shown to be ignorance.

He assented.

And yet the courageous man and the coward alike go to meet that about which they are confident; so that, in this point of view, the cowardly and the courageous go to meet the same things.

And yet, Sokrates, said Protagoras, that to which the coward goes is the opposite of that to which the courageous goes; the one, for example, is ready to go to battle, and the other is not ready.

And is going to battle honorable or disgraceful? I said.

Honorable, he replied.

And if honorable, then already admitted by us to be good; for all honorable actions we have admitted to be good.

That is true; and to that opinion I shall always adhere.

³⁶⁰True, I said. But which of the two are they who, as you say, are unwilling to go to war, which is a good and honorable thing?

The cowards, he replied.

And what is good and honorable, I said, is also pleasant?

It has certainly been acknowledged to be so, he replied.

And do the cowards knowingly refuse to go to the nobler, and pleasanter, and better?

The admission of that, he replied, would belie our former admissions.

But does not the courageous man also go to meet the better, and pleasanter, and nobler?

That must be admitted.

And the courageous man has no base fear or base confidence?

True, he replied.

And if not base, then honorable?

He admitted this.

And if honorable, then good?

Yes.

But the fear and confidence of the coward or foolhardy or madman, on the contrary, are base?

He assented.

And these base fears and confidences originate in ignorance and uninstructedness?

True, he said.

Then as to the motive from which the cowards act, do you call it cowardice or courage?

I should say cowardice, he replied.

And have they not been shown to be cowards through their ignorance of dangers?

Assuredly, he said.

And because of that ignorance they are cowards?

He assented.

And the reason why they are cowards is admitted by you to be cowardice?

He again assented.

Then the ignorance of what is and is not dangerous is cowardice?

He nodded assent.

But surely courage, I said, is opposed to cowardice?

Yes.

Then the wisdom which knows what are and are not dangers is opposed to the ignorance of them?

To that again he nodded assent.

And the ignorance of them is cowardice?

To that he very reluctantly nodded assent.

And the knowledge of that which is and is not dangerous is courage, and is opposed to the ignorance of these things?

At this point he would no longer nod assent, but was silent.

And why, I said, do you neither assent nor dissent, Protagoras?

Finish the argument by yourself, he said.

I only want to ask one more question, I said. I want to know whether you still think that there are men who are most ignorant and yet most courageous?

You seem to have a great ambition to make me answer, Sokrates, and therefore I will gratify you, and say, that this appears to me to be impossible consistently with the argument.

My only object, I said, in continuing the discussion, has been the desire to ascertain the *nature* and *relations* of *virtue*; ³⁶¹for if this were clear, I am very sure that the other controversy which has been carried on at great length by both of us—you affirming and I denying that virtue can be taught—would also become clear. The result of our discussion appears to me to be singular. For if the argument had a human voice, that voice would be heard laughing at us and saying:

"Protagoras and Sokrates, you are strange beings; there are you, Sokrates, who were saying that virtue cannot be taught, contradicting yourself now by your attempt to prove that all things are knowledge, including justice, and temperance, and courage—which tends to show that virtue can certainly be taught; for if virtue were other than knowledge, as Protagoras attempted to prove, then clearly virtue cannot be taught; but if virtue is entirely knowledge, as you are seeking to show, then I cannot but suppose that virtue is capable of being taught. Protagoras, on the other hand, who started by saying that it might be taught, is now eager to prove it to be anything rather than knowledge; and if this is true, it must be quite incapable of being taught."

Now I, Protagoras, perceiving this terrible confusion of our ideas, have a great desire that they should be cleared up. And I should like to carry on the discussion until we ascertain what virtue is, whether capable of being taught or not, lest haply Epimetheus should trip us up and deceive us in the argument, as he forgot us in the story; I prefer your Prometheus to your Epimetheus, for of him I make use, whenever I am busy about these questions, in Promethean care of my own life. And if you have no objection, as I said at first, I should like to have your help in the enquiry.

Protagoras replied: Sokrates, I am not of a base nature, and I am the last man in the world to be envious. I cannot but applaud your energy and your conduct of an argument. As I have often said, I admire you above all men whom I know, and far above all men of your age; and

I believe that you will become very eminent in philosophy. Let us come back to the subject at some future time; at present we had better turn to something else.

³⁶²By all means, I said, if that is your wish; for I too ought long since to have kept the engagement of which I spoke before, and tarried because I could not refuse the request of the noble Kallias.

So the conversation ended, and we went our way.

Appendix
What is a Sophist?
Sokrates and Hippokrates

³⁰⁹FRIEND: Where do you come from, Sokrates? And yet I need hardly ask the question, for I know that you have been in chase of the fair Alkibiades. I saw the day before yesterday; and he had got a beard like a man—and he is a man, as I may tell you in your ear. But I thought that he was still very charming.

SOKRATES: What of his beard? Are you not of Homer's opinion, who says:

Youth is most charming when the beard first appears?

And that is now the charm of Alkibiades.

FRIEND: Well, and how do matters proceed? Have you been visiting him, and was he gracious to you?

SOKRATES: Yes, I thought that he was very gracious; and especially today, for I have just come from him, and he has been helping me in an argument. But shall I tell you a strange thing? I paid no attention to him, and several times I quite forgot that he was present.

FRIEND: What is the meaning of this? Has anything happened between you and him? For surely you cannot have discovered a fairer love than he is; certainly not in this city of Athens.

SOKRATES: Yes, much fairer.

FRIEND: What do you mean—a citizen or a foreigner?

SOKRATES: A foreigner.

FRIEND: Of what [polis]?

SOKRATES: Of Abdera.

FRIEND: And is this stranger really in your opinion a fairer love than the son of Kleinias?

SOKRATES: And is not the wiser always the fairer, sweet friend?

FRIEND: But have you really met, Sokrates, with some wise [person]?

SOKRATES: Say rather, with the wisest of all living men, if you are willing to accord that title to Protagoras.

FRIEND: What! Is Protagoras in Athens?

SOKRATES: Yes; he has been here two days.

FRIEND: And do you just come from an interview with him?

³¹⁰SOKRATES: Yes; and I have heard and said many things.

FRIEND: Then, if you have no engagement, suppose that you sit down tell me what passed, and my attendant here shall give up his place to you.

SOKRATES: To be sure; and I shall be grateful to you for listening.

FRIEND: Thank you, too, for telling us.

SOKRATES: That is thank you twice over. Listen then: Last night, or rather very early this morning, Hippokrates, the son of Apollodoros and the brother of Phason, gave a tremendous thump with his staff at my door; some one opened to him, and he came rushing in and bawled out: "Sokrates, are you awake or asleep?"

I knew his voice, and said: Hippokrates, is that you? Do you bring any news?

Good news, he said; nothing but good.

Delightful, I said; but what is the news and why have you come hither at this unearthly hour?

He drew nearer to me and said: Protagoras is come.

Yes, I replied; he came two days ago: have you only just heard of his arrival?

Yes, by the gods, he said; but not until yesterday evening.

At the same time he felt for the bed, and sat down at my feet, and then he said: Yesterday quite late in the evening, on my return from Oenoe whither I had gone in pursuit of my runaway slave Satyrus, as I meant to have told you, if some other matter had not come in the way—on my return, when we had done supper and were about to retire to rest, my brother said to me: Protagoras [has] come [to Athens]..

I was going to you at once, and then I thought that the night was far spent. But the moment sleep left me after my fatigue, I got up and came hither direct.

I, who knew the very courageous madness of the man, said: What is the matter? Has Protagoras robbed you of anything?

He replied, laughing: Yes, indeed he has, Sokrates, of the *wisdom* which he keeps from me.

But, surely, I said, if you give him money, and make friends with him, he will make you as wise as he is himself.

Would to heaven, he replied, that this were the case! He might take all that I have, and all that my friends have, if he pleased. But that is why I have come to you now, in order that you may speak to him on my behalf; for I am young, and also I have never seen nor heard him; (when he visited Athens before I was but a child) and all men praise him, Sokrates; ³¹¹he is reputed to be the most accomplished of speakers. There is no reason why we should not go to him at once, and then we shall find him at home. He lodges, as I hear, with Kallias the son of Hipponikos: let us start.

I replied: Not yet, my good friend; the hour is too early. But let us rise and take a turn in the court and wait about there until daybreak; when the day breaks, then we will go. For Protagoras is generally at home, and we shall be sure to find him; never fear.

Upon this we got up and walked about in the court, and I thought that I would make trial of the strength of his resolution. So I examined him and put questions to him. Tell me, Hippokrates, I said, as you are going to Protagoras, and will be paying your money to him, what is he to whom you are going and what will he make of you?

If, for example, you had thought of going to Hippokrates of Kos, the Asclepiad, and were about to give him your money, and some one had said to you: You are paying money to your namesake Hippokrates, O Hippokrates; tell me, what is he that you give him money? How would you have answered?

I should say, he replied, that I gave money to him as a physician.

And what will he make of you?

A physician, he said.

And if you were resolved to go to Polycleitus the Argive, or Pheidias the Athenian, and were intending to give them money, and some one had asked you: What are Polukleitos and Pheidias, and why do you give them this money? How would you have answered?

I should have answered, that they were sculptors.

And what will they make of you?

A sculptor, of course.

Well now, I said, you and I are going to Protagoras, and we are ready to pay him money on your behalf. If our own means are sufficient, and we can gain him with these, we shall be only too glad; but if not, then we are to spend the money of your friends as well.

Now suppose, that while we are thus enthusiastically pursuing our object some one were to say to us: Tell me, Sokrates, and you Hippokrates, what is Protagoras, and why are you going to pay him money—how should we answer? I know that Pheidias is a sculptor, and that Homer is a poet; but what appellation is given to Protagoras? How is [Protagoras] designated?

They call him a '*Sophist*', Sokrates, he replied.

Then we are going to pay our money to him in the character of a Sophist?

Certainly!

³¹²But suppose a person were to ask this further question: And how about yourself? What will Protagoras make of you, if you go to see him?

He answered, with a blush upon his face (for the day was just beginning to dawn, so that I could see him): Unless this differs in some way from the former instances, I suppose that he will make a Sophist of me.

By the gods, I said, and are you not ashamed at having to appear before the Greeks in the character of a Sophist?

Indeed, Sokrates, to confess the truth, I am.

But you should not assume, Hippokrates, that the instruction of Protagoras is of this nature: may you not learn of him in the same way that you learned the arts of the grammarian, musician, or trainer, not with the view of making any of them a profession, but only as a part of education, and because a private gentleman and freeman ought to know them?

Just so, he said; and that, in my opinion, is a far truer account of the teaching of Protagoras.

I said: I wonder whether you know what you are doing?

And what am I doing?

You are going to commit your soul to the care of a man whom you call a Sophist. And yet I hardly think that you know what a Sophist is; and if not, then you do not even know to whom you are committing your soul and whether the thing to which you commit yourself be good or evil.

I certainly think that I do know, he replied.

Then tell me, what do you imagine that he is?

I take him to be one who knows wise things, he replied, as his name implies.

And might you not, I said, affirm this of the painter and of the carpenter also: Do not they, too, know wise things? But suppose a person asked us: In what are the painters wise? We should answer: In what relates to the making of likenesses, and similarly of other things. And if he were further to ask: What is the wisdom of the Sophist, and what is the manufacture over which he presides—how should we answer him?

How should we answer him, Sokrates? What other answer could there be but that he presides over the art which makes men eloquent?

Yes, I replied, that is very likely true, but not enough; for in the answer a further question is involved: Of what does the Sophist make a man talk eloquently? The player on the lyre may be supposed to make a man talk eloquently about that which he makes him understand, that is about playing the lyre. Is not that true?

Yes.

Then about what does the Sophist make him eloquent? Must not he make him eloquent in that which he understands?

Yes, that may be assumed.

And what is that which the Sophist knows and makes his disciple know?

Indeed, he said, I cannot tell.

³¹³Then I proceeded to say: Well, but are you aware of the danger which you are incurring? If you were going to commit your body to some one, who might do good or harm to it, would you not carefully consider and ask the opinion of your friends and kindred, and deliberate many days as to whether you should give him the care of your body? But when the soul is in question, which you hold to be of far more value than the body, and upon the good or evil of which depends the well-being of your all—about this never consulted either with your father or with your brother or with any one of us who are your companions. But no sooner does this foreigner appear, than you instantly commit your soul to his keeping. In the evening, as you say, you hear of him, and in the morning you go to him, never deliberating or taking the opinion of any one as to whether you ought to entrust yourself to him or not—you have quite made up your mind that you will at all hazards be a pupil of Protagoras, and are prepared to expend all the property of yourself and of your friends in carrying out at any price this determination, although, as you admit, you do not know him, and have never spoken with

him: and you call him a Sophist, but are manifestly ignorant of what a Sophist is; and yet you are going to commit yourself to his keeping.

When he heard me say this, he replied: No other inference, Sokrates, can be drawn from your words.

I proceeded: Is not a Sophist, Hippokrates, one who deals wholesale or retail in the food of the soul? To me that appears to be his nature.

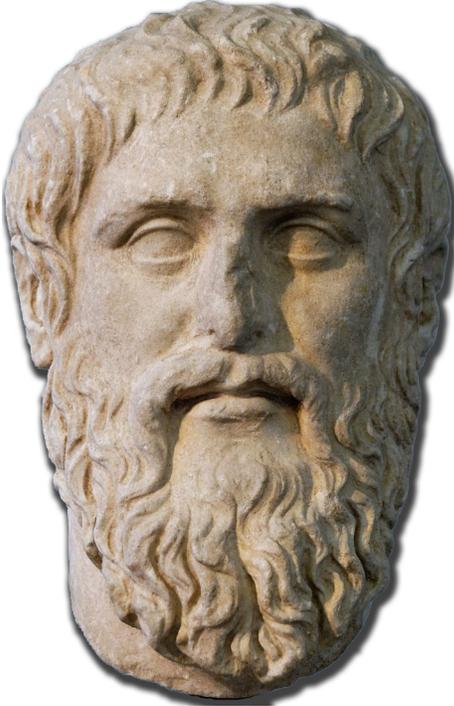
And what, Sokrates, is the food of the soul?

Surely, I said, knowledge is the food of the soul; and we must take care, my friend, that the Sophist does not deceive us when he praises what he sells, like the dealers wholesale or retail who sell the food of the body; for they praise indiscriminately all their goods, without knowing what are really beneficial or hurtful: neither do their customers know, with the exception of any trainer or physician who may happen to buy of them. In like manner those who carry about the wares of knowledge, and make the round of the cities, and sell or retail them to any customer who is in want of them, praise them all alike; though I should not wonder, O my friend, if many of them were really ignorant of their effect upon the soul; and their customers equally ignorant, unless he who buys of them happens to be a physician of the soul. If, therefore, you have understanding of what is good and evil, you may safely buy knowledge of Protagoras or of any one; but if not, then, O my friend, pause, and do not hazard your dearest interests at a game of chance. ³¹⁴For there is far greater peril in buying knowledge than in buying meat and drink: the one you purchase of the wholesale or retail dealer, and carry them away in other vessels, and before you receive them into the body as food, you may deposit them at home and call in any experienced friend who knows what is good to be eaten or drunken, and what not, and how much, and when; and then the danger of purchasing them is not so great. But you cannot buy the wares of knowledge and carry them away in another vessel; when you have paid for them you must receive them into the soul and go your way, either greatly harmed or greatly benefited; and therefore we should deliberate and take counsel with our elders; for we are still young-too young to determine such a matter. And now let us go, as we were intending, and hear Protagoras; and when we have heard what he has to say, we may take counsel of others; for not only is Protagoras at the house of Kallias, but there is Hippias of Elis, and, if I am not mistaken, Prodikos of Keios, and several other wise men.

To this we agreed, and proceeded on our way until we reached the vestibule of the house; and there we stopped in order to conclude a discussion which had arisen between us as we were going along; and we stood talking in the vestibule until we had finished and come to an understanding. And I think that the doorkeeper, who was a eunuch, and who was probably annoyed at the great inroad of the Sophists, must have heard us talking. At any rate, when we knocked at the door, and he opened and saw us, he grumbled: "They are Sophists—he is not at home," and instantly gave the door a hearty bang with both his hands.

Again we knocked, and he answered without opening: "Did you not hear me say that he is not at home, fellows?"

But, my friend, I said, you need not be alarmed; for we are not Sophists, and we are not come to see Kallias, but we want to see Protagoras; and I must request you to announce us. At last, after a good deal of difficulty, the man was persuaded to open the door.



THE REPUBLIC

by: Plato (*Aristokles*) c. 428 – 348 BCE

Translated by: BENJAMIN JOWETT

*Additions, corrections, and footnotes by Barry F. Vaughan*⁵⁷

Books VI and VII (*in part*):
The Divided Line and Allegory of the Cave

Persons of the Dialogue: *Sokrates, Glaukon (Plato's older brother)*

...Still, I must implore you, Sokrates, said Glaukon, not to turn away just as you are reaching the goal; if you will give an explanation of *the* [G]ood as you have already given of [J]ustice and [T]emperance and the other virtues, we [will] be satisfied.

Yes, my friend, and I [will] be at least equally satisfied, but I cannot help fearing that I [will] fall, and that my indiscreet zeal will bring ridicule upon me. No, [gentlemen], let us not at present ask what is the actual nature of *the* [G]ood, for to reach what is now in my thoughts would be an effort too great for me. But of the child of *the* [G]ood who is most like him, I would [willing] speak, if I could be sure that you wished to hear—otherwise [I will] not.

By all means, he said, tell us about the child, and you [will owe us an explanation] of the parent [later].

⁵⁰⁷I wish, I replied, that I could [give], and you [could] receive, [an] account of the parent [now], and not of the [child] only; however, [take] this [as a down payment], and at the same time [be careful] that I do not render a false account, although I have no *intention* of deceiving you.

Yes, we will take all the care that we can: proceed.

⁵⁷ This text is adapted from the Project Gutenberg's Republic, by Plato, www.gutenberg.org. For the full text visit the Project Gutenberg website. This edited version is intended for academic or personal use and may not be sold or used for profit.

I have changed spellings of proper names to more accurately match the Greek text as opposed to the more traditional Latinized spellings which were dominant in Jowett's time. I have also changed UK spellings to US spellings where appropriate, as well as made clarifications in translation (noted with brackets) and have added explanatory footnotes.

UNIVERSALS VERSUS PARTICULARS

Yes, I said, but I must first come to an [agreement] with you, and remind you of what I have mentioned in the course of this discussion, and at many other times.

What?

The old story, that there are many beautiful [things] and many good [things], and so of other [objects] which we describe and define; to all of them [the word] 'many' is applied.

True, he said.

And there is an absolute [B]eauty and an absolute [G]ood, and of other things to which the term 'many' is applied there is [one] absolute [reality]; for they may be brought *under a single [I]dea*, which is called the *essence* of each.⁵⁸

Very true.

The many, as we say, are seen [i.e., perceived] but not known [i.e., comprehended], and the [I]deas are known [i.e., comprehended] but not seen [i.e., perceived].⁵⁹

Exactly.

And what is the organ with which we see visible things?

Sight, he said.

And with hearing, I said, we hear, and with the other senses perceive the other objects of sense?

True.

But have you [every noticed] that sight is by far the most costly and complex piece of workmanship which the [creator] of the senses ever contrived?

No, I never have, he said.

Then reflect [with me for a moment]; has the ear or voice need of any third or additional nature in order that the one may be able to hear and the other to be heard?

Nothing of the sort.

⁵⁸ The 'many' are usually referred to by philosophers as "particulars" while the 'one' is called a "universal". The universal is that which all the particulars have in common.

⁵⁹ The distinction introduced here is between material objects which are grasped with the senses and nonmaterial entities that are grasped with the mind.

No, indeed, I replied; and the same is true of most, if not all, the other senses; you would not say that any of them requires such an addition?

Certainly not.

But you [understand] that without the addition of some other nature there is no seeing or being seen?

How do you mean?

Sight being, as I conceive, in the eyes, and he who has eyes wanting to see; color being also present in them, still unless there be a third nature specially adapted to the purpose, the owner of the eyes will see nothing and the colors will be invisible.

Of what nature are you speaking?

[What you call] light, I replied.

True, he said.

Noble, then, is the [connection] which links together sight and visibility, and ⁵⁰⁸great beyond other bonds by no small difference of nature; for light is their bond, and light is no ignoble thing?

No, he said, the [opposite] of ignoble.

And which, I said, of the gods in heaven would you say was the lord of this element? Whose is that light which makes the eye to see perfectly and the visible to appear? You mean the sun, as you and all mankind say. May not the relation of sight to this deity be described as follows?

How?

Neither sight nor the eye in which sight resides is the sun?

No.

Yet of all the organs of sense the eye is the most like the sun?

By far the most like.

And the power which the eye possesses is a sort of [discharge] which [comes] from the sun?

Exactly.

Then the sun is not sight, but the author of sight who is recognized by sight.

True, he said.

And this is he whom I call the child of the [G]ood, whom the [G]ood [produced] in his own likeness, to be in the visible world, in relation to sight and the things of sight, what the [G]ood is in the intellectual world in relation to [the] mind and the things of [the] mind.

Will you be a little more explicit, he asked?

Why, you know, I said, that the eyes, when a person directs them towards objects on which the light of day is no longer shining, but the moon and stars only, see dimly, and are nearly blind; they seem to have no clearness of vision in them?

Very true.

But when they are directed towards objects on which the sun shines, they see clearly and there is sight in them?

Certainly.

And *the soul is like the eye*: when resting upon that on which [T]ruth and [B]eing shine, the soul perceives and understands and is [glowing] with intelligence; but when turned towards the twilight of [B]ecoming and perishing, then she has opinion only, and goes [about] blinking, and first [holds] one opinion and then another, and seems to have no intelligence?

Just so.

Now, that which imparts truth to the known, and the power of knowing to the knower, is what I would have you term the [I]dea of [G]ood; and this you [should understand as] the *cause* of [knowledge], and of truth in so far as the latter becomes the subject of knowledge. [These are] beautiful, as are both truth and knowledge, you will be right in [believing] this other nature [to be] more ⁵⁰⁹beautiful than either [of the others]; and, as in the previous instance, light and sight may be truly said to be like the sun, and yet not to be the sun, so in this other [case], [knowledge] and truth may be deemed to be *like* the [G]ood, but not the [G]ood itself; the [G]ood has a place of honor [that is] higher.

What a beautiful [thing] that must be, he said, [that] which is the author of [knowledge] and truth, and yet surpasses them in beauty; for you surely cannot mean to say that pleasure is the [G]ood?

God forbid, I replied; but may I ask you to consider the [analogy from] another point of view?

[From] what point of view?

You would say, would you not, that the sun is only the author of visibility in all visible

things, [and] of [birth] and nourishment and growth, though he himself is not [born]?

Certainly.

In like manner the [G]ood may be said to be not only the [cause] of knowledge of all known things, but of their *being* and *essence*, and yet the [G]ood is not [an] essence, but far exceeds essence in dignity and power.

Glaukon said, with a ludicrous earnestness: By the light of heaven, how amazing!

Yes, I said, and [you are responsible for this extravagant analogy]; for you [forced me to talk about my beliefs on the matter].

[Well please continue]; at any rate [tell us] if there is anything more to be said about the [analogy] of the sun.

Yes, I said, there is a great deal more.

Then [don't leave anything out], however [small].

THE DIVIDED LINE

I will do my best, I said; but I'm [afraid] a great deal will have to be [left out]. You have to imagine, that there are two ruling powers, and that one of them is set over the intellectual world, the other over the visible. I do not say heaven, lest you should fancy that I am playing upon the [words] (οὐρανός-*ouranos* – “heaven”, and ορατός-*oratos* – “that which is seen”). May I suppose that you [understand] this distinction [between] the visible (perceivable) and intelligible (conceivable)?

I have.

Now take a line which has been cut into two unequal parts, and divide each of them again in the same proportion, and suppose the two main divisions to [correspond], one to the visible and the other to the intelligible. [T]hen compare the subdivisions in respect of their clearness and [lack] of clearness, and you will find that the first section in the [realm] ⁵¹⁰of the visible consists of images. And by images I mean, in the first place, shadows, and in the second place, reflections in water and in [mirrors] and the like: Do you understand?

Yes, I understand.

Imagine, now, the [next] section, of which [the first] is only the [reflection], to include the [objects] which we see, and everything that grows or is made [i.e., the objects that *cause* the reflections].

[Alright].

Would you not admit that both [parts] of this division have different *degrees of truth*, and that the copy is to the original as the [realm] of opinion is to the [realm] of knowledge?

Most undoubtedly.

Next proceed to consider the manner in which the [realm] of the [conceivable] is to be divided.

In what manner?

[In the following way]: [like the other part we just considered] there are two subdivisions. In the lower the soul uses figures; [such an] enquiry can only be hypothetical, and instead of going upwards to a principle, [it] descends to the other end. In the higher of the two [parts], the soul passes [beyond] hypotheses, and goes up to a principle which is above hypotheses, making no use of figures, as in the former case, but proceed[s] only in and through [I]deas themselves.

I do not quite understand your meaning, he said.

Then I will try again; you will understand me better when I have made some preliminary remarks. You [know] that students of geometry, arithmetic, and [other mathematical] sciences *assume* the [definitions of] **odd** and the **even** [numbers], and [shapes] and three kinds of angles, and [other mathematical axioms]. [T]hese are their hypotheses, which they—and everybody—are supposed to know. Therefore, they do not [bother] to give any [explanation] of them, either to themselves or [anybody else]. [Rather] they begin with [these axioms], and [proceed from them] until they arrive at last, and in a [logical] manner, at their conclusion?

Yes, he said, I know.

And [you also] know that although they use visible [images of points and lines and shapes] and [think] about [those things], they are [not *really*] thinking [about these images], but [about] the [Ideas] which they [represent]. [They are] not [thinking about] the figures which they draw, but of the *absolute square* and the *absolute diameter*, and so on—the [images] which they draw or make, [or] which have shadows and reflections in water, are converted by them into images, but they are really seeking to “see” the things *themselves*, which can only be “seen” with the *eye of the mind*?

⁵¹¹That is true.

[This is what I meant by] *the intelligible*. The soul is compelled to use hypotheses [in search of it]; not ascending to a first principle, because she is unable to rise above the region of hypothesis, but *employing the objects* of which the shadows below are resemblances in their turn, as images, they—in relation to the shadows and reflections of them—have a greater distinctness, and therefore, a higher value.

I understand, he said, that you are talking [about] geometry and the [mathematical] arts.

And when I speak of the other division of the intelligible, you will understand me to speak of that other sort of knowledge which reason herself attains by the power of dialectic, using the hypotheses not as first principles, but *only as hypotheses*. That is to say, as steps and points of departure into a world which is “above” hypotheses, [so] she may soar beyond them to the first principle of the whole. Clinging to this, and then to that which depends on this, by successive steps she descends again without the aid of any sensible object, from ideas, through ideas, and in ideas she ends.

I understand you, he replied; not perfectly, for you seem to me to be describing a task which is really tremendous; but, at any rate, I understand you to say that [K]nowledge and [B]eing, which the science of dialectic contemplates, are clearer than the [conceptions] of the arts—as they are termed—which proceed from hypotheses only. These are also contemplated *by the understanding*, and *not* by the senses. But, because they start from hypotheses and do not ascend to a principle, those who contemplate them appear to you not to exercise the higher [faculty of] **reason** upon them, although when a first principle is added to them they are [grasped] by the [faculty of] reason [alone]. And the habit which is concerned with geometry and the [mathematical] sciences I suppose you would term ‘understanding’ and not ‘reason’, [because it is] intermediate between **opinion** and **knowledge**.

You have quite conceived my meaning, I said; and now, corresponding to these four divisions, let there be four faculties in the soul—*reason* answering to the highest, *understanding* to the second, *faith* (or conviction) to the third, and *perception* of shadows to the last—and let there be a scale of them, and let us suppose that the several faculties have clearness in the same degree that their objects have truth.

I understand, he replied, and [agree], and accept your arrangement.

THE ALLEGORY OF THE CAVE

⁵¹⁴ And now, I said, let me show in [an analogy] how far our nature is enlightened or unenlightened: [See]! Human beings living in a underground cave, which has a mouth open towards the light and reaching all along the cave; here they have been from their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move, and can only see [in front of] them, being prevented by chains from turning [a]round]. Above and behind them is a blazing fire at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised [platform]; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the [front of the platform], like the screen which [puppeteers] have in front of them, over which they show their puppets.

I see.

⁵¹⁵ And do you see, I said, men passing [behind] the wall carrying all sorts of [objects], and statues and figures of animals made of wood and stone and various materials, which appear over the wall? Some of them are talking, others silent.

You have shown me a strange image, and they are strange prisoners.

[They are l]ike ourselves, I replied; and they only see their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave?

True, he said; how could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their heads?

And [they would also only see the shadows] of the objects which are being carried [on the platform]?

Yes, he said.

And if they were able to [talk] with one another, wouldn't [they] suppose that they were naming what was actually before them?

Very true.

And suppose further that the prison had an echo which came from the [front]; [wouldn't they believe that] when one of the passers-by spoke [from the platform] that the voice which they heard came from the shadow [in front of them]?

No question, he replied.

To them, I said, the "truth" would [seem to be] nothing [more than] the shadows of the images [on the wall].

That is certain.

And now look again, and see what will naturally follow if the prisoners are released and disabused of their error. At first, when any of them is liberated and compelled suddenly to stand up and turn [a]round and walk and look towards the light, he will suffer sharp pains; the glare will distress him, and he will be unable to see the realities of which in his former state he had seen the shadows; and then [imagine] someone saying to him, that what he saw before was an illusion, but that now, when he is approaching nearer to [B]eing and his eye is turned towards *more real existence*, he has a clearer vision; what will be his reply? And you may further imagine that his instructor is pointing to the objects as they pass and requiring him to name them; will he not be perplexed? Will he not fancy that the shadows which he formerly saw are "truer" than the objects which are now shown to him?

Far truer.

And if he is compelled to look straight at the light, will he not have a pain in his eyes which will make him turn away and take in the vision of objects which he can see, and which he will [think are] clearer than the things which are now being shown to him?

True, he now

And suppose once more, that he is reluctantly dragged up a steep and rugged ascent, and held fast until he is forced into the presence of the [S]un himself, is he not likely to be pained and irritated? When he ⁵¹⁶approaches the light his eyes will be [blinded], and he will not be able to see anything at all of what are now called realities.

Not all in a moment, he said.

He will [have] to grow accustomed to the “sight” of the upper world. And first he will *see* the shadows best, next the reflections of men and other objects in the water, and then the objects themselves; then he will gaze upon the light of the moon and the stars and the spangled heaven; and he will *see* the sky and the stars by night better than the sun or the light of the sun by day?

Certainly.

Last of [all] he will be able to *see* the [S]un, and not mere reflections of [it] in the water, but he will *see* [it] in [its] own proper place, and not in another; and he will contemplate [the sun] as [it] is [in itself].

Certainly.

He will then proceed to argue that this [i.e., the sun] is He who gives the season and the years, and is the guardian of all that is in the visible world, and *in a certain way* the **cause** of all things which he and his fellows have been accustomed to [see]?

Clearly, he said, he would first *see* the [S]un and then *reason about* Him.

And when he remembered his old [life], and the wisdom of the cave and his fellow-prisoners, [don't you] suppose that he would [think himself lucky at] the change, and pity them?

Certainly, he would.

And if they were in the habit of conferring honors among themselves on those who were quickest to observe the passing shadows and to remark which of them went before, and which followed after, and which were together; and who were therefore best able to draw conclusions as to the future, do you think that he would care for such honors and glories, or envy the possessors of them? Would he not say with Homer,

“Better to be the poor servant of a poor master, and to endure anything, rather than think as they do, and live after their manner?”

Yes, he said, I think that he would rather suffer anything than entertain these false notions and live in this miserable manner.

⁵¹⁷Imagine once more, I said, such a [person] coming suddenly out of the [S]un to be replaced in his old situation; would he not be certain to have his eyes full of darkness?

To be sure, he said. And if there were a contest, and he had to compete in measuring the shadows with the prisoners who had never moved out of the cave, while his sight was still weak, and before his eyes had become steady (and the time which would be needed to acquire this new habit of sight might be very considerable) would he not be ridiculous? [The slaves] would say of him that [he went up and came back down] without his eyes; and that it was better not even to think of ascending; and if anyone tried to [free] another [slave] and lead him up to the light, let them only catch the offender, and they would put him to death.⁶⁰

No question, he said.

This entire allegory, I said, you may now [add], dear Glaukon, to the previous argument;⁶¹ the [cave] *is* the world of sight, the light of the fire *is* the sun, and you will not misapprehend me if you interpret the journey upwards to be *the ascent of the soul* into the [conceivable] world according to my poor belief, which, at your desire, I have expressed whether rightly or wrongly, God [only] knows. But, whether true or false, my opinion is that in the World of Knowledge the idea of [G]ood appears last of all, and is “seen” only with an effort; and, when “seen”, is also inferred to be the [absolute cause] of all things beautiful and right, [cause] of [illumination] and of the lord of light in this visible world, [as well as] the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual [world]. This is the power upon which [the rational person]—[whether acting] in public or private life—must have his eye fixed.

I agree, he said, as far as I am able to understand you.

Moreover, I said, you must not wonder that those who attain to this [divine] vision are unwilling to descend to human affairs; for their souls are ever hastening into the upper world where they desire to dwell; [and this] desire of theirs is very natural, if our allegory may be trusted.

Yes, very natural.

And is there anything surprising [about] one who passes from divine contemplation to the evil state of man, misbehaving himself in a ridiculous manner; if, while his eyes are blinking and before he has become accustomed to the surrounding darkness, he is compelled to fight in courts of law, or in other places, about the images or the shadows of images of justice, and is endeavoring to meet the conceptions of those who have never yet seen absolute [J]justice?

⁶⁰ This is a rather transparent reference to Sokrates himself and his destiny at the hands of the Athenians.

⁶¹ “The previous argument” refers to the Divided Line. The allegory is a narrative account of the same divisions and capacities elucidated in the metaphor of the line: the shadows of the cave equal reflections on the line, the shadow puppets represent the material objects which cause reflections, the objects outside the cave are the universals, or Ideas, derived via hypothesis, and the Sun represents Being itself which is grasped with unaided reason.

Anything but surprising, he replied.

⁵¹⁸Any one who has common sense will remember that the bewilderments of the eyes are of two kinds, and arise from *two causes*, either from coming out of the light or from going into the light, which is true of the mind's eye, quite as much as of the bodily eye; and he who remembers this when he sees any one whose vision is perplexed and weak, will not be too ready to laugh; he will first ask whether that soul of man has come out of the brighter light, and is unable to see because unaccustomed to the dark, or having turned from darkness to the day is dazzled by excess of light. And he will count the one happy in his condition and state of being, and he will pity the other; or, if he have a mind to laugh at the soul which comes from below into the light, there will be more reason in this than in the laugh which greets him who returns from above out of the light into the cave.⁶²

That, he said, is a very just distinction.

But then, if I am right, professors of [learning] must be wrong when they say that they can put knowledge into the soul which was not there before, like sight into blind eyes.⁶³

They undoubtedly say this, he replied.

Whereas, our argument shows that the power and capacity of learning exists in the soul already; and that just as the eye was unable to turn from darkness to light without the whole body, so too the instrument of knowledge can only—by the movement of the whole soul—be turned from the world of *Becoming* into that of *Being*, and learn by degrees to endure the sight of being, and of the brightest and best of being, or in other words, of *the* [G]ood.

Very true.

And [mustn't] there be some [skill] which will effect conversion in the easiest and quickest manner; not implanting the faculty of sight, for that exists already, but has been turned in the wrong direction, and is looking away from the truth?

Yes, he said, such a [skill] may be presumed.

And whereas the other so-called virtues of the soul seem to be akin to bodily qualities, for even when they are not originally innate they can be implanted later by habit and exercise, the virtue of wisdom, more than anything else, contains a [god-like] element which always remains, and by this conversion is rendered useful and profitable; or, on the other hand,⁵¹⁹ hurtful and useless. Did you never observe the narrow intelligence flashing from the keen

⁶² The coming and going between the cave and the light is a reference to the doctrine of reincarnation, or *metempsychosis*. Herodotus attributes this doctrine to Pythagoros, who was an influence on Plato. Pythagoros is supposed to have picked up the idea from Egypt. However, while there is an idea of an afterlife—at least for the aristocracy—in pre-classical Egypt, they do not seem to have an idea of an immortal soul that passes back and forth between different metaphysical realms. If Pythagoros was indeed exposed to this idea in Egypt, it would make far more sense to attribute the idea to Indian traders who may have brought the idea—already long established in India—to Egypt along with goods from their homeland.

⁶³ See *Meno* 81d, *Phaedo* 70dff.

eye of a clever rogue—how eager he is, how clearly his paltry soul sees the way to his end; he is the reverse of blind, but his keen eyesight is forced into the service of evil, and he is mischievous in proportion to his cleverness.

Very true, he said.

But what if there had been a [curtailing] of such natures in the days of their youth; and they had been severed from those sensual pleasures, such as eating and drinking, which, like weights, were attached to them at their birth, and which drag them down and turn the vision of their souls upon the things that are below—if, I say, they had been released from these impediments and turned in the opposite direction, the very same faculty [i.e., reason] in them would have seen the truth as keenly as they see what their eyes are turned to now.

Very likely.

Yes, I said; and there is another thing which is likely—or rather a necessary inference from what has preceded—that neither the uneducated and uninformed of the truth, nor those who never make an end of their education, will be [competent] rulers of [the] Polis; not the former, because they have no single aim of duty which is the rule of all their actions, private as well as public; nor the latter, because they will not act at all except upon compulsion, fancying that they are already dwelling apart in the islands of the blest.

Very true, he replied.

Then, I said, [our] business [as] founders of the Polis will be to *compel* the best minds to attain that knowledge which we have already shown to be the greatest of all—they must continue to ascend until they arrive at the [G]ood; but when they have ascended and seen enough we must not allow them to do as they do now.

What do you mean?

I mean that they remain in the upper world: but this must not be allowed; they must be made to descend again among the prisoners in the cave, and partake of their labors and honors, whether they are worth having or not.

But isn't this unjust, he said; [should] we give them a worse life, when they might have a better [one]?

You have again forgotten, my friend, I said, the intention of the [ruler], who did not aim at making any one class in the Polis happy above the rest; the happiness was to be in the whole Polis, and he held ⁵²⁰the citizens together by persuasion and necessity, making them benefactors of the Polis, and therefore benefactors of one another; to this end he created them, not to please themselves, but to be his instruments in binding up the Polis.

True, he said, I had forgotten.

Observe, Glaukon, that there will be no injustice in compelling our philosophers to have a care [for] others; we [will] explain to them that in other Cities, men of their class are not obliged to share in the toils of politics: and this is reasonable, for they grow up at their own sweet will, and the government would rather not have them. Being self-taught, they cannot be expected to show any gratitude for a culture which they have never received. But we have brought you into the world to be rulers of the hive, kings of yourselves and of the other citizens, and have educated you far better and more perfectly than they have been educated, and you are better able to share in the double duty. Wherefore, each of you, when his turn comes, must go down to the [cave], and get the habit of seeing in the dark. When you have acquired the habit, you will see ten thousand times better than the [other] inhabitants of the cave, and you will know what the several images are, and what they represent, because you have seen the [B]eautiful and [J]ust and [G]ood in their truth. And thus, our Polis, which is also yours, will be a reality, and not only a dream, and will be administered in a spirit unlike other Cities, in which men fight with one another about shadows and are distracted in the struggle for power, which in their eyes is a great *good*. Whereas the truth is that the Polis in which the rulers are most reluctant to govern is always the best and most quietly governed, and the Polis in which they are most eager [is] the worst.

Quite true, he replied.

And will our pupils, when they hear this, refuse to take their turn at the toils of Polis, when they are allowed to spend the greater part of their time with one another in the heavenly light?

Impossible, he answered; for they are just men, and the commands which we impose upon them are just; there can be no doubt that every one of them will take office as a stern necessity, and not after the fashion of our present rulers of Polis.

Yes, my friend, I said; and there lies the point. You must contrive for ⁵²¹your future rulers another and a better life than that of a ruler, and then you may have a well-ordered Polis; for only in the Polis which offers this, will [those who] rule [be] truly rich, not in silver and gold, but in virtue and wisdom, which are the true blessings of life. Whereas if they go to the administration of public affairs, poor and hungering after their own private advantage, thinking that [afterwards] they are to snatch the chief [G]ood, [there will never be] order; for they will be fighting about office[s], and the civil and domestic broils which thus arise will be the ruin of the rulers and the whole Polis.

Most true, he replied.

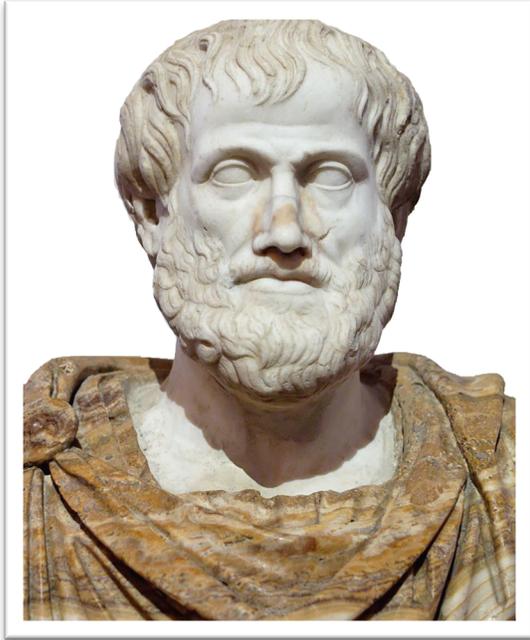
And the only life which looks down upon the life of political ambition is that of true philosophy. Do you know of any other?

Indeed, I do not, he said.

And those who govern ought not to be lovers of the task? For, if they are, there will be rival lovers, and they will fight.

No question.

Who then are those whom we [will] compel to be guardians? Surely they will be the men who are wisest about affairs of Polis, and by whom the Polis is best administered, and who at the same time have other honors and another and a better life than that of politics?



NIKOMACHEAN ETHICS

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BOOK I: The Teleology of Human Action

Chapter 1 – Every Action has an End

^{1094A}Every art (*τεχνη*–*techne*) and every inquiry, and similarly every action and

pursuit, is thought to *aim at some good* (*αγαθου*–*agathou*); and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim (*τελων*–*telon*). But a certain difference is found among ends; some are activities, others are products apart from the activities that produce them. Where there are ends apart from the actions, it is the nature of the products to be better than the activities.

Now, as there are many actions, arts, and sciences (*επιστημων*–*epistemon*), their ends also are many; the end of the medical art is health, that of shipbuilding a vessel, that of strategy victory, that of economics wealth. But where such arts fall under a single capacity—as bridle-making and the other arts concerned with the equipment of horses fall under the art of riding, and this and every military action under strategy, in the same way other arts fall under yet others—in all of these the ends of the master arts are to be preferred to all the subordinate ends; for it is for the sake of the former that the latter are pursued. It makes no difference whether the activities themselves are the ends of the actions, or something else apart from the activities, as in the case of the sciences just mentioned.

Chapter 2 – Human Action is Political

If, then, there is some end of the things we do, which we desire for its own sake (*everything else being desired for the sake of this*), and if we do not choose everything for the sake of

⁶⁴ From the Internet Classics Archive. Full text available for download at <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.html>.

I have changed spellings to more accurately match the Greek text as opposed to the more traditional Latinized spellings. I have also changed UK spellings to US spellings where appropriate, as well as made clarifications in translation noted with brackets and added explanatory footnotes. This text is intended for academic or personal use and may not be sold or used for profit.

something else (for at that rate the process would go on to infinity, so that our desire would be empty and vain), clearly *this must be the good and the chief good*. Will not the knowledge of it, then, have a great influence on life? Shall we not, like archers who have a mark to aim at, be more likely to hit upon what is right? If so, we must try, in outline at least, to determine what it is, and of which of the sciences or capacities it is the object. It would seem to belong to the most authoritative art and that which is most truly the master art. And *politics* (*πολιτικη-politike*) *appears to be of this nature*; for it is this ^{1094b} that ordains which of the sciences should be studied in a state, and which each class of citizens should learn and up to what point they should learn them; and we see even the most highly esteemed of capacities to fall under this, e.g., strategy, economics, rhetoric; now, since *politics uses the rest of the sciences* (*επιστημων-epistemon*), and since, again, it legislates as to what we are to do and what we are to abstain from, the end of this science must include those of the others, so that *this end must be the good for man*. For even if the end is the same for a single man and for a state, that of the state seems at all events something greater and more complete whether to attain or to preserve; though it is worth while to attain the end merely for one man, it is finer and more godlike to attain it for a nation or for city-states. These, then, are the ends at which our inquiry aims, since it is political science, in one sense of that term.

Chapter 4 – Happiness is the Goal of Action

...In view of the fact that *all knowledge and every pursuit aims at some good*, what it is that we say political science aims at and what is the highest of all goods achievable by action. *Verbally* there is very general agreement; for both the general run of men and people of superior refinement say that it is *happiness* (*ευδαιμονια-eudaimonia*), and identify *living well* and *doing well* with *being happy*; but with regard to *what happiness is* they differ, and the many do not give the same account as the wise. For the former think it is some plain and obvious thing, like *pleasure, wealth, or honor*; they differ, however, from one another—and often even the same man identifies it with different things, with health when he is ill, with wealth when he is poor; but, conscious of their ignorance, they admire those who proclaim some great ideal that is above their comprehension. Now some thought that apart from these many goods there is another which is self-subsistent and causes the goodness of all these as well...

Chapter 5 – Different Conceptions of ‘Happiness’

...To judge from the lives that men lead, most men, and men of the most vulgar type, seem (not without some ground) to *identify the good, or happiness, with pleasure* (*ηδονην-hedonen*); which is the reason why they love the life of enjoyment. For there are, we may say, *three prominent types of life*⁶⁵—that just mentioned, the *political*, and thirdly the *contemplative* life. Now the mass of mankind are evidently quite slavish in their tastes, preferring a life suitable to beasts, but they get some ground for their view from the fact that

⁶⁵ The notion of three kinds of lives (i.e., the life of pleasure, the life of politics, the life of observation/contemplation) was a common trope in Classical Greek culture and probably originates with the Pythagorean School.

many of those in high places share the tastes of Sardanapallus.⁶⁶ A consideration of the prominent types of life shows that people of superior refinement and of active disposition identify happiness with honor; for this is, roughly speaking, the end of the political life. But it seems too superficial to be what we are looking for, since it is thought to *depend on those who bestow honor rather than on him who receives it*, but the good we divine to be something proper to a man and not easily taken from him. Further, men seem to pursue honor *in order that they may be assured* of their goodness; at least it is by men of practical wisdom (*φρονιμῶν-phronimon*) that they seek to be honored, and among those who know them, and on the ground of their virtue; clearly, then, according to them, at any rate, virtue (*ἀρετῆν-areten*)⁶⁷ is better. And perhaps one might even suppose this to be—rather than honor—the end of the political life. But even this appears somewhat incomplete; for possession of [excellence] seems actually compatible with being asleep, or with lifelong inactivity, and, further, with the greatest ^{1096a}sufferings and misfortunes; but a man who was living so no one would call happy, unless he were maintaining a thesis at all costs. But enough of this; for the subject has been sufficiently treated even in the current discussions. Third comes the contemplative life, which we shall consider later.

The life of money-making is one undertaken under compulsion, and wealth is evidently not the good we are seeking; for it is *merely* useful, and *for the sake of something else*. And so one might rather take the aforementioned objects to be ends; for they are loved *for* themselves. But it is evident that not even these are ends; yet many arguments have been thrown away in support of them...

Chapter 7 – The Purpose of Human Life

Let us again return to the good we are seeking, and ask what it can be. It seems different in different actions and arts; it is different in medicine, in strategy, and in the other arts likewise. What then is the good of each? Surely, ***that for whose sake everything else is done***. In medicine this is health, in strategy victory, in architecture a house, in any other sphere something else, and in every action and pursuit the end; for it is *for the sake of* this that all men do whatever else they do. Therefore, if there is an end for all that we do, this will be the good achievable by action, and if there are more than one, these will be the goods achievable by action.

So the argument has by a different course reached the same point; but we must try to state this even more clearly. Since there [is] evidently more than one end, and we choose some of these (e.g., wealth, flutes, and in general instruments) *for the sake of something else*, clearly ***not all ends are final ends***; but *the chief good is evidently something final*. Therefore, if there is only one final end, this will be what we are seeking, and if there are more than one, the most final of these will be what we are seeking. Now we call *that which is in-itself worthy of pursuit* more final than that which is worthy of pursuit for the sake of something else, and that which is never desirable for the sake of something else more final than the

⁶⁶ The name ‘Sardanapalus’ is either mythical, or a corruption of ‘Ashurbanipal’ who was an emperor of Assyria in the 7th Century BCE. To a Classical Greek the name is associated with a life of corruption, effeminacy, gluttony, and general excess.

⁶⁷ While usually translated ‘virtue’ the Greek word ἀρετή is more accurately rendered as ‘excellence’.

things that are desirable both in themselves and for the sake of that other thing, and therefore, we call 'final'—without qualification—that which is *always desirable in-itself and never for the sake of something else*.

Now such a thing **happiness**, above all else, is held to be; for this we choose always for self and never for the sake of something else, but honor, pleasure, reason, and every virtue we choose indeed for themselves (for if nothing resulted from them we should still choose each of them), but we choose them also for the sake of happiness, judging that by means of them we shall be happy. Happiness, on the other hand, no one chooses for the sake of these, nor, in general, for anything other than itself...

Presumably, however, to say that happiness is the chief good seems a platitude, and a clearer account of what it is, [is] still desired. This might perhaps be given, if we could first ascertain *the function of man*. For just as for a flute-player, a sculptor, or an artist, and, in general, for all things that have a function or activity, the good and the 'well' is thought to reside in the function, so would it seem to be for man, if he has a function. Have the carpenter, then, and the tanner certain functions or activities, and has man none? Is he born without a function? Or as eye, hand, foot, and in general each of the parts evidently has a function, may one lay it down that man similarly has a function apart from all these? What then can this be? Life seems to be common even to plants, but we are seeking what is *peculiar* to man. Let us ^{1098a}exclude, therefore, the *life of nutrition and growth*.⁶⁸

Next there would be a *life of perception*,⁶⁹ but it also seems to be common even to the horse, the ox, and every animal. There remains, then, *an active life of the element that has a rational principle*; of this, one part has such a principle in the sense of being obedient to one, the other in the sense of possessing one and *exercising thought*. And, as 'life of the rational element' also has two meanings, we must state that life in the sense of activity is what we mean; for this seems to be the more proper sense of the term. Now if the function of man is an activity of soul which follows or implies a rational principle, and if we say 'so-and-so-and' 'a good so-and-so' have a function which is the same in kind, e.g., a lyre, and a good lyre-player, and so without qualification in all cases, eminence in respect of goodness being added to the name of the function (for the function of a lyre-player is to play the lyre, and that of a good lyre-player is to do so well): if this is the case, and we state the function of man to be a certain kind of life, and this to be an activity or actions of the soul implying a rational principle, and the function of a good man to be the good and noble performance of these, and if any action is well performed when it is performed in accordance with the appropriate excellence: if this is the case, *human good turns out to be activity of soul in accordance with virtue*, and if there [is] more than one virtue, in accordance with the best and most complete.

But we must add 'in a complete life.' For,

one swallow does not make a summer,

⁶⁸ The 'nutritive' soul is the life of a plant; it takes in and processes nutrition; it grows and reproduces; it dies.

⁶⁹ The 'sensate' soul differs from the nutritive soul in that it not only processes nutrition, but to do so it must have senses. Without the capacity of sensation, animals would be unable to find food and mates.

nor does one day; and so too one day, or a short time, does not make a man blessed and happy.

BOOK II: How Moral Virtue is Produced

Chapter 1 – Two Kinds of Virtue/Excellence

[Excellence], then, being of two kinds, *intellectual* and [ethical] (*εθικης–ethikes*), intellectual [excellence] in the main owes both its *birth and its growth to teaching* (for which reason it requires **experience** and **time**), while [ethical excellence] *comes about as a result of habit*, whence also its name is one that is formed by a slight variation from the word (i.e., *ηθος–ethos*). From this it is also plain that *none* of the [ethical excellences] *arises in us by nature*; for nothing that exists by nature can form a habit contrary to its nature. For instance the stone which by nature moves downwards cannot be habituated to move upwards, not even if one tries to train it by throwing it up ten thousand times; nor can fire be habituated to move downwards, nor can anything else that by nature behaves in one way be trained to behave in another. Neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do the virtues arise in us; rather we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit.

Again, of all the things that come to us by nature we first acquire the potentiality and later exhibit the activity (this is plain in the case of the senses; for it was not by often seeing or often hearing that we got these senses, but on the contrary we had them before we used them, and did not come to have them by using them); but *the virtues we get by first exercising them*, as also happens in the case of the arts as well. For the things we have to learn before we can do them, *we learn by doing them*, e.g., men become builders by building and lyre-players by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts..

Again, it is from the same causes and by the same means that every [excellence] is both produced and destroyed, and similarly every art; for it is from playing the lyre that both good and bad lyre-players are produced. And the corresponding statement is true of builders and of all the rest; men will be good or bad builders as a result of building well or badly. For if this were not so, there would have been no need of a teacher, but all men would have been born good or bad at their craft. This, then, is the case with the virtues also; *by doing the acts that we do in our transactions with other men we become just or unjust*, and by doing the acts that we do in the presence of danger, and being habituated to feel fear or confidence, we become *brave or cowardly*. The same is true of appetites and feelings of anger; some men become *temperate* and good-tempered, others *self-indulgent* and irascible, by behaving in one way or the other in the appropriate circumstances. Thus, in one word, *states of character arise out of like activities*. This is why the activities we exhibit must be of a certain kind; it is because the states of character correspond to the differences between these. It makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or of another from our very youth; *it makes a very great difference, or rather all the difference*.

Chapter 2 – Moral Virtue is the Mean Between Lack and Excess

Since, then, the present inquiry does not aim at theoretical knowledge like the others (for we are inquiring, not in order to know what virtue *is*, but in order to *become* good, since otherwise our inquiry would have been of no use), *we must examine the nature of actions*, namely how we ought to do them; for these determine also the nature of the states of character that are produced, as we have said.

Now, *that we must act according to the right rule* is a common principle and must be assumed—it will be discussed later, i.e., *both what* the right rule is, and *how* it is related to the other virtues. But this must be agreed upon beforehand, that the whole account of matters of conduct must be given in outline and not precisely, as we said at the very beginning that the accounts we demand must be in accordance with the subject-matter; matters concerned with conduct and questions of what is good for us have no fixity, any more than matters of health. The general account being of this nature, the account of particular cases is yet more lacking in exactness; for they do not fall under any art or precept but *the agents themselves must in each case consider what is appropriate to the occasion*, as happens also in the art of medicine or of navigation.

...First, then, let us consider this, that it is the nature of such things to be destroyed by [*lack*] and *excess*, as we see in the case of strength and of health; both *excessive* and *defective exercise* destroys the strength, and similarly drink or food which is above or below a certain amount destroys the health, while that which is proportionate both produces and increases and preserves it. So too is it, then, in the case of *temperance* and *courage* and the other virtues. For the man who flies from and fears everything and does not stand his ground against anything becomes a coward, and the man who fears nothing at all but goes to meet every danger becomes rash; and similarly the man who indulges in every pleasure and abstains from none becomes self-indulgent, while the man who shuns every pleasure, as boors do, becomes in a way insensible; *temperance and courage, then, are destroyed by excess and [lack], and preserved by the mean.*

But not only are the sources and causes of their origination and growth the same as those of their destruction, but also the sphere of their actualization will be the same; for this is also true of the things which are more evident to sense, e.g., of strength; it is produced by taking much food and undergoing much exertion, and it is the strong man that will be most able to do these things. So too is it with the virtues; *by abstaining from pleasures we become temperate*, and it is when we have become so that we are most able to abstain from them; and similarly too in the case of courage; *for by being habituated to despise things that are terrible and to stand our ground against them we become brave*, and it is when we have become so that we shall be most able to stand our ground against them.

Chapter 3 – Moral Virtue Deals with Pleasure and Pain

We must take as *a sign of states of character* the pleasure or pain that ensues on acts; for *the man who abstains from bodily pleasures and delights in this very fact is temperate*, while *the man who is annoyed at it is self-indulgent*, and *he who stands his ground against things that*

*are terrible and delights in this or at least is not pained is **brave**, while the man who is pained is a **coward**.* For [ethical] excellence is concerned with pleasures and pains; it is on account of the pleasure that we do bad things, and on account of the pain that we abstain from noble ones. Hence, we ought to have been brought up in a particular way from our very youth, as Plato says, *so as both to delight in and to be pained by the things that we ought*; for this is the right education.⁷⁰

Again, if the virtues are concerned with actions and passions, and every passion and every action is accompanied by pleasure and pain, for *this* reason also virtue will be concerned with pleasures and pains. *This is indicated also by the fact that punishment is inflicted by these means; for it is a kind of cure, and it is the nature of cures to be effected by contraries.*

Again, as we said [before], *every state of soul has a nature relative to and concerned with the kind of things by which it tends to be made worse or better*; but it is [because] of pleasures and pains that men become bad, by pursuing and avoiding these—either the pleasures and pains they ought not or when they ought not or as they ought not, or by going wrong in one of the other similar ways that may be distinguished. Hence men even define the virtues as certain states of impassivity and rest; not well, however, because they speak absolutely, and do not say 'as one ought' and 'as one ought not' and 'when one ought or ought not', and the other things that may be added. We assume, then, that this kind of excellence tends to do what is best with regard to pleasures and pains, and vice does the contrary.

The following facts also may show us that virtue and vice are concerned with these same things. There being *three objects of choice* and *three of avoidance*, the **noble**, the **advantageous**, the **pleasant**, and their contraries, the **base**, the **injurious**, the **painful**, about all of these the good man tends to go right and the bad man to go wrong, and especially about pleasure; for this is common to the animals, and also it accompanies all objects of choice; for even the noble and the advantageous appear pleasant.

^{1105a}Again, it has grown up with us all from our infancy; this is why it is difficult to rub off this passion, engrained as it is in our life. And we measure even our actions—some of us more and others less—by the rule of pleasure and pain. For this reason, then, our whole inquiry must be about these; for *to feel delight and pain rightly or wrongly has no small effect on our actions.*

Again, it is *harder to fight with pleasure than with anger*, to use Heraclitus' phrase', but both art and virtue are always concerned with what is harder; for even the good is better when it is harder. *Therefore, for this reason the whole concern of both virtue and of political science is with pleasures and pains; for the man who uses these well will be good, he who uses them badly, [will be] bad...*

⁷⁰ Republic 401e-402a, Laws 653a.

Chapter 4 – Ethical Virtue Cannot be Accidental

The question might be asked: “what [do] we mean by saying that we must become just by doing just acts, and temperate by doing temperate acts?” [This is a problem because], if men do just and temperate acts, they *are* just and temperate, [and in the same way] if they do what is in accordance with the laws of grammar and of music, they *are* grammarians and musicians.

Or is this not true even of the arts? It is possible to do something that is in accordance with the laws of grammar, either *by chance* or at *the suggestion of another*. A man will be a grammarian, then, only when he has done something grammatical *and* done it grammatically; and this means *doing it in accordance with the grammatical knowledge in himself*.

Again, the case of the arts and that of the virtues are not similar; for the products of the arts have their goodness in themselves, so that it is enough that they should have a certain character, but if the acts that are in accordance with the virtues have themselves a certain character it does not follow that they are done justly or temperately. The agent also must be in a certain condition when he does them; in the first place he must have *knowledge*, secondly he must *choose* the acts, and choose them for their own sakes, and thirdly his action *must proceed from a firm and unchangeable character*. These are not reckoned in as conditions of the possession of the arts, except the ^{1105b}bare knowledge; but as a condition of the possession of the virtues knowledge has little or no weight, while the other conditions count not for a little but for everything, i.e., the very conditions which result from often doing just and temperate acts.

Actions, then, are called ‘just’ and ‘temperate’ when they are such as the just or the temperate man would do; but it is not the man who does these that is just and temperate, but the man who also does them as just and temperate men do them. It is well said, then, that it is by doing just acts that the just man is produced, and by doing temperate acts the temperate man; without doing these no one would have even a prospect of becoming good.

But most people do not do these, but take refuge in theory and think they are being philosophers and will become good in this way, behaving somewhat like patients who listen attentively to their doctors, but do none of the things they are ordered to do. As the latter will not be made well in body by such a course of treatment, the former will not be made well in soul by such a course of philosophy.

Chapter 5 – Virtues are States of Character (*not Passions or Faculties*)

Next we must consider what virtue *is*. Since things that are found in the soul are of three kinds- *passions, faculties, states of character*, [excellence] must be one of these. By ‘passions’ I mean appetite, anger, fear, confidence, envy, joy, friendly feeling, hatred, longing, emulation, pity, and in general the feelings that are accompanied by pleasure or pain. By ‘faculties’ [I mean] the things [that make it possible to] feel these, e.g., of becoming angry or being pained or feeling pity. By ‘states of character’ [I mean] the things in virtue of which we stand well or badly with reference to the passions, e.g., with reference to anger we

stand badly if we feel it violently or too weakly, and well if we feel it moderately; and similarly with reference to the other passions.

Now neither the virtues nor the vices are *passions*, because we are not called good or bad on the ground of our passions, but are so called on the ground of our virtues and our vices, and because we are neither praised nor blamed for our passions (for the man who feels fear or anger is not praised, nor is the man who simply feels anger blamed, but the man who feels it in a certain way), ^{1106a}but for our virtues and our vices we are praised or blamed.

Again, we *feel* anger and fear without choice, but *the virtues are modes of choice* or involve choice. Further, in respect of the passions we are said to be moved, but in respect of the virtues and the vices we are said not to be moved but to be disposed in a particular way.

For these reasons also they are not faculties; for we are neither called good nor bad, nor praised nor blamed, for the simple capacity of feeling the passions; again, we have the faculties by nature, but we are not made good or bad by nature; we have spoken of this before. If, then, the virtues are neither passions nor faculties, all that remains is that they should be states of character...

Chapter 6 – Ethical Virtue is a Mean Relative to the Individual

We must, however, not only describe [excellence] as a state of character, but also say *what sort of state* it is. We may remark, then, that every virtue or excellence both brings into good condition the thing of which it is the excellence and makes the work of that thing be done well; e.g., the excellence of the eye makes both the eye and its work good; for it is by the excellence of the eye that we see well. Similarly the excellence of the horse makes a horse both good in-itself and good at running and at carrying its rider and at awaiting the attack of the enemy. Therefore, if this is true in every case, *the virtue of man also will be the state of character which makes a man good and which makes him do his own work well.*

How this is to happen we have stated already, but it will be made plain also by the following consideration of the specific nature of virtue. In everything that is continuous and divisible it is possible to take more, less, or an equal amount, and that either in terms of the thing itself or relatively to us; and the equal is an intermediate between excess and defect. By the **intermediate in the object** I mean *that which is equidistant from each of the extremes*, which is one and the same for all men; by the **intermediate relatively to us** [I mean] *that which is neither too much nor too little*—and this is not one, nor the same for all. For instance, if ten is many and two is few, six is the intermediate, taken in terms of the object; for it exceeds and is exceeded by an equal amount; this is intermediate according to arithmetical proportion. But the intermediate relatively to us is not to be taken so; if ten pounds ^{1106b}are too much for a particular person to eat and two too little, it does not follow that the trainer will order six pounds; for this also is perhaps too much for the person who is to take it, or too little—too little for Milo, too much for the beginner in athletic exercises. The same is true of running and wrestling. Thus, a master of any art avoids excess and defect, but seeks the intermediate and chooses this—the intermediate not in the object *but relatively to us.*

If it is thus, then, that every art does its work well—by looking to the intermediate and judging its works by this standard ... and if, further, virtue is more exact and better than any art, as nature also is, then virtue must have the quality of aiming at the intermediate. I mean [ethical] virtue; for it is this that is concerned with passions and actions, and in these there is excess, defect, and the intermediate. For instance, both fear and confidence and appetite and anger and pity and in general pleasure and pain may be felt both too much and too little, and in both cases not well; but to feel them at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right motive, and in the right way, is what is both intermediate and best, and this is characteristic of virtue. Similarly with regard to actions also there is excess, defect, and the intermediate. Now virtue is concerned with passions and actions, in which excess is a form of failure, and so is defect, while the intermediate is praised and is a form of success; and being praised and being successful are both characteristics of virtue. Therefore, *virtue is a kind of mean*, since, as we have seen, it *aims at what is intermediate*.

Again, it is possible to fail in many ways (for evil belongs to the class of the unlimited, as the Pythagoreans conjectured, and good to that of the limited), while to succeed is possible only in one way (for which reason also one is easy and the other difficult—to miss the mark easy, to hit it difficult); for these reasons also, then, excess and defect are characteristic of vice, and the mean of virtue:

For [people] are good in but one way, but bad in many.

[Excellence], then, is a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, i.e. the mean relative to us, this being determined ^{1107a}by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it. Now *it is a mean between two vices*, that which depends on *excess* and that which depends on *defect*; and again it is a mean because *the vices respectively fall short of or exceed what is right in both passions and actions*, while virtue both finds and chooses that which is intermediate. Hence in respect of its substance and the definition which states its essence virtue is a mean, with regard to what is best and right [it is] an extreme.

But *not every action nor every passion admits of a mean*; for some have names that already imply badness, e.g., spite, shamelessness, envy, and in the case of actions adultery, theft, murder; for all of these and suchlike things imply by their names that they are themselves bad, and not the excesses or deficiencies of them. *It is not possible, then, ever to be right with regard to them*; one must always be wrong. Nor does goodness or badness with regard to such things depend on committing adultery with the right woman, at the right time, and in the right way, but simply to do any of them is to go wrong. It would be equally absurd, then, to expect that in unjust, cowardly, and voluptuous action there should be a mean, an excess, and a deficiency; for at that rate there would be a mean of excess and of deficiency, an excess of excess, and a deficiency of deficiency. But as there is no excess and deficiency of temperance and courage because what is intermediate is in a sense an extreme, so too of the actions we have mentioned there is no mean nor any excess and deficiency, but however they

are done they are wrong; for in general there is neither a mean of excess and deficiency, nor excess and deficiency of a mean...

Chapter 8 – The Relationships between Means and Extremes

There are three kinds of disposition, then, two of them vices, involving excess and deficiency respectively, and one a virtue/[excellence], viz., the mean, and all are in a sense opposed to all; for the *extreme states are contrary both to the intermediate state and to each other*, and the intermediate to the extremes; as the equal is greater relatively to the less, less relatively to the greater, so the middle states are excessive relatively to the deficiencies, deficient relatively to the excesses, both in passions and in actions. For *the brave man appears rash relatively to the coward*, and *cowardly relatively to the rash man*; and similarly the temperate man appears self-indulgent relatively to the insensible man, insensible relatively to the self-indulgent, and the liberal man prodigal relatively to the mean man, mean relatively to the prodigal. Hence also the people at the extremes push the intermediate man each over to the other, and the brave man is called rash by the coward, cowardly by the rash man, and correspondingly in the other cases.

These states being thus opposed to one another, the greatest contrariety is that of the extremes to each other, rather than to the intermediate; for these are further from each other than from the intermediate, as the great is further from the small and the small from the great than both are from the equal. Again, to the intermediate some extremes show a certain likeness, as that of rashness to courage and that of prodigality to liberality; but the extremes show the greatest unlikeness to each other; now contraries are defined as the things that are furthest from each other, so that things that are further apart are more contrary.

^{1109a}To the mean in some cases the deficiency, in some the excess is more opposed; e.g., it is not rashness, which is an excess, but cowardice, which is a deficiency, that is more opposed to courage, and not insensibility, which is a deficiency, but self-indulgence, which is an excess, that is more opposed to temperance. This happens from two reasons, one being drawn from the thing itself; for because one extreme is nearer and liker to the intermediate, we oppose not this but rather its contrary to the intermediate. E.g., since rashness is thought liker and nearer to courage, and cowardice more unlike, we oppose rather the latter to courage; for things that are further from the intermediate are thought more contrary to it. This, then, is one cause, drawn from the thing itself; another is drawn from ourselves; for the things to which we ourselves more naturally tend seem more contrary to the intermediate. For instance, we ourselves tend more naturally to pleasures, and hence are more easily carried away towards self-indulgence than towards propriety. We describe as contrary to the mean, then, rather the directions in which we more often go to great lengths; and therefore self-indulgence, which is an excess, is the more contrary to temperance.

Chapter 9

That [ethical] virtue is a mean, then, and in what sense it is so, and that it is a mean between two vices, the one involving excess, the other deficiency, and that it is such because its

character is to aim at what is intermediate in passions and in actions, has been sufficiently stated. Hence, also, *it is no easy task to be good*. For in everything *it is no easy task to find the middle*, e.g., to find the middle of a circle is not for every one but for him who knows; so, too, any one can get angry—that is easy—or give or spend money; but to do this to the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, with the right motive, and in the right way, that is not for every one, nor is it easy; wherefore goodness is both rare and laudable and noble.

Hence he who aims at the intermediate must first depart from what is the more contrary to it, as Calypso advises:

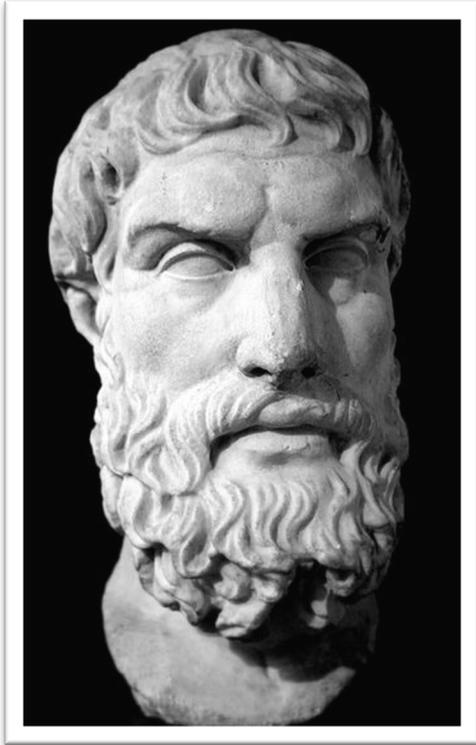
*Hold the ship out beyond that surf and spray.*⁷¹

For of the extremes one is more erroneous, one less so; therefore, since to hit the mean is hard in the extreme, we must as a second best, as people say, take the least of the evils; and this will be done best in the way we describe. But we must consider the things towards which we ourselves also are easily carried away; for some of us tend to one thing, some to another; and this will be recognizable from the pleasure and the pain we feel. We must drag ourselves away to the contrary extreme; for we shall get into the intermediate state by drawing well away from error, as people do in straightening sticks that are bent.

Now in everything the *pleasant or pleasure is most to be guarded against*; for we do not judge it impartially. We ought, then, to feel towards pleasure as the elders of the people felt towards Helen, and in all circumstances repeat their saying; for if we dismiss pleasure thus, we are less likely to go astray. It is by doing this, then, (to sum the matter up) that we shall best be able to hit the mean.

But this is no doubt difficult, and especially in individual cases; for or is not easy to determine both how and with whom and on what provocation and how long one should be angry; for we too sometimes praise those who fall short and call them good-tempered, but sometimes we praise those who get angry and call them manly. The man, however, who deviates little from goodness is not blamed, whether he do so in the direction of the more or of the less, but only the man who deviates more widely; for he does not fail to be noticed. But up to what point and to what extent a man must deviate before he becomes blameworthy it is not easy to determine by reasoning, any more than anything else that is perceived by the senses; such things depend on particular facts, and the decision rests with perception. So much, then, is plain, that the intermediate state is in all things to be praised, but that we must incline sometimes towards the excess, sometimes towards the deficiency; for so shall we most easily hit the mean and what is right.

⁷¹ Odyssey, XII:216f.



THE EPISTLE OF EPIKOUROS:⁷² to Menoikeus

Translated by: Robert Drew Hicks
*Additions, corrections, and footnotes by Barry F. Vaughan*⁷³

The Epistle of Epikouros to Menoikeus

Greeting [Menoikeus]:

Let no one be slow to seek wisdom when he is young nor weary in the search thereof when he is grown old. For no age is too early or too late for the health of the soul. And to say that the season for studying philosophy has not yet come, or that it is past and gone, is like saying that the season for happiness is not yet or that it is now no more.

Therefore, both old and young ought to seek wisdom, the former in order that, as age comes over him, he may be young in good things because of the grace of what has been, and the latter in order that, while he is young, he may at the same time be old, because he has no fear of the things which are to come. So *we must exercise ourselves in the things which bring happiness*, since, if that be present, we have everything, and, if that be absent, all our actions are directed toward attaining it.

Without ceasing, do all of the things I have [taught] you, exercise yourself in [them], and [believe] them to be *the elements of [a good] life*.

God Exists

First believe that God is a living being immortal and happy, according to the notion of a god indicated by the common sense of humankind; and so believing, you shall not affirm of him anything that is foreign to his immortality or that is repugnant to his happiness. For truly there are gods, and knowledge of them is evident; but they are not such as the multitude believe, [because they are not consistent in the opinions they form about them]. [The truly impious person affirms of the gods what common people believe about them, not the person

⁷²Epikouros of Athens (341-270 BCE).

⁷³ This translations by Robert Hicks is found on Wikisource and is in the public domain:

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Letter_to_Menoikeus. This edited version is intended for academic or personal use and may not be sold or used for profit. I have changed spellings of proper names to more accurately match the Greek text as opposed to the more traditional Latinized spellings which were dominant in Hick's time. I have also changed UK spellings to US spellings where appropriate, as well as made clarifications in translation (noted with brackets) and have added explanatory footnotes.

who denies the gods.]⁷⁴ For the [opinions of ordinary people] about the gods are not true preconceptions but [rather] *false assumptions*: that the greatest evils happen to wicked [people] and the greatest blessings happen to good [people, and all of this comes] from the hand of the gods. [Ordinary people believe] that [the gods] are always favorable to their own good qualities and [bless] people like themselves, but [these ordinary people dislike whatever is different and consider it] alien.

Death Should Not be Feared

Accustom yourself to believe that death is nothing to us, for good and evil imply awareness, and *death is the privation of all awareness*; therefore a right understanding that death is nothing to us makes the mortality of life enjoyable, not by adding to life an unlimited time, but by taking away the yearning [for] immortality.⁷⁵ For life has no terror; for those who thoroughly apprehend that there are no terrors for them in ceasing to live. Therefore, the person who says that he fears death, not because it will [bring] pain when it comes, but because [the thought of non-existence disturbs him], is foolish. Whatever causes no annoyance when it is present, causes only a *groundless pain* in the **expectation**. Death, therefore, [which ordinary people think is] the [worst] of evils, is nothing to us, seeing that, [as long as we exist], death [does not], and, when death [exists], we [do] not. [Thus, death] is nothing either to the living or the dead, for with the living it is not, and the dead exist no longer.

But in the world, at one time people shun death as the greatest of all evils, and at another time [desire] it as a respite from the evils in life. The wise person does not [devalue] life nor does he fear the cessation of life. The thought of life is no offense to him, nor is the cessation of life regarded as an evil. [Just] as people choose food, not merely and simply the larger portion, but [that which is] more pleasant, so [also] the wise seek to enjoy the time which is most pleasant and not merely that which is longest. And he who admonishes the young to live well and the old to make a good end speaks foolishly, not merely because of the desirability of life, but because the same exercise at once teaches [us] to live and die well. [The person who] says that it [is better] not to be born, but [if] one is born [it is better] to pass [quickly] through the gates of Hades,⁷⁶ is foolish. For *if* he truly believes this, why does he not [kill himself]? It [would be quite] easy for a person to do so, *if* [they really believed this]. If he speaks only in [jest], his words are foolishness, for those who hear [him do not] believe him.

⁷⁴ That is, it is worse to believe false things about the gods than it is to deny their existence. And, for Epikuros, the worst thing to believe about the gods is that they are responsible for the events which happen in our world, as he makes clear in the following passages.

⁷⁵ As a materialist, Epikuros rejects both the Substance Dualism of Plato and the Formal Dualism of Aristotle. Because everything that exist is composed of atoms, the soul—which he believes exists—must also be composed of atoms, and is therefore subject to the same decomposition that affects the body. Hence, there can be no consciousness after death since it is merely an attribute of a living person (which is nothing more than a complex conglomeration of atoms). Since there is no personal identity after death, that state is not something that should be feared because there is no consciousness (i.e., self) which could perceive that state.

⁷⁶ In Greek myth and folklore, Hades is the place beneath the earth where the souls of the dead congregate to spend eternity.

Pleasure is the Greatest Good

We must remember that the future is neither wholly ours—nor not wholly ours—so that we neither count upon it as certain, nor despair [that it may not] come. We must also [remember about] desires [that] some are [rooted in nature] while others are groundless. [Further, we must remember] [concerning] natural [desires] that some are [both] **necessary** [and] **natural**, [while others are] only natural. And of the necessary desires [we must remember that] some are necessary *if* we are [going] to be happy, some *if* the body is to be rid of [anxiety], some *if* we are [merely] to [survive].⁷⁷ He who has a clear and certain understanding of these things will direct every preference and aversion toward securing health [for the] body and **tranquility** [for the] mind, seeing **that this is the sum and end of a happy life**.⁷⁸ *For the end of all our actions is to be free from pain and fear*, and, when once we have attained all this, the tempest of the soul is [quieted]. Such a living creature has no need to go [searching for] something that is lacking, nor to look [for] anything by which the good of the soul and of the body will be fulfilled. When we are pained, then—and only then—do we feel the need of pleasure. [This is why] we call pleasure the alpha and omega of a happy life. *Pleasure is our first and [native] good*. It is the starting-point of every [desire] and of every aversion, and we come back to it, inasmuch as we make feeling the rule by which to judge every good thing. And since pleasure is our first and native good, for that reason we do not choose [any] pleasure what[so]ever, but often pass over pleasures when a greater annoyance [follows] them. And often we consider pains superior to pleasures when submission to the pains for a long time brings us as a consequence a *greater pleasure*. While, therefore, all pleasure—because it is naturally akin to us—is good, *not all pleasure is worthy of choice*, just as all pain is an evil and yet *not all pain is to be shunned*. It is, however, by *measuring one against another*,⁷⁹ and by looking at the conveniences and inconveniences, that all these matters must be judged. Sometimes we treat the good as an evil, and the evil, on the contrary, as a good. Again, we regard independence of outward things as a great good, not so as in all cases to use little, but so as *to be contented with little* if we [do not] have much, being honestly persuaded that [people] have the sweetest enjoyment of luxury who stand least in need of it, and that whatever is natural is easily procured and only vain and worthless [pleasures] hard to win. Plain [food] gives as much pleasure as a costly diet, when once the pain of [desire] has been removed, while bread and water confer the highest possible pleasure when they are brought to hungry lips. To habituate one's self, therefore, to [a] simple and inexpensive diet supplies all that is needful for health, and enables a person to meet the necessary requirements of life without [loss]; it places us in a better condition when we [occasionally] approach [fine food] and [makes] us fearless of fortune.

⁷⁷ What Epikuros makes clear in this passage is that desire is not intrinsically good, but rather teleologically good. Therefore, all desires are not equal. He lays out a hierarchy of desire with arbitrary desires least important followed by those that are dictated by the natural order, which further divide into those necessary for existence versus those necessary for a happy existence. Understanding what kind of desire one has in mind is essential to successfully pursuing a happy life.

⁷⁸ 'Tranquility' (translated from 'atarakteo' and its cognates) is a central concept for both Epicureans and Stoics. For Epikuros this "undisturbed" state is attained by eliminating, as much as is possible, occurrences of pain (physical or psychological). Thus, the choices we make must always be with full awareness of the hierarchy of desires and their.

⁷⁹ See Plato, Protagoras 356.

When we say, then, that pleasure is the end and aim, *we do not mean the pleasures of the prodigal or the pleasures of sensuality*, as we are understood to do by some through ignorance, prejudice, or willful misrepresentation. By ‘pleasure’ we mean ***the absence of pain in the body and of trouble in the soul***. It is not an unbroken succession of drinking-bouts and of [celebration], not [sex], not the enjoyment of the fish and other delicacies of a luxurious table, which produce a pleasant life; it is *sober reasoning*, [investigating] the [justification] of every choice and avoidance, and banishing those [opinions] through which the greatest disturbances take possession of the soul. Of all this, [practical wisdom is the goal]. For this reason [*practical wisdom*] *is a more precious thing even than the other virtues*, for a life of pleasure [without] prudence, honor, and justice [is not really pleasant]; nor [is it possible to live] a life of prudence, honor, and justice, [without] pleasure. For the virtues have grown into one with a pleasant life, and a pleasant life is inseparable from them.

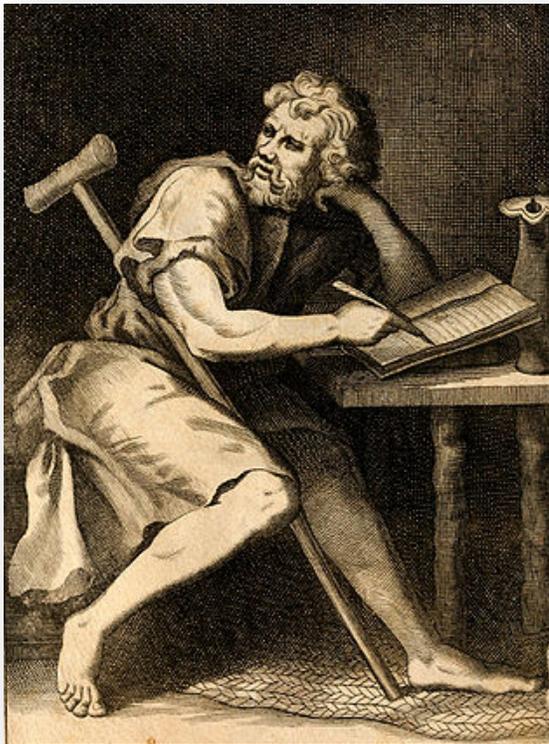
The Wise Person

Who, then, is superior in your judgment to such a person? [They] hold a [pious] belief concerning the gods, and [are] altogether free from the fear of death. [Such a person] has diligently considered the [order established] by nature, and understands how easily the limit of good things can be reached and attained, and how either the duration or the intensity of evils is [small]. Destiny—which some [people] introduce as sovereign over all things—[they laugh at] and scorn; [such a person understands] that some things happen of *necessity*, others by *chance*, others through our own *agency*. [The wise person understands] that *necessity destroys responsibility*, and chance—or ‘fortune’—is [unpredictable]. But our own actions are free, and it is to them that praise and blame [are properly applied].⁸⁰ It [would be] better, to accept [false stories about] the gods than to [submit oneself to what the Natural Philosophers call] [D]estiny.⁸¹ The one holds out some faint hope that we may escape if we honor the gods, while the necessity of the naturalists is deaf to all entreaties. Nor does [the wise person] hold [C]hance to be a god—as the world in general does—for in the acts of a god there is no disorder; nor [do they believe Chance is] a cause, though an uncertain one, for [the wise] believe that no good or evil is dispensed by [C]hance to people [in order] to make life happy, though it supplies the starting-point of great good and great evil. [The wise person] believes that [their own] misfortune is [superior to] the prosperity of the fool. In short, it is better [to understand that right action does] not owe its [success] to the aid of [C]hance.

Exercise yourself in these and [similar principles] day and night, both by yourself and [those who are likeminded]. Then [neither] in waking or dreaming, will you be disturbed; will live [like] a god among [humans]. For people lose all appearance of mortality by living in the midst of immortal blessings.

⁸⁰ I.e., moral judgments require freedom of the will.

⁸¹ Epikuros is referring to the doctrine of determinism: the view that every action in the universe is preceded by a cause which itself is in turn preceded by a cause, none of which are examples of non-caused choice.



EGXEIRIDION

or

THE MANUAL

BY: EPIKTETOS⁸²

Translation by:
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Additions, corrections, and footnotes
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1. Some things are in our control and others not. Things in our control are opinion, pursuit, desire, aversion, and, in a word, whatever are our own actions. Things not in our control are body, property, reputation, command, and, in one word, whatever are not our own actions.

1.1. The things in our control are by nature free, unrestrained, unhindered; but those not in our control are weak, slavish, restrained, belonging to others. Remember, then, that if you suppose that things which are slavish by nature are also free, and that what belongs to others is your own, then you will be hindered. You will [cry], you will be disturbed, and you will find fault both with gods and men. But if you suppose that only to be your own which is your own, and what belongs to others such as it really is, then no one will ever compel you or restrain you. Further, you will find fault with no one or accuse no one. You will do nothing against your will. No one will hurt you, you will have no enemies, and you will not be harmed.

⁸²The ideas and content of “The Manual” is that of Epiktetos (c. 50-135 CE) but was recorded by his disciple Arrian of Nicomedia (c. 86-146 CE)

⁸³ This text is adapted from *The Internet Classics Archive*, [Egxeiridion](http://classics.mit.edu/Epictetus/epicench.html), by Epiktetos, <http://classics.mit.edu/Epictetus/epicench.html>. This edited version is intended for academic or personal use and may not be sold or used for profit.

I have changed spellings of proper names to more accurately match the Greek text as opposed to the more traditional Latinized spellings which were dominant in Jowett’s time. I have also changed UK spellings to US spellings where appropriate, as well as made clarifications in translation (noted with brackets) and have added explanatory footnotes.

1.2. Aiming, therefore, at such great things, remember that you must not allow yourself to be carried, even with a slight tendency, towards the attainment of lesser things. Instead, you must entirely [abandon] some things and for the present postpone [others]. But if you would both have these great things, along with power and riches, then you will not gain even the latter, because you aim at the former too: but you will absolutely fail of the former, by which alone happiness and freedom are achieved.

1.3. Therefore, [strive] to be able to say to every harsh appearance, "*You are but an appearance, and not absolutely the thing you appear to be.*" And then examine it by those rules which you have, and first, and chiefly, by this: whether it concerns the things *which are in our own control*, or those which are not; and, if it concerns anything not in our control, be prepared to say that it is nothing to you.

2. Remember that following desire promises the attainment of that of which you are desirous; and aversion promises the avoiding that to which you are averse. However, who[ever] fails to obtain the object of his desire is *disappointed*, and he who incurs the object of his aversion [is] *wretched*. If, then, you confine your aversion to only those objects which are contrary to the natural use of your faculties, which you have in your own control, you will never incur anything to which you are averse. But *if you are averse to sickness, or death, or poverty, you will be wretched*. Remove aversion, then, from all things that are not in our control, and transfer it to things contrary to the nature of what is in our control. But, for the present, totally *suppress desire*: for, if you desire any of the things which are not in your own control, you must necessarily be disappointed; and of those which are, and which it would be laudable to desire, nothing is yet in your possession. Use only the appropriate actions of pursuit and avoidance; and even these lightly, and with gentleness and reservation.

3. With regard to whatever [things] give you delight, are useful, or are deeply loved, remember to tell yourself of what general nature they are, beginning from the most insignificant things. If, for example, you are fond of a specific ceramic cup, remind yourself that it is only ceramic cups in general of which you are fond. Then, if it breaks, you will not be disturbed. If you kiss your child, or your wife, say that you only kiss things which are human, and thus you will not be disturbed if either of them dies.

4. When you are going about any action, remind yourself [of] what nature the action is. If you are going to bathe, [imagine] the things which usually happen in the bath:⁸⁴ some people splash the water, some push, some use abusive language, and others steal. Thus you will more safely go about this action if you say to yourself, "*I will now go bathe, and keep my own mind in a state conformable to nature.*" [Do this] in the same manner with regard to every other action. For thus, if any hindrance arises in bathing, you will have it ready to say, "*It was not only to bathe that I desired, but to keep my mind in a state conformable to nature; and, I will not keep it if I am bothered at things that happen.*"

5. Men are disturbed, not by *things*, but by the [circumstances] and [opinions] which they form [about] things. Death, for instance, is not terrible, else it would have appeared so to

⁸⁴ Epiktetos is here referring to a *public* bath as only the very wealthiest people in the Roman world would have a bathing pool in their home.

Sokrates. But the [fear of death] consists in our [belief] that death [*ought* to be feared]. When, therefore, we are hindered, or disturbed, or grieved, let us never attribute it to others, but *to ourselves*; that is, to our own [opinions]. An un[educated] person will lay the fault of his own bad [situation] upon others. Someone just starting instruction will lay the fault on himself. Some who is perfectly instructed will place blame neither on others nor on himself.

6. Do not be prideful with any excellence that is not your own. If a horse should be prideful and say, "*I am handsome*," it would be supportable. But when you are prideful, and say, "*I have a handsome horse*," know that you are proud of what is, in fact, only the good of the horse. What, then, is your own? Only your *reaction to the appearances* of things. Thus, when you behave conformably to nature in reaction to how things appear, you will be proud with reason; for you will take pride in some good of your own.

7. Consider when, on a voyage, your ship is anchored; if you go on shore to get water you may, along the way, amuse yourself with picking up a shellfish, or an onion. However, your thoughts and [steadfast] attention ought to be bent towards the ship, waiting for the captain to call [you] on board; you must then immediately leave all these things, otherwise you will be thrown into the ship, bound neck and feet like a sheep. So it is with life. If, instead of an onion or a shellfish, you are given a wife or child, that is fine. But if the [C]aptain calls, you must run to the ship, leaving them, and regarding none of them. But if you are old, never go far from the ship: lest, when you are called, you should be unable to come in time.

8. Do not demand that things happen as you wish, but wish that they happen as they do happen, and [your life] will go well.

9. Sickness is a hindrance to the body, but not to your ability to *choose*, unless that is your choice. Lameness is a hindrance to the leg, but not to your ability to *choose*. Say this to yourself with regard to everything that happens, then you will see such obstacles as hindrances to something else, but *not to yourself*.

10. With every accident, ask yourself what abilities you have for making a proper use of it. If you see an attractive person, you will find that [temperance] is the ability you have against your desire. If you are in pain, you will find fortitude. If you hear unpleasant language, you will find patience. And thus habituated, *the appearances of things* will not [carry] you away along with them.

11. Never say of anything, "*I have lost it*;" but, "*I have returned it*." Is your child dead? "*It is returned*." Is your wife dead? "*She is returned*." Is your estate taken away? Well, is not that likewise returned? "*But he who took it away is a bad man*." What difference is it to you who the [G]iver assigns to take it back? While [H]e gives it to you to possess, take care of it; but do not view it as your own, [but] as travelers view a hotel.

12. If you want to improve, reject such reasoning's as these: "*If I neglect my affairs, I will have no income; if I do not correct my servant, he will be bad*." For it is better to die with hunger, exempt from grief and fear, than to live in affluence with perturbation; and it is better your servant should be bad, than you unhappy.

12.1. Begin, therefore, from little things. Is a little oil spilt? A little wine stolen? Say to yourself, "*This is the price paid for apathy,⁸⁵ for tranquility,⁸⁶ and nothing is to be had for nothing.*" When you call your servant, it is possible that he may not come; or, if he does, he may not do what you want. But he is by no means of such importance that it should be in his power to give you any [agitation].

13. If you want to improve, be content to be thought foolish and stupid with regard to external things. Do not wish to be thought to know anything; and even if you appear to be somebody important to others, distrust yourself. For, it is difficult to both keep your faculty of choice in a state conformable to nature, and at the same time acquire external things. But while you are careful about the one, you must of necessity neglect the other.

14. If you wish your children, and your wife, and your friends to live forever, *you are stupid*. You wish to *control things which you cannot*, you wish [that] things that belong to others be your[s]. So likewise, if you wish your servant to be without fault, you are a fool; for you wish vice not to be vice, but something else. But, if you wish to have your desires undisappointed, *this* is in your own control. Exercise, therefore, what is in your control. He is the master of every other person who is able to confer or remove whatever that person wishes either to have or to avoid. Whoever, then, would be free, let him wish nothing, let him decline nothing, which depends on others [otherwise] he must necessarily be a slave.

15. Remember that you must behave in life as at a dinner party. Is anything brought around to you? Put out your hand and take your share with moderation. Does it pass by you? Do not stop it. [Has] it not yet come? Do not stretch your desire towards it, but wait till it reaches you. Do this with regard to children, to a wife, to public posts, to riches, and you will eventually be a worthy partner of the feasts of the gods. And if you do not even take the things which are set before you—but are able even to reject them—then you will not only be a partner at the feasts of the gods, but also of their empire. For, by doing this, Diogenes,⁸⁷ Heraklitos⁸⁸ and others like them, deservedly became, and were called ["gods"].

⁸⁵ In Greek, '*apatheia*' does not have the negative connotation that its English transliteration carries. It literally means "lack of passion" which is the goal of the Stoic. *Pathos*—passion—is a disturbance in the soul which, according to the Stoics, leads to unhappiness.

⁸⁶ The Greek term '*ataraxia*', here translated "tranquility" is a key concept for the Stoics. It is the negation of '*taraxē*' which means "trouble", "disorder", or "confusion". The psychological goal of Stoic philosophy is to achieve a continual state of tranquility by first becoming aware of the root cause of mental disturbance, then comprehending the proper structure of the natural order (*logos*), then practicing detachment (*apatheia*) toward the cause of the mental disturbance until it becomes an habituated state of being in the world.

⁸⁷ Diogenes of Sinope (c. 412-323 BCE) was an Ionian-born philosopher and founder of Cynicism. He believed that human happiness was incompatible with social norms and laws which he viewed as arbitrary, and therefore relative, inventions. To achieve happiness, the Cynics taught that one must live a "dog-like" (*kunikos*) existence dictated only by human nature with no regard for the artificial social structures we have imposed on ourselves.

⁸⁸ Heraklitos of Ephesus (c. 535-c. 475 BCE) was a pre-socratic philosopher who held that the world, at least in so far as it appears to us, is dominated by change (transition, flux, etc.). The idea of permanence is an illusion that leads to unhappiness as it is not part of the world we live in.

16. When you see anyone weeping in grief because his son has gone abroad, or is dead, or because he has suffered in his affairs, be careful that the *appearance* may not misdirect you. Instead, distinguish within your own mind, and be prepared to say, "*It is not the accident that distresses this person, because it does not distress another person; it is the **judgment** which he makes about it.*" As far as words go, however, do not reduce yourself to his level, and certainly do not moan with him. Do not moan inwardly either.

17. Remember that you are an actor in a drama, of such a kind as the [A]uthor pleases to make it. If short, of a short one; if long, of a long one. If it is [H]is pleasure you should act a poor man, a cripple, a governor, or a private person, see that you act it naturally. For this is your business, *to act well the character assigned you*; to choose it is [A]nother's.

18. When a raven happens to croak unluckily, do not allow the *appearance* to [carry] you away with it, but immediately make the distinction to yourself, and say, "*None of these things are foretold to me; but either to my paltry body, or property, or reputation, or children, or wife. But to me all omens are lucky, **if I will**. For whichever of these things happens, it is in my control to derive advantage from it.*"⁸⁹

19. You [will] be unconquerable *if* you enter into no combat in which it is not in your own control to conquer. When, therefore, you see anyone eminent in honors, or power, or in high esteem on any other account, take heed *not to be [carried] away with the appearance*, and to pronounce him happy; for, if *the essence of good consists in things in our own control*, there will be no room for envy or emulation. But, for your part, do not wish to be a general, or a senator, or a consul, but to be *free*; and the only way to this is a contempt of things not in our own control.

20. Remember, that [it is not the person] who [uses] ill language or gives a blow that insults, but [*your opinion*] which represents these things *as* insulting. When, therefore, anyone provokes you, be assured that *it is your own opinion which provokes you*. Try, therefore, in the first place, not to be [carried] away with the appearance. For if you once gain time and respite, you will more easily command yourself.

21. Let death and exile, and all other things which *appear* terrible be daily before your eyes, but chiefly death, and you will never entertain any abject thought, nor too eagerly covet anything.

22. If you have an earnest desire of attaining to philosophy, prepare yourself from the very first to be laughed at, to be sneered at by the multitude, to hear them say, "*He is returned to us a philosopher all at once,*" and "*Whence this [haughty] look?*" Now, for your part, do not have a [haughty] look; but keep steadily to those things which *appear best* to you as one appointed by God to this station. For remember that, if you adhere to the same point, those very persons who at first ridiculed will afterwards admire you. But if you are conquered by them, you will incur a double ridicule.

⁸⁹ It is interesting to note that Epiktetos does not deny the existence of omens but rather tells us to focus on what is in our control: our response to the *appearance* of the omen. Further, he makes clear that a person's destiny is not determined by Fate, but rather our ability to respond appropriately to the world as it appears to us.

23. If you ever happen to turn your attention to external [things in order] to please anyone, be assured that you have ruined [the course of your] life. Be contented, then, in everything with being a philosopher; and, if you wish to be thought so likewise by anyone, appear so to yourself, and it will [be sufficient].

24. Do not allow such considerations as these [to] distress you. *"I will live in dishonor, and be nobody anywhere."* For, if dishonor is an evil, you can no more be involved in any evil by the means of another, than be engaged in anything base. Is it any business of yours, then, to get power, or to be admitted to an entertainment? By no means. How, then, after all, is this a dishonor? And how is it true that you will be nobody anywhere, when you ought to be somebody in [only] *those things which are in your own control*, in which you may be of the greatest consequence? *"But my friends will be unassisted."* What do you mean by unassisted? They will not have money from you, nor will you make them Roman citizens. Who told you, then, that these are among the things in our own control, and not the affair of others? And who can give to another the things which he [does not have] himself? *"Well, but get them, then, that we too may have a share."* If I can get them with the preservation of my own honor and fidelity and greatness of mind, show me the way and I will get them; but if you require me to lose my own proper good [so] that you may gain what is not good, consider how inequitable and foolish you are. Besides, which would you rather have, a sum of money, or a friend of fidelity and honor? Rather assist me, then, to gain this character than require me to do those things by which I may lose it. But my country, say you, as far as depends on me, will be unassisted. Here again, what assistance is this you mean? *"It will not have porticoes nor baths of your providing."* And what signifies that? Why, neither does a smith provide it with shoes, or a shoemaker with arms. *It is enough if everyone fully performs his own proper business.* And were you to supply it with another citizen of honor and fidelity, would not he be of use to it? Yes. Therefore neither are you yourself useless to it. *"What place, then, do you say, I will hold in the state?"* Whatever you can hold with the preservation of your fidelity and honor. But if, by desiring to be useful to that, you lose these, of what use can you be to your country when you are become faithless and void of shame.

25. Is anyone preferred before you at an entertainment, or in a compliment, or in being admitted to a consultation? If these things are good, you ought to be glad that he has gotten them; and if they are evil, do not be [upset] that you have not gotten them. And remember that you cannot—without using the same means [which others do] to acquire things not in our own control—expect to be thought worthy of an equal share of them. For how can he who does not frequent the door of any [great] man, does not attend him, does not praise him, have an equal share with him who does? You are unjust, then, and insatiable, if you are unwilling to pay the price for which these things are sold, and would have them for nothing. For how much is lettuce sold? Fifty cents, for instance. If another, then, paying fifty cents, takes the lettuce, and you, not paying it, go without, do not imagine that he has gained any advantage over you. For as he has the lettuce, so you have the fifty cents which you did not give. So, in the present case, you have not been invited to such a person's entertainment, because you have not paid him the price for which a supper is sold. It is sold for praise; it is sold for attendance. Give him then the value, *if it is for your advantage*. But if you would, at

the same time, not pay the one and yet receive the other, you are insatiable, and a blockhead. Have you nothing, then, instead of the supper? Yes, indeed, you have: the not praising him, whom you do not like to praise; the not bearing with his behavior at coming in.

26. The will of [N]ature may be learned from those things in which we do not distinguish from each other. For example, when our neighbor's boy breaks a cup, or the like, we are presently ready to say, "*These things will happen.*" Be assured, then, that when your own cup likewise is broken, *you ought to be affected just as when another's cup was broken.* Apply this in like manner to greater things. Is the child or wife of another dead? There is no one who would not say, "*This is a human accident,*" but if anyone's own child happens to die, it is presently, "*Alas, I how wretched am I!*" But it should be remembered how we are affected in hearing the same thing concerning others.

27. As a [target] is not set up for the sake of missing the aim, so neither does the nature of evil exist in the world.

28. If a person gave your body to any stranger he met on his way, you would certainly be angry. And *do you feel no shame in handing over your own mind to be confused and mystified by anyone who happens to verbally attack you?*

29. In every affair consider what precedes and follows, and then undertake it. Otherwise you will begin with spirit; but not having thought of the consequences, when some of them appear you will shamefully desist. "*I would conquer at the Olympic games!*" But consider what precedes and follows, and then, if it is for your advantage, engage in the affair. You must conform to rules, submit to a diet, refrain from dainties; exercise your body, whether you choose it or not, at a stated hour, in heat and cold; you must drink no cold water, nor sometimes even wine. In a word, you must give yourself up to your master, as to a physician. Then, in the combat, you may be thrown into a ditch, dislocate your arm, turn your ankle, swallow dust, be whipped, and, after all, lose the victory. When you have evaluated all this, if your inclination still holds, *then* go to war. Otherwise, take notice, you will behave like children who sometimes play like wrestlers, sometimes gladiators, sometimes blow a trumpet, and sometimes act a tragedy when they have seen and admired these shows. Thus you too will be at one time a wrestler, at another a gladiator, now a philosopher, then an orator; *but with your whole soul, nothing at all.* Like an ape, you mimic all you see, and one thing after another is sure to please you, but is out of favor as soon as it becomes familiar. For you have never entered upon anything considerately, nor after having viewed the whole matter on all sides, or made any scrutiny into it, but rashly, and with a cold inclination. Thus some, when they have seen a philosopher and heard a man speaking like Euphrates⁹⁰ (though, indeed, who can speak like him?), have a mind to be philosophers too. Consider first, man, what the matter is, and what your own nature is able to bear. If you would be a wrestler, consider your shoulders, your back, your thighs; for different persons are made for different things. Do you think that you can act as you do, and be a philosopher? That you can eat and drink, and be angry and discontented as you are now? You must watch, you must labor, you must get the better of certain appetites, must quit your acquaintance, be

⁹⁰ Euphrates of Tyre (c. 35-118 CE) was a famous Stoic philosopher and orator.

despised by your servant, be laughed at by those you meet; come off worse than others in everything, in magistracies, in honors, in courts of judicature. When you have considered all these things round, approach, if you please; if, by parting with them, you have a mind to purchase apathy, freedom, and tranquility. If not, do not come here; do not, like children, be one while a philosopher, then a [bar tender], then an orator, and then one of Caesar's officers. These things are not consistent. You must be one man, either good or bad. You must cultivate either your own ruling faculty or externals, and apply yourself either to things within or without you; that is, *either [be] a philosopher, or one of the vulgar.*

30. Duties are universally *measured by relations*. Is anyone a father? If so, it is implied that the children should take care of him, submit to him in everything, patiently listen to his reproaches, his correction. "But he is a bad father," [you say]. [Are] you naturally entitled, then, to a good father? No, only to a father. Is a brother unjust? Well, keep your own situation towards him. [Don't] consider what *he* does, but [rather] what you [should] do to keep your own [free will aligned with] nature. For another will not hurt you unless you [allow it]. You will then be hurt when you *think* you are hurt. In this manner, therefore, you will find, from the idea of a neighbor, a citizen, a general, the corresponding duties if you accustom yourself to contemplate the [different] relations.

31. Be assured that the **essential property of piety** towards the gods is to form right opinions concerning them: [that they exist and] govern the universe with goodness and justice. And fix yourself in this resolution, to obey them, and yield to them, and willingly follow them in all events, as produced by the most perfect understanding. For thus you will never find fault with the gods, nor accuse them [of] neglecting you. And it is not possible for this to be effected any other way than by *withdrawing yourself from things not in our own control*, and placing good or evil in those only which are. For if you suppose any of the things not in our own control to be either good or evil, when your [wishes] are disappointed, or [you suffer something] you would [rather] avoid, you must necessarily find fault with—and blame—the [A]uthors. For every animal is naturally formed to [avoid] and abhor things that appear hurtful, [as well as] the causes of them. [And on the other hand they] pursue and admire [anything] which appears beneficial, [as well as] the causes of them. It is impractical, then, that one who supposes himself to be hurt should be happy about the person who, he thinks, hurts him, just as it is impossible to be happy about the [injury] itself. Hence, also, a father is [hated] by a son when he does not [give] him the things which he [thinks are] good; [it was the belief that ruling was] good that made Polunikes and Eteokles mutually enemies.⁹¹ On this account the husbandman, the sailor, the merchant, on this account those who lose wives and children, revile the gods. For where interest is, there too is piety placed. So that, whoever is careful to regulate his desires and [fears] as he ought, is, by the very same means, careful of piety likewise. But it is also incumbent on everyone to offer libations and

⁹¹ From Sophokles' play, *Antigone*. After their father and king of Thebes, Oidipous, blinded himself for his crimes of pride and incest, Poulnekes and Eteokles were supposed to rule the city of Thebes in turn. But when Eteokles refused to give up the throne as he promised, Poulnekes raised an army from Argos to force his brother to yield. The city of Thebes had seven gates and seven heroes from each side led the attack/defense at each gate. The two brothers faced each other at one of these gates, and in the fighting mortally wounded each other.

sacrifices and first fruits, *conformably to the customs of his country*,⁹² with purity, and not in a slovenly manner, nor negligently, nor sparingly, nor beyond his ability.

32. When you have recourse to divination, remember that you [do not] know what the event will be, and you come to learn it [from] the diviner; but of what nature it is you know before you come, at least if you are a philosopher. For if it is among the things not in our own control, it can [neither] be good or evil. Do not, therefore, bring either desire or aversion with you to the [seer] (else you will approach him trembling), but first acquire a distinct knowledge that every event is indifferent and nothing to you, of whatever sort it may be, for it will be in your power to make a right use of it, and this no one can hinder. Then come with confidence to the gods, as your counselors, and afterwards, when any counsel is given you, remember what counselors you have assumed, and whose advice you will neglect if you disobey. Come to divination, as Sokrates prescribed, in cases of which the whole consideration relates to the event, and in which no opportunities are afforded by reason, or any other art, to discover the thing proposed to be learned. When, therefore, it is our duty to share the danger of a friend or our country, we ought not to consult the oracle whether we will share it with them or not. For, though the diviner should forewarn you that the victims are unfavorable, this means no more than that either death or mutilation or exile is portended. But we have reason (*logos*) within us, and it directs, even with these hazards, to the greater diviner, the Pythian god, who cast out of the temple the person who gave no assistance to his friend while another was murdering him.

33. [Always choose a disposition] and form of conduce, which you [can maintain] both [by yourself and with others].

33.1. For the most part [be] silent, or speak [only] what is necessary, and in few words. We may, however, enter—though sparingly—into discourse sometimes when occasion calls for it. But [do not discuss] common subjects [like] gladiators, or horse races, or athletic champions, or feasts, the vulgar topics of conversation. [Most importantly, do] not [talk about] men, so as either to blame, or praise, or make comparisons. If you are able, then, [direct the conversation] of your company to proper subjects; but, if you happen to be among strangers, [it is best to] be silent.

33.2. Do not [laugh too] much, nor [too often], nor [too loudly].

33.3. Avoid swearing, if possible, altogether; if not, as far as you are able.

33.4. Avoid public and vulgar entertainments. But, if ever an occasion calls you to them, keep your attention [focused], [so] that you may not [unwittingly] slide into vulgar manners. Be assured that if [one is] a [good] person, if his companions [are wicked], he will [become wicked as well].

33.5. Provide things [for] the body [but] no further than mere use: meat, drink, clothing, house, family. But [cast] off and reject everything relating to show and [decoration].

⁹² This would indicate that religious ritual is relative while piety universal.

33.6. As far as possible, before marriage, keep yourself pure from familiarities with women, and, if you indulge them, let it be lawfully. But do not, therefore, be [boastful] and [criticize] those who use these liberties, nor boast that you yourself do not.

33.7. If anyone tells you that a person speaks ill of you, do not make excuses about what is said of you, but answer: *"He does not know my other faults, [or] he would not have only mentioned these."*

33.8. It is not necessary for you to appear public spectacles; but [when] there is a proper occasion for you to be there, do not appear more solicitous for anyone than for yourself. That is, wish things to be only just as they are, and him only to conquer who is the conqueror, thus you will meet with no hindrance. But *abstain entirely from declamations and derision and violent emotions*. And when you come away, do not [discuss] a great deal on what has passed, and what does not contribute to your own [improvement]. For it would appear by such discourse that you were immoderately struck with the [spectacle].

33.9. Do not go—[of your own will]—to the rehearsals of any (authors), nor appear [at them often]. But, if you do [go], keep your gravity and [quietness], and at the same time avoid being [gloomy].

33.10. When you are going to confer with anyone, and particularly of those in a superior station, [think about] how Sokrates or Zeno would behave in such a case, and you will not be at a loss to make a proper use of whatever may occur.

33.11. When you are going to any of the people in power, [imagine] that you will not find him at home; that you will not be admitted; that the doors will not be opened to you; that he will take no notice of you. If, with all this, it is your duty to go, bear what happens, and never say [to yourself], *"It was not worth so much."* For this is vulgar, and like a man dazed by external things.

33.12. In parties of conversation, avoid a frequent and excessive mention of your own [deeds] and dangers. For, however agreeable it may [seem] to you to mention the risks you have run, it is not equally agreeable to others to hear your adventures. Also avoid the attempt to excite laughter. For this is a slippery point, which may throw you into vulgar manners. And, besides, it may lower you in the esteem of your acquaintance. Approaches to indecent discourse are [also] dangerous. Whenever, therefore, anything of this sort happens, if there be a proper opportunity, rebuke [the one] who makes advances that way—or, at least, by silence and blushing and a forbidding look, show yourself to be displeased by such talk.

34. If you are [tempted] by the appearance of any promised pleasure, guard yourself against being [carried] away by it; let the affair wait your leisure, and procure yourself some delay. Then bring to your mind [two] points of time: [the time] in which you will enjoy the pleasure, and [the time after] in which you will repent and reproach yourself for having enjoyed it. Set before your mind [this] opposition and you will be [proud of] yourself if you

abstain. And even though it should *appear* to [be] a [reasonable] gratification, take heed that its [tempting], agreeable, and attractive force may not [overwhelm] you; but [opposed to] this how much better it is to be conscious of having gained so great a victory [over temptation].

35. When you do anything [with] a clear [mind] that it *ought* to be done, never [avoid] being seen do[ing] it, even [if others might] make a wrong [assumption] about it; if you do not act right[ly], shun the action itself; but, if you do, why [should] you [be] afraid of those who [judge] you [ignorantly]?

36. As the proposition, "*Either it is day or it is night,*" is extremely proper for a disjunctive argument, but quite improper in a conjunctive one, so, at a feast, to choose the largest share is very suitable to the bodily appetite, but utterly inconsistent with the social spirit of an entertainment. [So] when you [dine] with [others], remember not only the value of those bodily things which are set before you, but [also] the value of [your] behavior which ought to be [given to] the person who [hosts] the entertainment.

37. If you [take] any [position beyond] your [abilities], you [will] both [do that job poorly] and [at the same time have failed to do] one which you might have [done well].

38. When walking, you are careful not to step on a nail or turn your foot. So likewise be careful not to hurt [your] ruling facult[ies]. If [you] guard against this in every action, [you will always] undertake the action with greater safety.

39. [For each individual] the body is the [correct] measure of the [things it needs], just as the foot is [the correct measure for a] shoe. If, therefore, you [limit yourself to what the body needs], you will [maintain] the [appropriate] measure. [B]ut if you [exceed the correct measure], you must necessarily be carried [away—over] a cliff. Just like the case of a shoe, if you [exceed what] the foot [needs], it comes first to be gilded, then [dyed] purple, and then studded with jewels. For that which exceeds [appropriate] measure, there is no [limit].

40. [From the age of] fourteen girls are flattered by men with the title of ‘woman’.⁹³ Therefore, [they come to think their value only lies in sex appeal, and thus they falsely place all their hopes in appearing sexually attractive]. We should, therefore, [strive to help them understand that their true value lies in moral], modest, and discreet behavior.

41. [Spending excessive time engaged in animal functions like eating, drinking, exercising, and anything relating to the body, is an indication of limited mental capacity.] These [activities] should be done [occasionally] and [moderately], [while] our whole attention [should] be engaged in [building up our rational capacities].

⁹³ The Greek term ‘*kurios*’ used here, and its Latin equivalent ‘*dominae*’, have no equivalent in contemporary English. Both the Greek and Latin terms refer to someone with real—not apparent—power, and was used of women who ran a household—a wife or matriarch. The English term ‘lady’ with its connotation of etiquette, fails to capture the actual authority denoted in ‘*kurios*’. Since it is clear from the context that Epiktetos is chastising both men and women in this passage for the “power politics” of sexuality I am using the term ‘woman’ to signify a female of—supposedly—appropriate sexual age.

42. When any[one] harms you, or speaks badly [about] you, remember that he acts or speaks from a [presumption that it is the right thing to do]. [But notice that] it is not possible [for] [such a person] to follow what appears right to you, but [rather] what appears [correct to him]. Therefore, if he judges from a wrong appearance, *he* is the person hurt, since he too is the person deceived. For if anyone should suppose a true [statement] to be false, the [statement] is not [harmed], but [rather the person] who [holds the false belief]. [If you begin with] these principles, you will meekly bear a person who [chastises] you, for you will say [to yourself on these] occasions, "*It seems so to him.*"

43. Everything has two handles: one by which it may be carried, [another] by which it cannot. If your brother acts unjustly, do not "lay hold" on the action by the "handle" of his injustice, for [you cannot get a grip on that]. [Rather, get a grip on the situation by remembering that] he is your brother and that he was brought up with you. [This is the proper way to get a grip on his actions and to "carry it" properly].

44. These [inferences] are [fallacious]:

*"I am richer than you.
therefore, I am better [than you];"*

and

*"I am more eloquent than you.
therefore, I am better [than you]."*

The [correct inference] is this:

*"I am richer than you,
therefore, [I have more property than you];"*

and

*"I am more eloquent than you,
therefore, my style is better than yours."*

But, after all, *you* are neither property nor style.

45. Do [you know someone who] bathes [quickly]? Do not say that he does it "badly", but [rather that he does it quickly]. Do [you know someone who drinks a lot of wine]? Do not say that he [drinks] "badly", but [rather] that he drinks a [lot]. For, unless you *perfectly understand the principle* from which anyone acts, how [can] you *know* if he acts [well or ill]? [Acting in this way] you will not run the [risk] of [making judgments about] appearances [instead of what you actually know].

46. Never call yourself a philosopher, nor [speak] a great deal among the unlearned about theorems; [rather, conform your actions to their level of understanding]. [When you are in public], do not talk [about] how [people] *ought* to eat, but [rather] eat as you ought. Remember that this was Sokrates' way [of avoiding showing off]. And when [people] came to him and [requested that he] recommend [other] philosophers [to them], [he did not mind being overlooked], but he took [them to] and recommended [others]. So [if you] happen [to be] among the un[educated] concerning philosophic[al ideas], for the most part be silent. For there is great danger in [regurgitating] what you have not digested. If anyone tells you that

you know nothing, and you are not [bothered by] it, then [rest assured] that you have begun [the path to knowledge]. Sheep do not regurgitate grass to show the shepherds how much they have eaten; but, inwardly digesting their food, they outwardly produce wool and milk. Thus, do not [expound on philosophical ideas before] the un[educated, but rather demonstrate] the actions produced by [those ideas] after they have been digested.

47. When you have brought yourself to supply the necessities of your body at a small price, do not [be too proud of] yourself; nor, if you drink water, say [to yourself], "*I [only] drink water.*" First, consider how much more [deprived] and patient of hardship the poor are than we. But if you [seek to improve] yourself by exercise [and hard work], and bearing hard [times without complaint], do it for your own sake, and not [as a display for others]; do not grasp statues,⁹⁴ but, when you are violently thirsty, take a little cold water in your mouth, and [spit] it out, [don't brag about it].

48. The condition and characteristic of [an ignorant] person is that he never expects either benefit or [harm] from himself, but from [others]. The condition and characteristic of a philosopher is, that he expects all [harm] and benefit from himself. The [indication of those between the two] are, that he [criticizes] no one, praises no one, blames no one, accuses no one, does not brag about himself, or his know[ledge]. When on any occasion he is hindered or restrained, he accuses himself; and, if he is praised, he secretly laughs at the person who praises him. If he is [criticized], he makes no defense. He [proceeds] with the caution of sick or injured people, dreading to move anything that is set right, before it is perfectly fixed. He suppresses all desire in himself; he [reserves] his aversion to things which thwart the proper use of the [power] of choice; the exertion of his active [will] towards anything is very gentle; if he appears stupid or ignorant, he does not care, and, in a word, he watches himself as an enemy, [as] one in ambush.

49. When anyone shows himself [too] confident in ability to understand and interpret the works of Xrusippos,⁹⁵ say to yourself, "*Unless Xrusippos had written obscurely, this person would have had no subject for his vanity. What do I desire? To understand [N]ature and follow her. I ask, then, who interprets [Nature]? [F]inding Xrusippos does, I have recourse to him. I do not understand his writings. I seek, therefore, one to interpret them [for me].*" So far, there is nothing to value myself upon. And when I find an interpreter, what remains is to make use of his [insights]. This alone is the valuable thing. But, if I admire nothing but the interpretation, what do I become more than a grammarian instead of a philosopher? Except, indeed, that instead of Homer I interpret Xrusippos. When anyone, therefore, desires me to read Xrusippos to him, I blush when I cannot show my actions agreeable and consonant to his [teaching].

⁹⁴ This idiom means something along the lines of, "don't set your aspirations too high". Late Classical (i.e., Hellenistic through Roman) statuary was dominated by hyper-idealistic realism. So the metaphor is don't hope to be like the statues or you'll be disappointed because you will always fall short.

⁹⁵ Xrusippos of Soleus (c. 279-c. 206 BCE) was the third leader of the Stoic school of philosophy in Athens. He excelled in Logic, Epistemology, Ethics, and Physics.

50. Whatever moral rules you have deliberately proposed [for] yourself, abide by them as [if] they were laws, and as if you would be guilty of impiety by violating any of them.⁹⁶ Do not [pay attention to] what anyone says [about] you, for this, after all, is no concern of yours.

51. How long will you put off thinking yourself worthy of the highest improvements and follow the distinctions of reason? You have received the philosophical theorems, with which you ought to be familiar, and you have been familiar with them [for a while] What other master, [are] you wait[ing] for? [Why do you] delay reforming yourself? You are no longer a [child], but a [mature person]. If, therefore, you will be negligent and slothful, and always add procrastination to procrastination, purpose to purpose, and fix day after day in which you will attend to yourself, you will continue without [progress], and, living and dying, continue being [ignorant]. This instant, then, think yourself worthy of living as a [mature person], and a [an expert]. Let whatever appears to be [right], be to you an inviolable law. And if any instance of pain or pleasure, or glory or disgrace, is set before you, remember that [*this is the struggle*], [this is your Olympic event and it] cannot be put off. By once being defeated and giving way, [expertise] is lost, [and] by the contrary preserved. Thus Sokrates became perfect, improving himself by everything, *attending to nothing but reason*. And though you are not yet a Sokrates, you ought to live as one [who desires to] become a Sokrates.

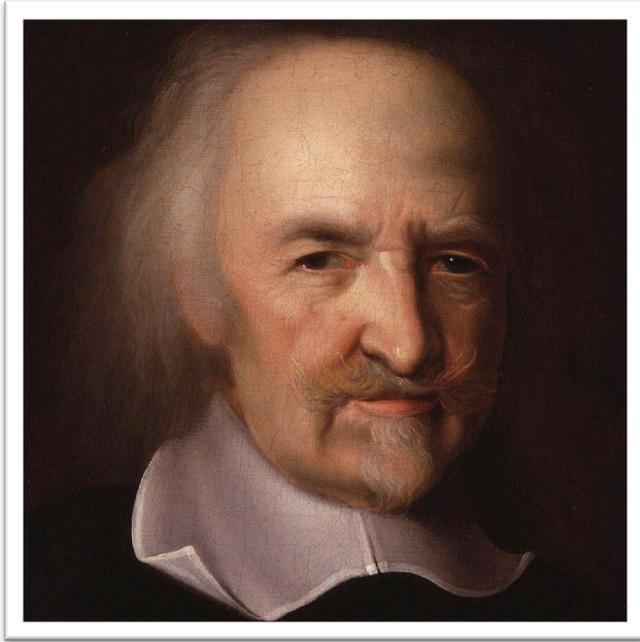
52. The first and most necessary topic in philosophy is that of the use of **moral theorems**, such as, "*We ought not to lie*;" the second is that of **demonstrations**, such as, "*What is the origin of our obligation not to lie*;" the third gives strength and articulation to the other two, such as, "*What is the origin of this is a demonstration*." For what is demonstration? What is consequence? What contradiction? What truth? What falsehood? The third topic, then, is necessary on the account of the second, and the second on the account of the first. But the most necessary, and that whereon we ought to rest, is the first. [Unfortunately, we have a tendency to] act [in a] contrary [manner]. [W]e spend all our time on the third topic, and employ all our diligence about that, and entirely neglect the first. Therefore, at the same time that we lie, we are immediately prepared to show how it is demonstrated that lying is not right.

53. Upon all occasions we ought to have these maxims ready at hand: "*Conduct me, Zeus, and you, O Destiny, Wherever your decrees have fixed my station*." (Cleanthes of Assos)

"I follow cheerfully; and, did I not, Wicked and wretched, I must follow still Whoever yields properly to Fate, is deemed Wise among men, and knows the laws of Heaven."
(Euripides, Frag. 965)

And this third: "*O Crito, if it thus pleases the gods, thus let it be. Anytus and Melitus may kill me indeed, but hurt me they cannot*." (Plato, Crito and Apology)

⁹⁶ It is interesting here to note the parallel with Immanuel Kant's first articulation of the Categorical Imperative: always select a maxim you could wish to be a universal law. The obvious difference, however, is that Kant believes the moral law is knowable, while Epictetus is prescribing that we act *as if* it were known.



**LEVIATHAN:
Or, The Matter, Form And
Power of a
Commonwealth,
Ecclesiastical and Civil**

**By: Thomas Hobbes of
Malmesbury 1651**

*Modernization, additions,
corrections, and footnotes by Barry
F. Vaughan⁹⁷*

CHAPTER XIII

**OF THE NATURAL CONDITION OF MANKIND, AS CONCERNING THEIR
FELICITY, AND MISERY**

Nature has made [humans] so equal—in the faculties of body and mind—that though there [is] found one [person] sometimes [physically] stronger, or [another] quicker [of] mind, yet when all is reckoned together, the difference between [humans] is not so considerable that one can claim to himself any benefit, to which another may not pretend [just] as well. For as to [physical] strength, [even] the weakest [is strong] enough to kill the strongest, either by secret [plans], or by [conspiring together] with others [who] are in the same danger [as] himself.

And as [far as mental faculties go], (*setting aside the arts grounded upon [verbal ability], especially Science—th[e] skill of proceeding [from] general, and infallible rules [to particular conclusions]—which very few have; [these are] not a native faculties born with us, nor [are they easily] attained [through] common human experience*), I find [an even] greater equality among [people] than [physical] strength. For prudence is nothing but experience; which equal time equally bestows on all men, in those things they equally apply themselves to. That which may perhaps make such equality incredible is [nothing] but a vain conceit of one's own wisdom, which almost all men think they have in a greater degree than

⁹⁷ This text is adapted from the Project Gutenberg's *Leviathan*, by Thomas Hobbes, www.gutenberg.org. For the full text visit the Project Gutenberg website. This edited version is intended for academic or personal use and may not be sold or used for profit. I have changed UK spellings to US spellings where appropriate, as well as made clarifications in translation (noted with brackets) and have added explanatory footnotes.

the vulgar; that is, than all men but themselves and a few others whom by fame or for concurring with themselves, they approve. For such is the nature of men, that howsoever they may acknowledge many others to be more witty, or more eloquent, or more learned; yet they will hardly believe there [are] many so wise as themselves: for they see their own wit at hand, and other men's at a distance. But this proves that men are in that point equal, than unequal. For there is not ordinarily a greater sign of the equal distribution of any thing, than that every man is contented with his share.

[Equality Causes Mistrust]

From this equality of ability arises equality of hope in attaining our ends. And therefore, if any two men desire the same thing, which they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies; and in the way to their end, (which is principally their own conservation, and sometimes their delectation only) endeavor to destroy or subdue one another. And from hence it comes to pass that where an invader has no more to fear than another man's single power; if one plant[s], sow[s], build[s], or possess a convenient seat, others may probably be expected to come prepared with forces united, to dispossess, and deprive him, not only of the fruit of his labor, but also of his life, or liberty. And the invader again is in [similar] danger.

[Mistrust Causes War]

And from this [mistrust] of one another, there is no way for any man to secure himself so reasonable as anticipation; that is, by force or [strategy], to master the persons of all men he can, so long, [un]till he see no other power great enough to endanger him: and this is no more than his own conservation requires, and is generally allowed. Also, because there [are] some that taking pleasure in contemplating their own power in the acts of conquest, which they pursue farther than their security requires; if others, that otherwise would be glad to be at ease within modest bounds, should not by invasion increase their power, they would not be able, long time, by standing only on their defense, to subsist. And by consequence, such augmentation of dominion over men, being necessary to a man's conservation, it ought to be allowed him.

Again, men have no pleasure (but on the contrary a great deal of grief) in keeping company, where there is no power able to over-awe them all. For every man [expects] that his companion should value him at the same rate he sets upon himself: and upon all signs of contempt, or undervaluing, naturally endeavors, as far as he dares (which amongst them that have no common power, to keep them in quiet, is far enough to make them destroy each other,) to extort a greater value from his condemners, by damage; and from others, by the example. So in the nature of man we find three principal causes of quarrel: first, ***competition***; second, ***[mistrust]***; [and] third, ***glory***.

The first makes men invade for *gain*; the second, for *safety*; and the third, for *reputation*. The first use *violence*, to make themselves masters of other men's persons, wives, children, and cattle. The second, to defend them, and the third for trifles as a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other sign of undervalue, either direct in their persons, or by reflexing in their kindred, their friends, their nation, their profession, or their name.

[In The Absence of Society There Is Universal War]

Hereby it is manifest that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in [submission], they are in that condition which is called **war**; and such a war, as is of *every man, against every man*. For **war** consists not in battle only—or the act of fighting—but in a [period] of time wherein *the will to contend by battle* is sufficiently known. And therefore, the notion of *time* is to be considered in the nature of war, [just] as it is in the nature of weather. For as the nature of foul weather lies not in a shower or two of rain but in an inclination thereto of many days together: so the nature of war, consists not in actual fighting; but *in the known disposition thereto*, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is **peace**.

[The Cost of War]

Whatsoever, therefore, is consequent to a time of war—where every man is enemy to every man—the same is consequent to the time wherein men live with [no] other security than what their own strength and their own invention shall furnish them with. In such [a] condition there is no place for *industry*; because the fruit thereof is uncertain; and consequently no *culture of the earth*; no *navigation*, nor use of the *commodities* that may be imported by sea; no *commodious building*; no *instruments of moving*, and removing such things as require much force; no *knowledge of the face of the earth*; no account of *time*; no *arts*; no *letters*; no *society*; and which is worst of all, *continual fear and danger of violent death*; and ***the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short***.

It may seem strange to [those who have] not [carefully considered] these things, that nature should thus dissociate and [make] men apt to invade and destroy one another. And he may, therefore, not trusting to this inference—made from the passions—desire perhaps to have the same confirmed by experience. Let him, therefore, consider with[in] himself: when taking a journey, he arms himself and seeks to go well accompanied; when going to sleep, he locks his doors; when even in his [own] house he locks his chests; and [all] this when he knows there [are] laws, and public officers, armed, to revenge all injuries [that might] be done [to] him. What opinion [does] he [have] of his fellow subjects when he rides armed; [or] of his fellow citizens when he locks his doors; and of his children, and servants when he locks his chests? Does he not there as much accuse mankind by his actions, as I do by my words? But neither of us accuse man's nature in it. The desires, and other passions of man, are—in themselves—no sin. No[r] are the actions that proceed from those passions, [un]till they know a law that forbids them. [And un]till laws [are] made they cannot know, nor can any law be made, [un]till they have agreed upon the person that shall make it.⁹⁸

It may be thought [that] there was never such a time nor condition of war [like] this; and I believe it was never generally so over all the world. But there are many places where [people] live so now. For the savage people in many places of America, except the

⁹⁸ Hobbes' point is that desires and actions, in themselves, are morally neutral. It is only in the presence of 'law' that an action or desire can be said to be 'good' or 'bad', 'right' or 'wrong'.

government of small families, the concord whereof depends on natural lust, have no government at all, and live [now] in that brutish manner, as I said before. However, it may be [imagined] what manner of life [this] would be—where there were no common power to fear—by [examining] the manner of life which men that have formerly lived under a peaceful government, use to degenerate into, [that is], in a *civil war*. But [further suppose that] there had never been any time wherein particular men were in a condition of war one against another; yet in all times, kings and persons of sovereign authority—because of their independence—are in continual jealousies and in the state and posture of gladiators, having their weapons pointing and their eyes fixed on one another. That is, their forts, garrisons, and guns upon the frontiers of their kingdoms and continual spies upon their neighbors, *is* a posture of war. But because they uphold thereby, the industry of their subjects, there does not follow from it that misery which accompanies the liberty of particular men.

[In War, Nothing Is Unjust]

To this war of every man against every man, this also is consequent: that *nothing can be unjust*.

The notions of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’, ‘justice’ and ‘injustice’ have no place [there]. Where there is no common power, there is no law, where [there is] no law, [there is] no injustice. *Force* and *fraud*, are in war the two *cardinal virtues*. Justice, and injustice are [neither] faculties of the body or mind. If they were, they might be in a man that was alone in the world, as well as his senses, and passions. They are qualities that relate to men in society, not in solitude. It is consequent also to the same condition that there [is] no [sense of] propriety, no dominion, no *mine* and *yours* distinct; but only that to be every man’s that he can get, and [only] for [as] long as he can keep it. And [this is all there is] for the ill condition which man—by mere nature—is actually placed in; though [there is] a possibility to come out of it consisting partly in the passions [and] partly in his reason.

The passions that incline men to peace are *fear of death*, desire of such things as are necessary to *commodious living*, and *a hope* by industry to obtain them. And *reason* suggests convenient articles of peace, upon which men may be drawn to agreement. These articles, are [those] which otherwise are called the *Laws of Nature* whereof I shall speak more particularly, in the two following chapters.

CHAPTER XIV

OF THE FIRST AND SECOND NATURAL LAWS, AND OF CONTRACTS

Right Of Nature

The **RIGHT OF NATURE**, which writers commonly call *Jus Naturale*, is the liberty each man has—to use his own power as he will himself—for the preservation of his own nature. [T]hat is to say, of his own life. [A]nd consequently, [he has the liberty] of doing anything which in his own judgment and reason he shall conceive to be the best means thereunto.

By **LIBERTY**, is understood—according to the proper signification of the word—*the*

absence of external impediments: which impediments may oft[en] take away part of a man's power to do what he would, but cannot hinder him from using the power left him, according as his judgment and reason shall dictate to him.

A LAW OF NATURE, (*Lex Naturalis*.) is a *precept*, or *general rule*, [discovered] by reason by which a man is forbidden to do that which is destructive of his life, or takes away the means of preserving the same; and to omit that by which he thinks it may be best preserved. For though they that speak of this subject use[d] to confound *jus*, and *lex*—right and law; yet they ought to be distinguished. [This is] because **RIGHT** consists in [the] liberty to do or to forbear; whereas **LAW** determines and binds to one of them: so that law and right, differ as much as obligation and liberty; which in one and the same matter are inconsistent.

The First Law Of Nature

And because the [natural] condition of Man, (as has ben declared in the precedent chapter) is a condition of war of every one against every one in which everyone is governed by his own reason and there is nothing he can make use of—that may not be a help unto him—in preserving his life against his enemies, it follows, that in such a condition, *every man has a right to every thing*—even to one another's body. And therefore, as long as this Natural Right of every man to everything endures, there can be no security [for anyone], ([however] strong or wise he [is],) of living out the time which nature ordinarily allows men to live.

And consequently, it is a precept, or *general rule of reason* "that every man, ought to endeavor peace, as far as he has hope of obtaining it; and when he cannot obtain it, that he may seek, and use all helps and advantages of war." The first branch of [this] rule contains the first and fundamental Law of Nature which is: "*seek peace, and follow it.*" The second [is] the sum of the **Right of Nature** which is, "*by all means we can, defend ourselves.*"

The Second Law Of Nature

From this fundamental Law of Nature, by which men are commanded to [seek] peace, is derived [the] **second law**: "*that a man be willing—when others are too—insofar [as possible] for peace and defense of himself he shall think it necessary, to lay down [the] right to all things, and be contented with [as] much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself.*" For as long as every man holds this right, of doing anything he likes, all men [are] in the condition of war. But if other men will not lay down their right, as well as he, then there is no reason for anyone, to divest himself of his: for that [is] to expose himself [as] prey, (which no man is bound to) rather than to dispose himself to peace. This is that law of the Gospel; "Whatsoever you require that others should do to you, that do ye to them." And that law of all men, "*Quod tibi feiri non vis, alteri ne feceris*".⁹⁹

To lay down a man's right to anything, is to divest himself of the liberty, of hindering another of the benefit of his own right to the same. For he that renounces—or passes away his right—gives not to any other man a right which he [did not have] before; because there is

⁹⁹ "do not do unto others what you do not want done to yourself"

nothing to which every man had not [a] right [to] by nature: but only stands out of his way, that he may enjoy his own original right, without hindrance from him; not without hindrance from another. So that the effect which returns to one man, by another man's defect of right, is but so much diminution of impediments to the use of his own [original] right.

Renouncing a Right

[A] right is laid aside, either by simply *renouncing* it, or by *transferring* it to [someone else]. By simply **RENOUNCING** when he [does not care] to whom the benefit [accrues]. By **TRANSFERRING**; when he *intends* the benefit to [go to] some certain person, or persons. And when a man has in either manner abandoned or granted away his right, he [is] said to be **OBLIGED**, or **BOUND**, not to hinder those, to whom such right is granted—or abandoned—from the benefit of it: and that he *ought*, and it his **DUTY**, not to make void that voluntary act of his own: and that such hindrance is **INJUSTICE**, and **INJURY**, as being *sine jure*,¹⁰⁰ the right [formerly] being renounced, or transferred. So that injury, or injustice, in the controversies of the world, is somewhat like to that, which in the disputations of scholars is called 'absurdity'. For as it is there called an absurdity to contradict what one maintained in the beginning: so in the world it is called 'injustice', and 'injury', voluntarily to undo that which from the beginning he had voluntarily done. The way by which a man either simply renounces, or transfers his right, is a declaration, or signification, by some voluntary and sufficient sign, or signs, that he [does] so renounce, or transfer—or has so renounced—or transferred the same, to him that accepts it. And these signs are either words only, or actions only, or (as it happens most often) both words *and* actions. And the same are the **BONDS** by which men are bound and obliged: bonds, that have their strength—not from their own nature—for nothing is more easily broken than a man's word,) but from fear of some evil consequence upon the rupture.

Not All Rights Are Alienable

Whenever a man transfers his right, or renounces it, it is either in consideration of some right reciprocally transferred to himself, or for some other good he hopes [to get]. For it is a voluntary act. And of the voluntary acts of every man, *the object is some good to himself*. And, therefore, *there [are] some rights which no man can be understood by any words, or other signs, to have abandoned, or transferred*. [For example,] a man cannot lay down the right of resisting [those] that assault him by force to take away his life. [This is] because he cannot be understood to aim, thereby, at any good [for] himself. The same may be said of *wounds*, and *chains*, and *imprisonment*. Because there is no [consequent] benefit to such patience as there is to the patience of suffering another to be wounded, or imprisoned. [And] also because a man cannot tell, when he sees men proceed against him by violence whether they intend his death or not. And lastly, the motive and end for which this renouncing and transferring or right is introduced is nothing [other than] *the security of a man's person*, in his life, and in the means of preserving life, as not to be weary of it. And therefore, if a man by words—or other signs—*seem* to deprive himself of the end for which those signs were intended he is not to be understood as if he meant it, or that it was his will. [Rather], he was

¹⁰⁰ Lt., "without a right."

ignorant of how such words and actions were to be interpreted.

The mutual transferring of [a] right, is that which men call [a] **CONTRACT**.

There is difference, between transferring of right to the thing, and transferring, or translation, that is, delivery of the thing itself. For the thing may be delivered together with the translation of the right; as in buying and selling with money, or exchange of goods, or lands: it may be delivered [at] some [later] time.

Again, one of the contractors, may deliver the thing contracted for on his part, and leave the other to perform his part at some determinate time after, and in the mean time be trusted; and then the contract on his part, is called **PACT**, or **COVENANT**: or both parts may contract now, to perform hereafter: in which cases, he that is to perform in time to come, being trusted, his performance is called keeping of promise, or faith; and the failing of performance (if it be voluntary) violation of faith.

When the transferring of right, is not mutual; but one of the parties transfers, in hope to gain thereby friendship, or service from another, or from his friends; or in hope to gain the reputation of charity, or magnanimity; or to deliver his mind from the pain of compassion; or in hope of reward in heaven; This is not contract, but **GIFT**, **FREE GIFT**, **GRACE**: which words signify one and the same thing.

Signs of contract are either *express*, or by *inference*. *Express*, are words spoken with understanding of what they signify; and such words are either of the time present, or past as: 'I Give', 'I Grant', 'I Have Given', 'I Have Granted', 'I will That This Be Yours': or of the future; as, 'I will Give', 'I will Grant'; which words of the future, are called promise....

If a covenant [is] made, wherein neither of the parties perform presently, but trust one another; in the condition of mere nature, (which is a condition of war of every man against every man,) upon any reasonable suspicion, it is void; but if there [is] a common power set over them both, with right and force sufficient to compel performance; it is not void. For he that performs first, has no assurance the other will perform after; because the bonds of words are too weak to bridle men's ambition, avarice, anger, and other passions, without the fear of some coercive power; which in the condition of mere nature, where all men are equal, and judges of the justness of their own fears cannot possibly be supposed. And therefore, he [that] performs first, [betrays] himself to his enemy [which is] contrary to the right (he can never abandon) of defending his life and means of living.

But in a *civil estate*, where there is a power set up to constrain those that would otherwise violate their faith, that fear is no more reasonable; and for that cause, he which by the covenant is to perform first, is obliged so to do.

The cause of fear, which makes such a covenant invalid, must be something arising after the covenant [was] made. [For example,] some new fact or other sign of the will not to perform; [otherwise] it cannot make the covenant void. For that which could not hinder a man from promising, ought not to be admitted as a hindrance *of* performing.

CHAPTER XV

OF OTHER LAWS OF NATURE

The Third Law Of Nature, Justice

From that Law of Nature, by which we are obliged to transfer to another, such rights, as being retained, hinder the peace of Mankind, there follows a third which is this: *that men perform their covenants made*. Without which, covenants are in vain, and [are] but empty words, and the right of all men to all things remaining, we are still in the condition of war.

And in this Law of Nature, consists the fountain and [origin] of **JUSTICE**. For where no covenant has preceded, there has no right ben transferred, and every man has right to every thing; and consequently, no action can be unjust. But when a covenant is made, then to break it is unjust: and the definition of **INJUSTICE** is no other than the *not performance of covenant*. And whatever is not *unjust*, is *just*.

But because covenants of mutual trust, where there is a fear of not performance on either part (as has ben said in the former chapter,) are invalid; though the [origin] of justice [is] the making of covenants; yet injustice actually there can be none, [un]till the cause of such fear [is] taken away; which while men are in the natural condition of war, cannot be done. Therefore, before the names of 'just', and 'unjust' can have place, there must be some *coercive power*, to compel men equally to the performance of their covenants, by the terror of some punishment greater than the benefit they expect by the breach of their covenant; and to make good that propriety, which by mutual contract men acquire, in recompense [payment] of the universal right they abandon: and such power there is none before the erection of a Commonwealth. And this is also to be gathered out of the ordinary definition of justice in the schools: for they say, that "justice is the constant will of giving to every man his own." And therefore, where there is no own, that is, no propriety, there is no injustice; and where there is no *coercive power* erected, that is, where there is no Commonwealth, there is no propriety; all men having right to all things: therefore where there is no Commonwealth, there nothing is unjust. So that the nature of justice consists in keeping of valid covenants: but the *validity* of covenants begins not but with the constitution of a **Civil Power**, sufficient to compel men to keep them: and then it is also that propriety begins....

Whatsoever is done to a man, conformable to his own will signified to the doer, is no injury to him. For if he that doeth it, has not passed away his original right to do what he please, by some antecedent covenant, there is no breach of covenant; and therefore no Injury done him. And if he have; then his will to have it done being signified, is a release of that covenant; and so again there is no injury done him.

Justice Commutative, And Distributive

Justice of *actions*, is by writers divided into *Commutative*, and *Distributive*; and the former

they say consists in proportion arithmetical; the later in proportion geometrical.

Commutative therefore, they place in the equality of value of the things contracted for; and **distributive**, in the distribution of equal benefit, to men of equal merit. As if it were injustice to sell dearer than we buy; or to give more to a man than he merits. The value of [the] things contracted for, is measured by the appetite of the contractors: and therefore, the just value is that which they [are] contented to give. And **Merit** (besides that which is by covenant, where the performance on one part, merits the performance of the other part, and falls under justice Commutative, not Distributive,) is not due by justice; but is rewarded of grace only. And therefore, this distinction, in the sense wherein it used to be expounded, is not right. To speak properly, **commutative justice is the justice of a contractor; that is, a performance of covenant, in buying, and selling; hiring, and letting to hire; lending, and borrowing.**

And **distributive justice, the justice of an arbitrator; that is to say, the act of defining what is just.** Wherein, (being trusted by them that make him arbitrator,) if he perform his trust, he is said to distribute to every man his own: and his is indeed just distribution, and may be called (though improperly) distributive justice; but more properly equity—which also is a Law of Nature, as shall be shown in due place.

The Fourth Law Of Nature, Gratitude

As justice depends on antecedent covenant; so does gratitude depend on antecedent grace; that is to say, antecedent free-gift: and is the fourth Law of Nature; which may be conceived in this form, "*that a man which receives benefit from another of mere grace, endeavor that he which gives it, have no reasonable cause to repent him of his good will.*" For no man gives, but with intention of good to himself; because gift is voluntary; and of all voluntary acts, the object is to every man his own good; of which if men see they shall be frustrated, there will be no beginning of benevolence, or trust; nor consequently of mutual help; nor of reconciliation of one man to another; and therefore they are to remain still in the condition of war; which is contrary to the first and fundamental Law of Nature, which commands men to seek peace. The breach of this law is called 'ingratitude' and has the same relation to grace that injustice has to obligation by covenant....

The Sixteenth, Of Submission To Arbitration

And because, [al]though men [are] never so willing to observe these laws, there may nevertheless arise questions concerning a man's action; *first*, whether it were done, or not done; *secondly* (if done) whether against the law, or not against the law; the former whereof, is called a *question of fact*; the later a question of right; therefore unless the parties to the question, covenant mutually to stand to the sentence of another, they are as far from peace as ever. This other, to whose sentence they submit, is called an **ARBITRATOR**. And therefore it is of the Law of Nature, "*that they that are at controversy, submit their right to the judgment of an arbitrator.*"

The Seventeenth, No Man Is His Own Judge

And seeing every man is presumed to do all things in order to his own benefit, no man is a fit

arbitrator in his own cause: and if he were never so fit; yet equity allowing to each party equal benefit, if one [is] admitted to be [a] Judge, the other is to be admitted also; [and] so the controversy, that is the cause of war remains, against the Law of Nature.

The Eighteenth, No Man To Be Judge, That Has In Him A Natural Cause Of Partiality

For the same reason no man in any cause ought to be received for arbitrator, to whom greater profit, or honor, or pleasure apparently arises out of the victory of one party, than of the other: for he has taken (though an unavoidable bribe, yet) a bribe; and no man can be obliged to trust him. And thus also, the controversy and the condition of war remains contrary to the Law of Nature.

The Nineteenth, Of Witness

And in a controversy of Fact, the Judge being to give no more credit to one, than to the other, (if there [are] no other Arguments) must give credit to a third; or to a third and fourth; or more: for else the question is undecided, and left to force, contrary to the Law of Nature.

These are the laws of nature, dictating peace, for a means of the conservation of men in multitudes; and which only concern the doctrine of Civil Society. There [are] other things tending to the destruction of particular men; as drunkenness, and all other parts of intemperance; which may therefore also be reckoned amongst those things which the Law of Nature has forbidden; but are not necessary to be mentioned, nor are pertinent enough to this place.

And though this may seem too subtle a deduction of the Laws of Nature to be taken notice of by all men, whereof the most part are too busy in getting food, and the rest too negligent to understand; yet to leave all men inexcusable, they have ben contracted into one easy sum, intelligible even to the meanest capacity; and that is, "Do not that to another, which thou would not have done to thy self;" which shows him, that he has no more to do in learning the laws of nature, but, when weighing the actions of other men with his own, they seem too heavy, to put them into the other part of the balance, and his own into their place, that his own passions, and self-love, may add nothing to the weight; and then there is none of these laws of nature that will not appear unto him very reasonable.

The Laws of Nature oblige *in foro interno* ["in the inner court", or "personal opinion"]; that is to say, they bind to a desire they should take place: but *in foro externo* ["in the outer court", or "public opinion"]; that is, to the putting them in act, not always. For he that should be modest, and tractable, and perform all he promises, in such time, and place, where no man else should do so, should but make himself a prey to others, and procure his own certain ruin, contrary to the ground of all laws of nature, which tend to natures preservation. And again, he that shall observe the same laws towards him, observes them not himself, seeks not peace, but war; [and] consequently the destruction of his nature by violence.

And whatsoever laws bind *in foro interno* ["in the inner court", or "personal opinion"], may be broken, not only by a fact contrary to the law but also by a fact according to it, in case a

man thinks it contrary. For though his action in this case accord[s with] the law; which where the obligation is *in foro interno* [“in the inner court”, or “personal opinion”], is a breach.

The Laws Of Nature Are Eternal

The laws of nature are immutable and eternal, for injustice, ingratitude, arrogance, pride, iniquity, exception of persons, and the rest, can never be made lawful. For it can never be that war shall preserve life, and peace destroy it.

The same laws, because they oblige only to a desire, and endeavor, I mean an unfeigned and constant endeavor, are easy to be observed. For in that they require nothing but endeavor; he that endeavors their performance, fulfills them; and he that fulfills the law is just.

The science of these laws, is the true Moral Philosophy and the Science of them, is the true and only Moral Philosophy. For Moral Philosophy is nothing else but the Science of what is good, and evil, in the conversation, and Society of mankind. Good, and evil, are names that signify our appetites, and aversions; which in different tempers, customs, and doctrines of men, are different: and divers men, differ not only in their judgment, on the senses of what is pleasant, and unpleasant to the taste, smell, hearing, touch, and sight; but also of what is conformable, or disagreeable to reason, in the actions of common life. Nay, the same man, in divers times, differs from himself; and one time praises, that is, calls good, what another time he dispraises, and calls evil: from whence arise disputes, controversies, and at last war. And therefore, so long as man is in the condition of mere nature, (which is a condition of war,) as private appetite is the measure of good, and evil: and consequently all men agree on this, that peace is good, and therefore also the way, or means of peace, which (as I have shown before) are justice, gratitude, modesty, equity, mercy, [and] the rest of the Laws of Nature, are good; that is to say, Moral Virtues; and their contrary vices, evil. Now the Science of Virtue and Vice, is Moral Philosophy; and therefore, the true doctrine of the Laws of Nature, is the true Moral Philosophy. But the writers of Moral Philosophy, though they acknowledge the same Virtues and Vices; yet not seeing wherein consisted their goodness; nor that they come to be praised, as the means of peaceable, sociable, and comfortable living; place them in a mediocrity of passions: as if not the cause, but the degree of daring, made fortitude; or not the cause, but the quantity of a gift, made liberality.

These dictates of reason men called by the name ‘laws’, but improperly: for they are but conclusions or theorems concerning what [conduces] to the conservation and defense of themselves; whereas law—properly [understood]—is the word of him that by right has command over others. But yet if we consider the same theorems as delivered in the word of God, that by right commands all things, then are they properly called *laws*.

CHAPTER XVII

OF THE CAUSES, GENERATION, AND DEFINITION OF A COMMONWEALTH

The final *cause, end, or design* of men, (who naturally love liberty, and Dominion over

others,) in the introduction of that restraint upon themselves, (in which we see them live in Commonwealths,) is the foresight of their own preservation, and of a more contented life thereby; that is to say, of getting themselves out from that miserable condition of war, which is necessarily consequent (as has been shown) to the natural passions of men, when there is no visible power to keep them in awe, and tie them by fear of punishment to the performance of their covenants, and observation of these laws of nature set down in the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters.

What Is Not To Be Had From The Law Of Nature

For the Laws of Nature (as justice, equity, modesty, mercy, and (in sum) *doing to others, as we would be done to,*) if themselves, without the terror of some power, to cause them to be observed, are contrary to our natural passions, that carry us to partiality, pride, revenge, and the like. And covenants, without the sword, are but words, and of no strength to secure a man at all. Therefore, notwithstanding the Laws of Nature, (which every one has then kept, when he has the will to keep them, when he can do it safely,) if there [is] no power erected, or not great enough for our security; every man will and may lawfully rely on his own strength and art, for caution against all other men. and in all places, where men have lived by small families, to rob and spoil one another, has been a trade, and so far from being reputed against the Law of Nature, that the greater spoils they gained, the greater was their honor; and men observed no other laws therein, but the laws of honor; that is, to abstain from cruelty, leaving to men their lives, and instruments of husbandry. And as small families did then; so now do cities and kingdoms which are but greater families (for their own security) enlarge their dominions, upon all pretenses of danger, and fear of invasion, or assistance that may be given to invaders, endeavor as much as they can, to subdue, or weaken their neighbors, by open force, and secret arts, for want of other caution, justly; and are remembered for it in after ages with honor....

It is true, that certain living creatures, as bees, and ants, live sociably one with another, (which are therefore by Aristotle numbered amongst *political creatures*;) and yet have no other direction, than their particular judgments and appetites; nor speech, whereby one of them can signify to another, what he thinks expedient for the common benefit: and therefore, some man may perhaps desire to know, why Mankind cannot do the same. To which I answer,

Firstly, that men are continually in competition for honor and dignity, which these creatures are not; and consequently amongst men there arises on that ground, envy and hatred, and finally war; but amongst these not so.

Secondly, that amongst these creatures, the *common good* differed not from the *private*; and being by nature inclined to their private, they procure thereby the common benefit. But man, whose joy consisted in comparing himself with other men, can relish nothing but what is eminent.

Thirdly, that these creatures, having not (as man) the use of reason, do not see, nor think they see any fault, in the administration of their common business: whereas amongst men, there

are very many, that think themselves wiser, and abler to govern the public, better than the rest; and these strive to reform and innovate, one this way, another that way; and thereby bring it into distraction and *civil war*.

Fourthly, that these creatures, though they have some use of voice, in making known to one another their desires, and other affections; yet they want that art of words, by which some men can represent to others, that which is good, in the likeness of evil; and evil, in the likeness of good; and augment, or diminish the apparent greatness of good and evil; discontenting men, and troubling their peace at their pleasure.

Fifthly, irrational creatures cannot distinguish between injury, and damage; and therefore as long as they [are] at ease, they are not offended with their fellows: whereas Man is then most troublesome, when he is most at ease: for then it is that he loves to show his wisdom, and control the actions of them that govern the Commonwealth.

Lastly, the agreement of these creatures is *natural*; that of men, is *by covenant only*, which is *artificial*: and therefore it is no wonder if there [is] some[thing] else required (besides covenant) to make their agreement constant and lasting; which is a common power to keep them in awe and to direct their actions to the common benefit.

The Generation Of A Commonwealth

The only way to erect such a Common Power, as may be able to defend them from the invasion of Foreigners, and the injuries of one another, and thereby to secure them in such sort, as that by their own industry, and by the fruits of the earth, they may nourish themselves and live contentedly; is, to confere all their power and strength upon *one man*, or upon one *assembly of men*, that may reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one will: which is as much as to say, to appoint one man, or assembly of men, to bear their person; and every one to own, and acknowledge himself to be author of whatsoever he that so bears their person, shall act, or cause to be acted, in those things which concern the common peace and safety; and therein to submit their wills, every one to his will, and their Judgments, to his judgment. This is more than *consent*, or *concord*; it is a real *unity* of them all, in one and the same person, made by covenant of every man with every man, in such manner, as if every man should say to every man, "I authorize and give up my right of governing myself, to *this man*, or to this *assembly of men*, on this condition, that thou give up thy right to him, and authorize all his actions in like manner." This done, the multitude so united in one person, is called a **COMMONWEALTH**, in Latin **CIVITAS**. This is the generation of that great **LEVIATHAN**, or rather (to speak more reverently) of that *mortal* god, to which we owe under the immortal God, our peace and defense. For by this authority, given him by every particular man in the Commonwealth, he has the use of so much power and strength conferred on him, that by terror thereof, he is enabled to form the wills of them all, to peace at home, and mutual aid against their enemies abroad.

The Definition Of A Commonwealth

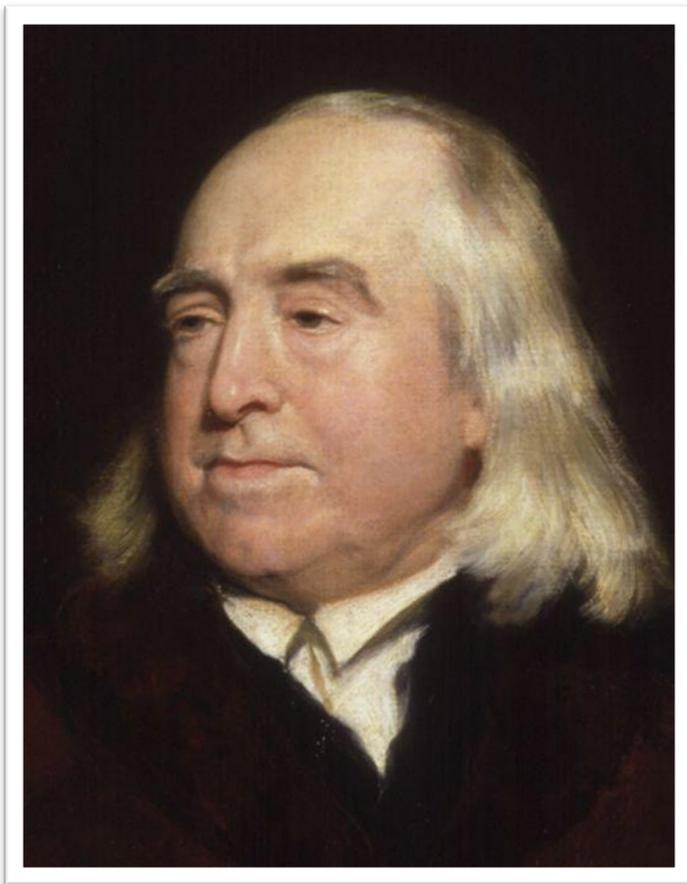
And in him consists the essence of the Commonwealth; which (to define it,) is "*one person*,

of whose acts a great multitude, by mutual covenants one with another, have made themselves every one the author, to the end he may use the strength and means of them all, as he shall think expedient, for their peace and common defense."

Sovereign

And he that carries this person, as called **SOVEREIGN**, and said to have *sovereign power*; and every one besides, his **SUBJECT**.

The attaining to this *sovereign power*, is by two ways. One, by natural force; as when a man makes his children, to submit themselves, and their children to his government, as being able to destroy them if they refuse, or by war subdues his enemies to his will, giving them their lives on that condition. The other is when men agree amongst themselves, to submit to some *man*, or *assembly of men*, voluntarily, on confidence to be protected by him against all others. This later, may be called a *Political Commonwealth*, or *Commonwealth by Institution*; and the former, a *Commonwealth by Acquisition*...



AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PRINCIPLES OF MORALS AND LEGISLATION

By: **Jeremy Bentham**
(1748-1832)

*Edited by and with additions and
corrections by Barry F. Vaughan¹⁰¹*

I. OF THE PRINCIPLE OF UTILITY

Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain* and *pleasure*. It is for them *alone* to point out *what we ought to do*, as well as to

determine what we shall do. On the one hand, the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think: every effort we can make to throw off our [subjugation], will serve but to demonstrate and confirm it. In words a man may pretend to abjure their empire: but in reality he will remain subject to it all the while. The **Principle of Utility**¹⁰² recognizes

¹⁰¹ This text of An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, by Jeremy Bentham is from The Library of Economics and Liberty (<http://www.econlib.org/library/Bentham/bnthPML.html>) and is a public domain text. I have modernized punctuation and changed UK to US spellings where appropriate. I have also added explanatory footnotes (original footnotes noted in brackets).

¹⁰² [Author's note] To this denomination has of late been added, or substituted, *the greatest happiness or greatest felicity* principle: this for shortness, instead of saying at length that principle which states the greatest happiness of all those whose interest is in question, as being the right and proper, and only right and proper and universally desirable, end of human action: of human action in every situation, and in particular in that of a functionary or set of functionaries exercising the powers of Government. The word utility does not so clearly point to the ideas of pleasure and pain as the words happiness and felicity do: nor does it lead us to the consideration of the number, of the interests affected; to the number, as being the circumstance, which contributes, in the largest proportion, to the formation of the standard here in question; the standard of right and wrong, by which alone the propriety of human conduct, in every situation, can with propriety be tried. This want of a sufficiently manifest connexion between the ideas of happiness and pleasure on the one hand, and the idea of utility on the other, I have every now and then found operating, and with but too much efficiency, as a bar to the acceptance, that might otherwise have been given, to this principle.

this subjection, and assumes it for the foundation of that system, the object of which is to rear the fabric of felicity by the hands of reason and of law. Systems [that] attempt to question it, deal in sounds instead of sense, in caprice instead of reason, in darkness instead of light.

But enough of metaphor and declamation: it is not by such means that moral science is to be improved.

The *principle of utility* is the foundation of the present work: it will be proper, therefore, at the outset to give an explicit and determinate account of what is meant by it. By the principle¹⁰³ of **utility** is meant *that principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question: or, what is the same thing in other words, to promote or to oppose that happiness.* I say of every action whatsoever, and therefore not only of every action of a private individual, but of every measure of government.

By ‘utility’ is meant *that property in any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good, or happiness, (all this in the present case comes to the same thing) or (what comes again to the same thing) to prevent the happening of mischief, pain, evil, or unhappiness to the party whose interest is considered: if that party be the community in general, then the happiness of the community: if a particular individual, then the happiness of that individual...*

IV. VALUE OF A LOT OF PLEASURE OR PAIN, HOW TO BE MEASURED

Pleasures then, and the avoidance of pains, are the *ends* that the legislator has in view; it behoves him, therefore, to understand their value. Pleasures and pains are the instruments he has to work with: it behoves him therefore to understand their force, which is again, in other words, their value.

To a person considered by himself, the value of a pleasure or pain considered by itself, will be greater or less, according to the four following circumstances:

1. its *intensity*
2. its *duration*
3. its *certainty* or uncertainty
4. its *propinquity* or remoteness.

These are the circumstances which are to be considered in estimating a pleasure or a pain

¹⁰³ [Author’s note] The word ‘principle’ is derived from the Latin *principium*: which seems to be compounded of the two words *primus*, ‘first’, or ‘chief’, and *cipium* a termination which seems to be derived from *cipio*, ‘to take’, as in *municipium*, *municipium*; to which are analogous, *auceps*, *forceps*, and others. It is a term of very vague and very extensive signification: it is applied to any thing which is conceived to serve as a foundation or beginning to any series of operations: in some cases, of physical operations; but of mental operations in the present case. The principle here in question may be taken for an act of the mind; a sentiment; a sentiment of approbation; a sentiment which, when applied to an action, approves of its utility, as that quality of it by which the measure of approbation or disapprobation bestowed upon it ought to be governed.

considered each of them by itself. But when the value of any pleasure or pain is considered for the purpose of estimating the tendency of any act by which it is produced, there are two other circumstances to be taken into the account; these are,

5. Its *fecundity*, or the chance it has of being followed by sensations of the same kind: that is, pleasures, if it be a pleasure: pains, if it be a pain.

6. Its *purity*, or the chance it has of not being followed by sensations of the opposite kind: that is, pains, if it be a pleasure: pleasures, if it be a pain.

These two last, however, are in strictness scarcely to be deemed properties of the pleasure or the pain itself; they are not, therefore, in strictness to be taken into the account of the value of that pleasure or that pain. They are in strictness to be deemed properties only of the act, or other event, by which such pleasure or pain has been produced; and accordingly are only to be taken into the account of the tendency of such act or such event.

To a number of persons, with reference to each of whom to the value of a pleasure or a pain is considered, it will be greater or less, according to seven circumstances: to wit, the six preceding ones; *viz.*,

1. its intensity
2. its duration
3. its certainty or uncertainty
4. its propinquity or remoteness
5. its fecundity
6. its purity.

And one other; to wit:

7. Its *extent*; that is, *the number of persons* to whom it extends; or (in other words) who are affected by it.

To take an exact account, then, of the general tendency of any act, by which the interests of a community are affected, proceed as follows. Begin with any one person of those whose interests seem most immediately to be affected by it: and take an account,

1. Of the value of each distinguishable pleasure [that] appears to be produced by it in the first instance.

2. Of the value of each pain [that] appears to be produced by it in the first instance.

3. Of the value of each pleasure [that] appears to be produced by it after the first. This constitutes the fecundity of the first pleasure and the impurity of the first pain.

4. Of the value of each pain [that] appears to be produced by it after the first. This constitutes the fecundity of the first pain, and the impurity of the first pleasure.

5. Sum up all the values of all the pleasures on the one side, and those of all the pains on the other. The balance, if it [is] on the side of pleasure, will give the good tendency of the act upon the whole, with respect to the interests of that individual person; if on the side of pain, the bad tendency of it upon the whole.

6. Take an account of the number of persons whose interests appear to be concerned; and repeat the above process with respect to each. [Add] up the numbers expressive of the degrees of good tendency, which the act has, with respect to each individual, in regard to whom the tendency of it is good upon the whole: do this again with respect to each individual, in regard to whom the tendency of it is good upon the whole. [D]o this again with respect to each individual, in regard to whom the tendency of it is bad upon the whole. Take the balance which—if on the side of pleasure—will give the general good tendency of the act, with respect to the total number or community of individuals concerned; if on the side of pain, the general evil tendency with respect to the same community.

It is *not to be expected* that this process should be strictly pursued previously to every moral judgment, or to every legislative or judicial operation. It may, however, be always kept in view: and as near as the process actually pursued on these occasions approaches to it, so near will such process approach to the character of an exact one.

The same process is [also] applicable to pleasure and pain, in whatever shape they appear: and by whatever denomination they are distinguished: to pleasure, whether it be called good (which is properly the cause or instrument of pleasure) or profit (which is distant pleasure, or the cause or instrument of, distant pleasure,) or convenience, or advantage, benefit, emolument, happiness, and so forth: to pain, whether it be called evil, (which corresponds to good) or mischief, or inconvenience, or disadvantage, or loss, or unhappiness, and so forth.

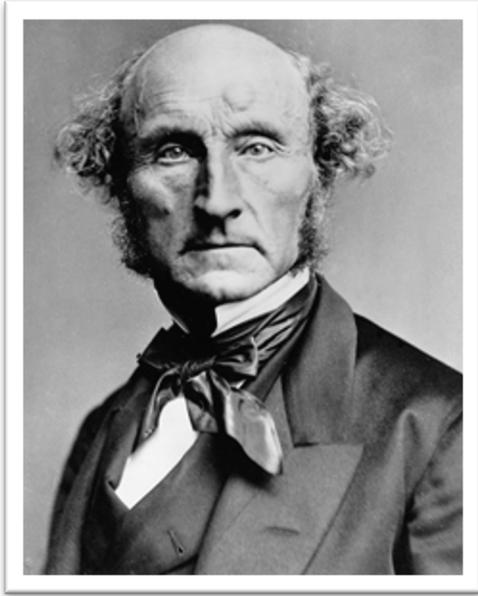
Nor is this a novel and unwarranted—any more than it is a useless—theory. In all this there is nothing but what the practice of mankind, [wherever] they have a clear view of their own interest, is perfectly conformable to. An article of property, an estate in land, for instance, is valuable, on what account? On account of the pleasures of all kinds which it enables a man to produce, and what comes to the same thing the pains of all kinds which it enables him to avert. But the value of such an article of property is universally understood to rise or fall according to the length or shortness of the time which a man has in it: the certainty or uncertainty of its coming into possession: and the nearness or remoteness of the time at which, if at all, it is to come into possession. As to the intensity of the pleasures which a man may derive from it, this is never thought of, because it depends upon the use which each particular person may come to make of it; which cannot be estimated till the particular pleasures he may come to derive from it, or the particular pains he may come to exclude by means of it, are brought to view. For the same reason, neither does he think of the fecundity or purity of those pleasures.

Thus much for pleasure and pain, happiness and unhappiness, in general...

XVII. OF THE LIMITS OF THE PENAL BRANCH OF JURISPRUDENCE

What other agents then are there, which, at the same time that they are under the influence of man's direction, are susceptible of happiness. They are of two sorts: 1) Other human beings who are styled persons; 2) Other animals, which, on account of their interests having been neglected by the insensibility of the ancient jurists, stand degraded into the class of *things*.¹⁰⁴ As to other human beings, the art of directing their actions to the above end is what we mean, or at least the only thing which, upon the principle of utility, we *ought* to mean, by the art of government: which, in as far as the measures it displays itself in are of a permanent nature, is generally distinguished by the name of *legislation*: as it is by that of *administration*, when they are of a temporary nature, determined by the occurrences of the day.

¹⁰⁴ [Author's note] Under the Gentoo [Hindu] and Mahometan [Muslim] religions, the interests of the rest of the animal creation seem to have met with some attention. Why have they not universally, with as much as those of human creatures, allowance made for the difference in point of sensibility? Because the laws that are have been the work of mutual fear; a sentiment which the less rational animals have not had the same means as man has of turning to account. Why ought they not? No reason can be given. If the being eaten were all, there is very good reason why we should be suffered to eat such of them as we like to eat: we are the better for it, and they are never the worse. They have none of those long-protracted anticipations of future misery which we have. The death they suffer in our hands commonly is, and always may be, a speedier, and by that means a less painful one, than that which would await them in the inevitable course of nature. If the being killed were all, there is very good reason why we should be suffered to kill such as molest us: we should be the worse for their living, and they are never the worse for being dead. But is there any reason why we should be suffered to torment them? Not any that I can see. Are there any why we should not be suffered to torment them? Yes, several. See B. I. tit. [Cruelty to animals]. The day has been, I grieve to say in many places it is not yet past, in which the greater part of the species, under the denomination of slaves, have been treated by the law exactly upon the same footing as, in England for example, the inferior races of animals are still. The day may come, when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been [withheld] from them but by the hand of tyranny. The French have already discovered that the blackness of the skin is no reason why a human being should be abandoned without redress to the caprice of a tormentor. It may come one day to be recognized, that the number of the legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the *os sacrum*, are reasons equally insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the same fate. What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason, or, perhaps, the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an infant of a day, or a week, or even a month, old. But suppose the case were otherwise, what would it avail? [T]he question is not, ["c]an they reason?", nor, ["c]an they talk?", but ["c]an they suffer?"



UTILITARIANISM

By: JOHN STUART MILL (1806-1873)

Edited by Barry F. Vaughan with additions, corrections, and explanatory footnotes.¹⁰⁵

CHAPTER II.

WHAT UTILITARIANISM IS

A passing remark is all that needs be given to the ignorant blunder of supposing that those who stand up for utility as the test of right and wrong, use the term in that restricted and merely

colloquial sense in which utility is opposed to pleasure. An apology is due to the philosophical opponents of Utilitarianism, for even the momentary appearance of confounding them with any one capable of so absurd a misconception; which is the more extraordinary, inasmuch as the contrary accusation, of referring everything to pleasure, and that too in its grossest form, is another of the common charges against Utilitarianism: and, as has been pointedly remarked by an able writer, the same sort of persons, and often the very same persons, denounce the theory "as impracticably dry when the word 'utility' precedes the word 'pleasure', and as too practicably voluptuous when the word 'pleasure' precedes the word 'utility'." Those who know anything about the matter are aware that every writer, from Epicurus¹⁰⁶ to Bentham¹⁰⁷, who maintained the *theory of utility*, meant by it, not something to be contradistinguished from pleasure, but pleasure itself, together with exemption from pain; and instead of opposing the useful to the agreeable or the ornamental, have always declared that 'the useful' means these, among other things. Yet the common herd, including the herd of writers, not only in newspapers and periodicals, but in books of weight and pretension, are perpetually falling into this shallow mistake. Having caught up the word 'utilitarian', while knowing nothing whatever about it but its sound, they habitually express by it the rejection, or the neglect, of pleasure in some of its forms; of beauty, of ornament, or of amusement. Nor is the term thus ignorantly misapplied solely in disparagement, but occasionally in compliment; as though it implied superiority to frivolity and the mere pleasures of the

¹⁰⁵ This text is from Project Gutenberg's [Utilitarianism](http://www.gutenberg.org), by John Stuart Mill, www.gutenberg.org.

I have changed UK spellings to US spellings where appropriate, as well as added explanatory footnotes and emphases in italics. This text is intended for academic or personal use, and may not be sold or used for profit.

¹⁰⁶ Epicurus (or *Epikouros* 341-270 BCE) was a Greek philosopher who developed the earliest version of Hedonism: the good is that which produces pleasure, the bad is that which produces pain. The ultimate state of human existence is *ataraxia*, or lack of disturbance. Though his name is often associated with Libertinism, or the continual pursuit of pleasure, Epicurus and his followers actually taught that pleasure is the absence of suffering and that to achieve this one must abstain from overindulgences of all kinds.

¹⁰⁷ Jeremy Bentham (1748 - 1832) was an English ethicist and political philosopher and reformer, mentor of J.S. Mill, and founder of modern Utilitarianism.

moment. And this perverted use is the only one in which the word is popularly known, and the one from which the new generation are acquiring their sole notion of its meaning. Those who introduced the word, but who had for many years discontinued it as a distinctive appellation, may well feel themselves called upon to resume it, if by doing so they can hope to contribute anything towards rescuing it from this utter degradation.¹⁰⁸

The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, **Utility**, or the **Greatest Happiness Principle**, holds that *actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness*. By ‘happiness’ is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by ‘unhappiness’, pain, and the privation of pleasure. To give a clear view of the moral standard set up by the theory, much more requires to be said; in particular, what things it includes in the ideas of ‘pain’ and ‘pleasure’; and to what extent this is left an open question. But these supplementary explanations do not affect the theory of life on which this theory of morality is grounded—namely, *that pleasure, and freedom from pain, are the only things desirable as ends; and that all desirable things (which are as numerous in the utilitarian as in any other scheme) are desirable either for the pleasure inherent in themselves, or as means to the promotion of pleasure and the prevention of pain*.

Now, such a theory of life excites in many minds, and among them in some of the most estimable in feeling and purpose, inveterate dislike. To suppose that life has (as they express it) no higher end than pleasure—no better and nobler object of desire and pursuit—they designate as utterly mean and groveling; as a doctrine worthy only of swine, to whom the followers of Epicurus were, at a very early period, contemptuously likened; and modern holders of the doctrine are occasionally made the subject of equally polite comparisons by its German, French, and English assailants.

When thus attacked, the Epicureans have always answered, that *it is not they, but their accusers*, who represent human nature in a degrading light; since the accusation supposes human beings to be capable of no pleasures *except* those of which swine are capable. If this supposition were true, the charge could not be gainsaid, but would then be no longer an imputation; for if the sources of pleasure were precisely the same to human beings and to swine, the rule of life which is good enough for the one would be good enough for the other. The comparison of the Epicurean life to that of beasts is felt as degrading, *precisely because* a beast's pleasures do not satisfy a human being's conceptions of happiness. Human beings have faculties *more elevated* than the animal appetites, and when once made conscious of them, do not regard anything as happiness which does not include their gratification. I do not, indeed, consider the Epicureans to have been by any means faultless in drawing out their scheme of consequences from the utilitarian principle. To do this in any

¹⁰⁸ [Mill's original footnote] The author of this essay has reason for believing himself to be the first person who brought the word utilitarian into use. He did not invent it, but adopted it from a passing expression in Mr. Galt's Annals of the Parish. After using it as a designation for several years, he and others abandoned it from a growing dislike to anything resembling a badge or watchword of sectarian distinction. But as a name for one single opinion, not a set of opinions--to denote the recognition of utility as a standard, not any particular way of applying it—the term supplies a want in the language, and offers, in many cases, a convenient mode of avoiding tiresome circumlocution.

sufficient manner, many Stoic¹⁰⁹, as well as Christian elements require to be included. But there is no known Epicurean theory of life which does not assign to the pleasures of the intellect; of the feelings and imagination, and of the moral sentiments, a much higher value as pleasures than to those of mere sensation. It must be admitted, however, that utilitarian writers in general have placed the superiority of mental over bodily pleasures chiefly in the greater *permanency, safety, uncostliness*, etc., of the former—that is, in their *circumstantial advantages* rather than in their intrinsic nature. And on all these points utilitarians have fully proved their case; but they might have taken the other, and, as it may be called, higher ground, with entire consistency. It is quite compatible with the principle of utility to recognize the fact, that some *kinds* of pleasure are more desirable and more valuable than others. It would be absurd that while, in estimating all other things, quality is considered as well as quantity, the estimation of pleasures should be supposed to depend on quantity alone.

If I am asked, what I mean by difference of *quality* in pleasures, or what makes one pleasure more valuable than another, merely as a pleasure, except its being greater in amount, there is but one possible answer. Of two pleasures, if there be one to which all or almost all who have experience of both *give a decided preference*, irrespective of any feeling of moral obligation to prefer it, that is the more desirable pleasure. If one of the two is, by those who are competently acquainted with both, placed so far above the other that they prefer it, even though knowing it to be attended with a greater amount of discontent, and would not resign it for any quantity of the other pleasure which their nature is capable of, we are justified in ascribing to the preferred enjoyment a superiority in quality, so far outweighing quantity as to render it, in comparison, of small account.

Now it is an unquestionable fact that those who are equally acquainted with, and equally capable of appreciating and enjoying, *both, do give a most marked preference to the manner of existence which employs their higher faculties*. Few human creatures would consent to be changed into any of the lower animals, for a promise of the fullest allowance of a beast's pleasures; no intelligent human being would consent to be a fool, no instructed person would be an ignoramus, no person of feeling and conscience would be selfish and base, even though they should be persuaded that the fool, the dunce, or the rascal is better satisfied with his lot than they are with theirs. They would not resign what they possess more than he, for the most complete satisfaction of all the desires which they have in common with him. If they ever fancy they would, it is only in cases of unhappiness so extreme, that to escape from it they would exchange their lot for almost any other, however undesirable in their own eyes. A being of higher faculties requires more to make him happy, is capable probably of more acute suffering, and is certainly accessible to it at more points, than one of an inferior type; but in spite of these liabilities, he can never really wish to sink into what he feels to be a lower grade of existence. We may give what explanation we please of this unwillingness; we may attribute it to pride, a name which is given indiscriminately to some of the most and to some of the least estimable feelings of which mankind are capable; we may refer it to the love of liberty and personal independence, an appeal to which was with the Stoics one of the most effective means for the inculcation of it; to the love of power, or to the

¹⁰⁹ Stoicism is a Hellenistic philosophy founded by Zeno of Citium which sought to balance the competing views of Determinism and free will. Stoic philosophers sought to align the will with the objective structure of reality (often referred to as the *Logos*).

love of excitement, both of which do really enter into and contribute to it: but its most appropriate appellation is a sense of dignity, which all human beings possess in one form or other, and in some, though by no means in exact, proportion to their higher faculties, and which is so essential a part of the happiness of those in whom it is strong, that nothing which conflicts with it could be, otherwise than momentarily, an object of desire to them.

Whoever supposes that this preference takes place at a sacrifice of happiness—that the superior being, in anything like equal circumstances, is not happier than the inferior—confounds the two very different ideas, of happiness, and content. It is indisputable that the being whose capacities of enjoyment are low, has the greatest chance of having them fully satisfied; and a highly-endowed being will always feel that any happiness which he can look for, as the world is constituted, is imperfect. But he can learn to bear its imperfections, if they are at all bearable; and they will not make him envy the being who is indeed unconscious of the imperfections, but only because he feels not at all the good which those imperfections qualify. *It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Sokrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied.* And if the fool, or the pig, is of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides.

It may be objected, that many who are capable of the higher pleasures, occasionally, under the influence of temptation, postpone them to the lower. But this is quite compatible with a full appreciation of the intrinsic superiority of the higher. Men often, from infirmity of character, make their election for the nearer good, though they know it to be the less valuable; and this no less when the choice is between two bodily pleasures, than when it is between bodily and mental. They pursue sensual indulgences to the injury of health, though perfectly aware that health is the greater good.

It may be further objected, that many who begin with youthful enthusiasm for everything noble, as they advance in years sink into indolence and selfishness. But I do not believe that those who undergo this very common change, voluntarily choose the lower description of pleasures in preference to the higher. I believe that before they devote themselves exclusively to the one, they have already become incapable of the other. Capacity for the nobler feelings is in most natures a very tender plant, easily killed, not only by hostile influences, but by mere want of sustenance; and in the majority of young persons it speedily dies away if the occupations to which their position in life has devoted them, and the society into which it has thrown them, are not favorable to keeping that higher capacity in exercise. Men lose their high aspirations as they lose their intellectual tastes, because they have not time or opportunity for indulging them; and they addict themselves to inferior pleasures, not because they deliberately prefer them, but because they are either the only ones to which they have access, or the only ones which they are any longer capable of enjoying. It may be questioned whether any one who has remained equally susceptible to both classes of pleasures, ever knowingly and calmly preferred the lower; though many, in all ages, have broken down in an ineffectual attempt to combine both.

From this verdict of the only competent judges, I apprehend there can be no appeal. On a question which is the best worth having of two pleasures, or which of two modes of

existence is the most grateful to the feelings, apart from its moral attributes and from its consequences, the judgment of those who are qualified by knowledge of both, or, if they differ, that of the majority among them, must be admitted as final. And there needs be the less hesitation to accept this judgment respecting the quality of pleasures, since there is no other tribunal to be referred to even on the question of quantity. What means are there of determining which is the acutest of two pains, or the [most intense] of two pleasurable sensations, except the general suffrage of those who are familiar with both? Neither pains nor pleasures are homogeneous, and pain is always heterogeneous with pleasure. What is there to decide whether a particular pleasure is worth purchasing at the cost of a particular pain, except the feelings and judgment of the experienced? When, therefore, those feelings and judgment declare the pleasures derived from the higher faculties to be preferable *in kind*, apart from the question of intensity, to those of which the animal nature, disjoined from the higher faculties, is susceptible, they are entitled on this subject to the same regard.

I have dwelt on this point, as being a necessary part of a perfectly just conception of Utility or Happiness, considered as the directive rule of human conduct. But it is by no means an indispensable condition to the acceptance of the utilitarian standard; for that standard *is not the agent's own* greatest happiness, but *the greatest amount of happiness altogether*; and if it may possibly be doubted whether a noble character is always the happier for its nobleness, there can be no doubt that it makes other people happier, and that the world in general is immensely a gainer by it. Utilitarianism, therefore, could only attain its end by *the general cultivation of nobleness of character*, even if each individual were only benefited by the nobleness of others, and his own, so far as happiness is concerned, were a sheer deduction from the benefit. But the bare enunciation of such an absurdity as this last, renders refutation superfluous.

According to the **Greatest Happiness Principle**, as above explained, the ultimate end, with reference to and for the sake of which all other things are desirable (whether we are considering our own good or that of other people), *is an existence exempt as far as possible from pain, and as rich as possible in enjoyments, both in point of quantity and quality*; the test of quality, and the rule for measuring it against quantity, being the preference felt by those who, in their opportunities of experience, to which must be added their habits of self-consciousness and self-observation, are best furnished with the means of comparison. This, being, according to the utilitarian opinion, the end of human action, is necessarily also the standard of morality; which may accordingly be defined, the rules and precepts for human conduct, by the observance of which an existence such as has been described might be, to the greatest extent possible, secured to all mankind; and not to them only, but, so far as the nature of things admits, *to the whole sentient creation*.

Against this doctrine, however, arises another class of objectors, who say that happiness, in any form, cannot be the rational purpose of human life and action; because, in the first place, it is unattainable: and they contemptuously ask, *What right hast thou to be happy?* [This is] a question which Mr. Carlyle clenches by the addition, *What right, a short time ago, hadst thou even to be?* Next, they say, that men can do *without* happiness; that all noble human beings have felt this, and could not have become noble but by learning the

lesson of *Entsagen*, or renunciation; which lesson, thoroughly learnt and submitted to, they affirm to be the beginning and necessary condition of all virtue.

The first of these objections would go to the root of the matter were it well founded; for if no happiness is to be had at all by human beings, the attainment of it cannot be the end of morality, or of any rational conduct. Though, even in that case, something might still be said for the utilitarian theory; since utility includes not solely the pursuit of happiness, but the prevention or mitigation of unhappiness; and if the former aim be chimerical, there will be all the greater scope and more imperative need for the latter, so long at least as mankind think fit to live, and do not take refuge in the simultaneous act of suicide recommended under certain conditions by Novalis.¹¹⁰ When, however, it is thus positively asserted to be impossible that human life should be happy, the assertion, if not something like a verbal quibble, is at least an exaggeration. If by happiness be meant a continuity of highly pleasurable excitement, it is evident enough that this is impossible. A state of exalted pleasure lasts only moments, or in some cases, and with some intermissions, hours or days, and is the occasional brilliant flash of enjoyment, not its permanent and steady flame. Of this the philosophers who have taught that happiness is the end of life were as fully aware as those who taunt them. The happiness which they meant was *not a life of rapture*, but moments of such, in an existence made up of few and transitory pains, many and various pleasures, with a decided predominance of the active over the passive, and having as the foundation of the whole, not to expect more from life than it is capable of bestowing. A life thus composed, to those who have been fortunate enough to obtain it, has always appeared worthy of the name of happiness. And such an existence is even now the lot of many, during some considerable portion of their lives. The present wretched education, and wretched social arrangements, are the only real hindrance to its being attainable by almost all.

The objectors perhaps may doubt whether human beings, if taught to consider happiness as the end of life, would be satisfied with such a moderate share of it. But great numbers of mankind have been satisfied with much less. The main constituents of a satisfied life appear to be two, either of which by itself is often found sufficient for the purpose: tranquility, and excitement. With much tranquility, many find that they can be content with very little pleasure: with much excitement, many can reconcile themselves to a considerable quantity of pain. There is assuredly no inherent impossibility in enabling even the mass of mankind to unite both; since the two are so far from being incompatible that they are in natural alliance, the prolongation of either being a preparation for, and exciting a wish for, the other. It is only those in whom indolence amounts to a vice, that do not desire excitement after an interval of repose; it is only those in whom the need of excitement is a disease, that feel the tranquility which follows excitement dull and insipid, instead of pleasurable in direct proportion to the excitement which preceded it. When people who are tolerably fortunate in their outward lot do not find in life sufficient enjoyment to make it valuable to them, the cause generally is, caring for nobody but themselves. To those who have neither public nor private affections, the excitements of life are much curtailed, and in any case dwindle in value as the time approaches when all selfish interests must be terminated by death: while those who leave after them objects of personal affection, and especially those who have also

¹¹⁰ Novalis is the pseudonym of Georg Philipp Fredrich Freiherr von Hardenberg (1772 - 1801), a poet and writer associated with the early Romantic movement in Germany.

cultivated a fellow-feeling with the collective interests of mankind, retain as lively an interest in life on the eve of death as in the vigor of youth and health. Next to selfishness, the principal cause which makes life unsatisfactory, is want of mental cultivation. A cultivated mind—I do not mean that of a philosopher, but any mind to which the fountains of knowledge have been opened, and which has been taught, in any tolerable degree, to exercise its faculties—finds sources of inexhaustible interest in all that surrounds it; in the objects of nature, the achievements of art, the imaginations of poetry, the incidents of history, the ways of mankind past and present, and their prospects in the future. It is possible, indeed, to become indifferent to all this, and that too without having exhausted a thousandth part of it; but only when one has had from the beginning no moral or human interest in these things, and has sought in them only the gratification of curiosity.

Now there is absolutely no reason in the nature of things why an amount of mental culture sufficient to give an intelligent interest in these objects of contemplation, should not be the inheritance of every one born in a civilized country. As little is there an inherent necessity that any human being should be a selfish egotist, devoid of every feeling or care but those which center in his own miserable individuality. Something far superior to this is sufficiently common even now, to give ample earnest of what the human species may be made. Genuine private affections, and a sincere interest in the public good, are possible, though in unequal degrees, to every rightly brought-up human being. In a world in which there is so much to interest, so much to enjoy, and so much also to correct and improve, every one who has this moderate amount of moral and intellectual requisites is capable of an existence which may be called enviable; and unless such a person, through bad laws, or subjection to the will of others, is denied the liberty to use the sources of happiness within his reach, he will not fail to find this enviable existence, if he escape the positive evils of life, the great sources of physical and mental suffering—such as indigence, disease, and the unkindness, worthlessness, or premature loss of objects of affection. The main stress of the problem lies, therefore, in the contest with these calamities, from which it is a rare good fortune entirely to escape; which, as things now are, cannot be obviated, and often cannot be in any material degree mitigated. Yet no one whose opinion deserves a moment's consideration can doubt that most of the great positive evils of the world are in themselves removable, and will, if human affairs continue to improve, be in the end reduced within narrow limits. Poverty, in any sense implying suffering, may be completely extinguished by the wisdom of society, combined with the good sense and providence of individuals. Even that most intractable of enemies, disease, may be indefinitely reduced in dimensions by good physical and moral education, and proper control of noxious influences; while the progress of science holds out a promise for the future of still more direct conquests over this detestable foe. And every advance in that direction relieves us from some, not only of the chances which cut short our own lives, but, what concerns us still more, which deprive us of those in whom our happiness is wrapped up. As for vicissitudes of fortune, and other disappointments connected with worldly circumstances, these are principally the effect either of gross imprudence, of ill-regulated desires, or of bad or imperfect social institutions.

All the grand sources, in short, of human suffering are in a great degree, many of them almost entirely, conquerable by human care and effort; and though their removal is grievously slow—though a long succession of generations will perish in the breach before

the conquest is completed, and this world becomes all that, if will and knowledge were not wanting, it might easily be made—yet every mind sufficiently intelligent and generous to bear a part, however small and inconspicuous, in the endeavor, will draw a noble enjoyment from the contest itself, which he would not for any bribe in the form of selfish indulgence consent to be without.

And this leads to the true estimation of what is said by the objectors concerning the possibility, and the obligation, of learning to do without happiness. Unquestionably it is possible to do without happiness; it is done involuntarily by nineteen-twentieths of mankind, even in those parts of our present world which are least deep in barbarism; and it often has to be done voluntarily by the hero or the martyr, for the sake of something which he prizes more than his individual happiness. But this something, what is it, unless the happiness of others, or some of the requisites of happiness? It is noble to be capable of resigning entirely one's own portion of happiness, or chances of it: but, after all, this self-sacrifice must be for some *end*; it is not its own end; and if we are told that its end is not happiness, but virtue, which is better than happiness, I ask, would the sacrifice be made if the hero or martyr did not believe that it would earn for others immunity from similar sacrifices? Would it be made, if he thought that his renunciation of happiness for himself would produce no fruit for any of his fellow creatures, but to make their lot like his, and place them also in the condition of persons who have renounced happiness? All honor to those who can abnegate for themselves the personal enjoyment of life, when by such renunciation they contribute worthily to increase the amount of happiness in the world; but he who does it, or professes to do it, for any other purpose, is no more deserving of admiration than the ascetic mounted on his pillar. He may be an inspiring proof of what men *can* do, but assuredly not an example of what they *should*.

Though it is only in a very imperfect state of the world's arrangements that any one can best serve the happiness of others by the absolute sacrifice of his own, yet so long as the world is in that imperfect state, I fully acknowledge that the readiness to make such a sacrifice is *the highest virtue which can be found in man*. I will add, that in this condition of the world, paradoxical as the assertion may be, the conscious ability to do without happiness gives the best prospect of realizing such happiness as is attainable. For nothing except that consciousness can raise a person above the chances of life, by making him feel that, let fate and fortune do their worst, they have not power to subdue him: which, once felt, frees him from excess of anxiety concerning the evils of life, and enables him, like many a Stoic in the worst times of the Roman Empire, to cultivate in tranquility the sources of satisfaction accessible to him, without concerning himself about the uncertainty of their duration, any more than about their inevitable end.

Meanwhile, let utilitarians never cease to claim the morality of self-devotion as a possession which belongs by as good a right to them, as either to the Stoic or to the Transcendentalist. The utilitarian morality does recognize in human beings the power of sacrificing their own greatest good for the good of others. It only refuses to admit that the sacrifice *is itself a good*. *A sacrifice which does not increase, or tend to increase, the sum total of happiness, it considers as wasted*. The only self-renunciation which it applauds, is devotion to the happiness, or to some of the means of happiness, of others; either of mankind

collectively, or of individuals within the limits imposed by the collective interests of mankind.

I must again repeat, what the assailants of Utilitarianism seldom have the justice to acknowledge, that the happiness which forms the utilitarian standard of what is right in conduct, is not the agent's own happiness, *but that of all concerned*. As between his own happiness and that of others, Utilitarianism requires him to be as strictly impartial as a disinterested and benevolent spectator. In the golden rule of Jesus of Nazareth, we read the complete spirit of the ethics of utility. To do as one would be done by, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, constitute the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality. As the means of making the nearest approach to this ideal, utility would enjoin, first, that laws and social arrangements should place the happiness, or (as speaking practically it may be called) the interest, of every individual, as nearly as possible in harmony with the interest of the whole; and secondly, that education and opinion, which have so vast a power over human character, should so use that power as to establish in the mind of every individual an indissoluble association between his own happiness and the good of the whole; especially between his own happiness and the practice of such modes of conduct, negative and positive, as regard for the universal happiness prescribes: so that not only he may be unable to conceive the possibility of happiness to himself, consistently with conduct opposed to the general good, but also that a direct impulse to promote the general good may be in every individual one of the habitual motives of action, and the sentiments connected therewith may fill a large and prominent place in every human being's sentient existence....

The objectors to Utilitarianism cannot always be charged with representing it in a discreditable light. On the contrary, those among them who entertain anything like a just idea of its disinterested character, sometimes find fault with its standard as being too high for humanity. They say it is exacting too much to require that people shall always act from the inducement of promoting the general interests of society. But *this is to mistake the very meaning of a standard of morals, and to confound the rule of action with the motive of it*. It is the business of ethics to tell us what are our duties, or by what test we may know them; but no system of ethics requires that the sole motive of all we do shall be a feeling of duty; on the contrary, ninety-nine hundredths of all our actions are done from other motives, and rightly so done, if the rule of duty does not condemn them. It is the more unjust to Utilitarianism that this particular misapprehension should be made a ground of objection to it, inasmuch as utilitarian moralists have gone beyond almost all others in affirming that the *motive has nothing to do with the morality of the action*, though much with the worth of the agent. He who saves a fellow creature from drowning does what is morally right, whether his motive be duty, or the hope of being paid for his trouble: he who betrays the friend that trusts him, is guilty of a crime, even if his object be to serve another friend to whom he is under greater obligations.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ [Mill's original footnote] An opponent, whose intellectual and moral fairness it is a pleasure to acknowledge (the Rev. J. Llewellyn Davis), has objected to this passage, saying, "Surely the rightness or wrongness of saving a man from drowning does depend very much upon the motive with which it is done. Suppose that a tyrant, when his enemy jumped into the sea to escape from him, saved him from drowning simply in order that he might inflict upon him more exquisite tortures, would it tend to clearness to speak of that rescue as 'a morally right action?' Or suppose again, according to one of the stock illustrations of ethical inquiries, that a man betrayed a trust received from a friend, because the discharge of it would fatally injure that friend himself or

But to speak only of actions done from the motive of duty, and in direct obedience to principle: it is a misapprehension of the utilitarian mode of thought, to conceive it as implying that people should fix their minds upon so wide a generality as the world, or society at large. The great majority of good actions are intended, not for the benefit of the world, but for that of individuals, of which the good of the world is made up; and the thoughts of the most virtuous man need not on these occasions travel beyond the particular persons concerned, except so far as is necessary to assure himself that in benefiting them he is not violating the rights—that is, the legitimate and authorized expectations—of any one else. The multiplication of happiness is, according to the utilitarian ethics, the object of virtue: the occasions on which any person (except one in a thousand) has it in his power to do this on an extended scale, in other words, to be a public benefactor, are but exceptional; and on these occasions alone is he called on to consider public utility; in every other case, private utility, the interest or happiness of some few persons, is all he has to attend to. Those alone the influence of whose actions extends to society in general, need concern themselves habitually about so large an object. In the case of abstinences indeed—of things which people forbear to do, from moral considerations, though the consequences in the particular case might be beneficial—it would be unworthy of an intelligent agent not to be consciously aware that the action is of a class which, if practiced generally, would be generally injurious, and that this is the ground of the obligation to abstain from it. The amount of regard for the public interest implied in this recognition, is no greater than is demanded by every system of morals; for they all enjoin to abstain from whatever is manifestly pernicious to society.

The same considerations dispose of another reproach against the doctrine of utility, founded on a still grosser misconception of the purpose of a standard of morality, and of the very meaning of the words right and wrong. It is often affirmed that *Utilitarianism renders men cold and unsympathetic*; that it chills their moral feelings towards individuals; that it makes them regard only the dry and hard consideration of the consequences of actions, not taking into their moral estimate the qualities from which those actions emanate. If the assertion means that they do not allow their judgment respecting the rightness or wrongness of an action to be influenced by their opinion of the qualities of the person who does it, this is a complaint not against Utilitarianism, but *against having any standard of morality at all*; for certainly no known ethical standard decides an action to be good or bad because it is done by

some one belonging to him, would Utilitarianism compel one to call the betrayal 'a crime' as much as if it had been done from the meanest motive?"

I submit, that he who saves another from drowning in order to kill him by torture afterwards, does not differ only in motive from him who does the same thing from duty or benevolence; the act itself is different. The rescue of the man is, in the case supposed, only the necessary first step of an act far more atrocious than leaving him to drown would have been. Had Mr. Davis said, "The rightness or wrongness of saving a man from drowning does depend very much"—not upon the motive, but—"upon the *intention*" no utilitarian would have differed from him. Mr. Davis, by an oversight too common not to be quite venial, has in this case confounded the very different ideas of Motive and Intention. There is no point which utilitarian thinkers (and Bentham pre-eminently) have taken more pains to illustrate than this. The morality of the action depends entirely upon the intention—that is, upon what the agent *wills to do*. But the motive, that is, the feeling which makes him will so to do, when it makes no difference in the act, makes none in the morality: though it makes a great difference in our moral estimation of the agent, especially if it indicates a good or a bad habitual *disposition*—a bent of character from which useful, or from which hurtful actions are likely to arise.

a good or a bad man, still less because done by an amiable, a brave, or a benevolent man or the contrary. These considerations are relevant, not to the estimation of actions, but of persons; and there is nothing in the utilitarian theory inconsistent with the fact that there are other things which interest us in persons besides the rightness and wrongness of their actions. The Stoics, indeed, with the paradoxical misuse of language which was part of their system, and by which they strove to raise themselves above all concern about anything but virtue, were fond of saying that he who has that has everything; that he, and only he, is rich, is beautiful, is a king. But no claim of this description is made for the virtuous man by the utilitarian doctrine. Utilitarians are quite aware that there are other desirable possessions and qualities besides virtue, and are perfectly willing to allow to all of them their full worth. They are also aware that a right action does not necessarily indicate a virtuous character, and that actions which are blamable often proceed from qualities entitled to praise. When this is apparent in any particular case, it modifies their estimation, not certainly of the act, but of the agent. I grant that they are, notwithstanding, of opinion, that in the long run the best proof of a good character is good actions; and resolutely refuse to consider any mental disposition as good, of which the predominant tendency is to produce bad conduct. This makes them unpopular with many people; but it is an unpopularity which they must share with every one who regards the distinction between right and wrong in a serious light; and the reproach is not one which a conscientious utilitarian need be anxious to repel...



It may not be superfluous to notice a few more of the common misapprehensions of utilitarian ethics, even those which are so obvious and gross that it might appear impossible for any person of candor and intelligence to fall into them: since persons, even of considerable mental endowments, often give themselves so little trouble to understand the bearings of any opinion against which they entertain a prejudice, and men are in general so little conscious of this voluntary ignorance as a defect, that the vulgarest misunderstandings of ethical doctrines are continually met with in the deliberate writings of persons of the greatest pretensions both to high principle and to philosophy. We not uncommonly hear the doctrine of utility inveighed against as a *godless* doctrine. If it be necessary to say anything at all against so mere an assumption, we may say that the question depends upon what idea we have formed of the moral character of the Deity. If it be a true belief that God desires, above all things, the happiness of his creatures, and that this was his purpose in their creation, utility is not only not a godless doctrine, but more profoundly religious than any other. If it be meant that Utilitarianism does not recognize the revealed will of God as the supreme law of morals, I answer, that an utilitarian who believes in the perfect goodness and wisdom of God, necessarily believes that whatever God has thought fit to reveal on the subject of morals, must fulfill the requirements of utility in a supreme degree. But others besides utilitarians have been of opinion that the Christian revelation was intended, and is fitted, to inform the hearts and minds of mankind with a spirit which should enable them to find for themselves what is right, and incline them to do it when found, rather than to tell them, except in a very general way, what it is: and that we need a doctrine of ethics, carefully followed out, to *interpret* to us the will of God. Whether this opinion is correct or not, it is superfluous here to discuss; since whatever aid religion, either natural or revealed, can afford to ethical investigation, is as open to the utilitarian moralist as to any other. He can use it as the testimony of God to the usefulness or hurtfulness of any given course of action, by as

good a right as others can use it for the indication of a transcendental law, having no connection with usefulness or with happiness.

Again, Utility is often summarily stigmatized as an immoral doctrine by giving it the name of Expediency, and taking advantage of the popular use of that term to contrast it with Principle. But the Expedient, in the sense in which it is opposed to the Right, generally means that which is expedient for the particular *interest of the agent himself*: as when a minister sacrifices the interest of his country to keep himself in place. When it means anything better than this, it means that which is expedient for some immediate object, some temporary purpose, but which violates a rule whose observance is expedient in a much higher degree. The Expedient, in this sense, instead of being the same thing with the useful, is a branch of the hurtful. Thus, it would often be expedient, for the purpose of getting over some momentary embarrassment, or attaining some object immediately useful to ourselves or others, to tell a lie. But inasmuch as the cultivation in ourselves of a sensitive feeling on the subject of veracity, is one of the most useful, and the enfeeblement of that feeling one of the most hurtful, things to which our conduct can be instrumental; and inasmuch as any, even unintentional, deviation from truth, does that much towards weakening the trustworthiness of human assertion, which is not only the principal support of all present social well-being, but the insufficiency of which does more than any one thing that can be named to keep back civilization, virtue, everything on which human happiness on the largest scale depends; we feel that the violation, for a present advantage, of a rule of such transcendent expediency, is not expedient, and that he who, for the sake of a convenience to himself or to some other individual, does what depends on him to deprive mankind of the good, and inflict upon them the evil, involved in the greater or less reliance which they can place in each other's word, acts the part of one of their worst enemies. Yet that even this rule, sacred as it is, admits of possible exceptions, is acknowledged by all moralists; the chief of which is when the withholding of some fact (as of information from a male-factor, or of bad news from a person dangerously ill) would preserve some one (especially a person other than oneself) from great and unmerited evil, and when the withholding can only be effected by denial. But in order that the exception may not extend itself beyond the need, and may have the least possible effect in weakening reliance on veracity, it ought to be recognized, and, if possible, its limits defined; and if the principle of utility is good for anything, it must be good for weighing these conflicting utilities against one another, and marking out the region within which one or the other preponderates.

Again, defenders of utility often find themselves called upon to reply to such objections as this—that there is not time, previous to action, for calculating and weighing the effects of any line of conduct on the general happiness. This is exactly as if any one were to say that it is impossible to guide our conduct by Christianity, because there is not time, on every occasion on which anything has to be done, to read through the Old and New Testaments. The answer to the objection is, that there has been ample time, namely, the whole past duration of the human species. During all that time mankind have been learning by experience the tendencies of actions; on which experience all the prudence, as well as all the morality of life, is dependent. People talk as if the commencement of this course of experience had hitherto been put off, and as if, at the moment when some man feels tempted to meddle with the property or life of another, he had to begin considering for the first time

whether murder and theft are injurious to human happiness. Even then I do not think that he would find the question very puzzling; but, at all events, the matter is now done to his hand.

It is truly a whimsical supposition, that if mankind were agreed in considering utility to be the test of morality, they would remain without any agreement as to what is useful, and would take no measures for having their notions on the subject taught to the young, and enforced by law and opinion. There is no difficulty in proving any ethical standard whatever to work ill, if we suppose universal idiocy to be conjoined with it, but on any hypothesis short of that, mankind must by this time have acquired positive beliefs as to the effects of some actions on their happiness; and the beliefs which have thus come down are the rules of morality for the multitude, and for the philosopher until he has succeeded in finding better. That philosophers might easily do this, even now, on many subjects; that the received code of ethics is by no means of divine right; and that mankind have still much to learn as to the effects of actions on the general happiness, I admit, or rather, earnestly maintain. The corollaries from the principle of utility, like the precepts of every practical art, admit of indefinite improvement, and, in a progressive state of the human mind, their improvement is perpetually going on.

But to consider the rules of morality as improvable, is one thing; to pass over the intermediate generalizations entirely, and endeavor to test each individual action directly by the first principle, is another. It is a strange notion that the acknowledgment of a first principle is inconsistent with the admission of secondary ones. To inform a traveller respecting the place of his ultimate destination, is not to forbid the use of landmarks and direction-posts on the way. The proposition that happiness is the end and aim of morality, does not mean that no road ought to be laid down to that goal, or that persons going thither should not be advised to take one direction rather than another. Men really ought to leave off talking a kind of nonsense on this subject, which they would neither talk nor listen to on other matters of practical concernment. Nobody argues that the art of navigation is not founded on astronomy, because sailors cannot wait to calculate the Nautical Almanac. Being rational creatures, they go to sea with it ready calculated; and all rational creatures go out upon the sea of life with their minds made up on the common questions of right and wrong, as well as on many of the far more difficult questions of wise and foolish. And this, as long as foresight is a human quality, it is to be presumed they will continue to do. Whatever we adopt as the fundamental principle of morality, we require subordinate principles to apply it by: the impossibility of doing without them, being common to all systems, can afford no argument against any one in particular: but gravely to argue as if no such secondary principles could be had, and as if mankind had remained till now, and always must remain, without drawing any general conclusions from the experience of human life, is as high a pitch, I think, as absurdity has ever reached in philosophical controversy.

The remainder of the stock arguments against Utilitarianism mostly consist in laying to its charge the common infirmities of human nature, and the general difficulties which embarrass conscientious persons in shaping their course through life. We are told that an utilitarian will be apt to make his own particular case an exception to moral rules, and, when under temptation, will see an utility in the breach of a rule, greater than he will see in its observance. But is utility the only creed which is able to furnish us with excuses for evil

doing, and means of cheating our own conscience? They are afforded in abundance by all doctrines which recognize as a fact in morals the existence of conflicting considerations; which all doctrines do, that have been believed by sane persons. It is not the fault of any creed, but of the complicated nature of human affairs, that rules of conduct cannot be so framed as to require no exceptions, and that hardly any kind of action can safely be laid down as either always obligatory or always condemnable. There is no ethical creed which does not temper the rigidity of its laws, by giving a certain latitude, under the moral responsibility of the agent, for accommodation to peculiarities of circumstances; and under every creed, at the opening thus made, self-deception and dishonest casuistry get in. There exists no moral system under which there do not arise unequivocal cases of conflicting obligation. These are the real difficulties, the knotty points both in the theory of ethics, and in the conscientious guidance of personal conduct. They are overcome practically with greater or with less success according to the intellect and virtue of the individual; but it can hardly be pretended that any one will be the less qualified for dealing with them, from possessing an ultimate standard to which conflicting rights and duties can be referred. If utility is the ultimate source of moral obligations, utility may be invoked to decide between them when their demands are incompatible. Though the application of the standard may be difficult, it is better than none at all: while in other systems, the moral laws all claiming independent authority, there is no common umpire entitled to interfere between them; their claims to precedence one over another rest on little better than sophistry, and unless determined, as they generally are, by the unacknowledged influence of considerations of utility, afford a free scope for the action of personal desires and partialities. We must remember that only in these cases of conflict between secondary principles is it requisite that first principles should be appealed to. There is no case of moral obligation in which some secondary principle is not involved; and if only one, there can seldom be any real doubt which one it is, in the mind of any person by whom the principle itself is recognized.



FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE METAPHYSICS OF MORALS (1785)

by: **IMMANUEL KANT (1724-1804)**^[SEP]

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SECTION I

TRANSITION FROM THE COMMON RATIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF MORALITY TO THE PHILOSOPHICAL

*Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good, without qualification, except a **good will**.* Intelligence, wit, judgment, and the other talents of the mind, however they may be named, or courage, resolution, perseverance, as qualities of temperament, are undoubtedly good and desirable in many respects; but these gifts of nature may also become extremely bad and mischievous if the will which is to make use of them, and which, therefore, constitutes what is called character, is not good. It is the same with the gifts of fortune. Power, riches, honor, even health, and the general well-being and contentment with one's condition which is called *happiness*, inspire pride, and often presumption, if there is not a good will to correct the influence of these on the mind, and with this also to rectify the whole principle of acting and adapt it to its end. The sight of a being who is not adorned with a single feature of a pure and good will, enjoying unbroken prosperity, can never give pleasure to an impartial rational spectator. Thus a good will appears to constitute the indispensable condition even of being worthy of happiness.

There are even some qualities which are of service to this good will itself and may facilitate its action, yet which have no intrinsic unconditional value, but always presuppose a good will, and this qualifies the esteem that we justly have for them and does not permit us to regard them as absolutely good. Moderation in the affections and passions, self-control, and

¹¹² This text is taken from Project Gutenberg's Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals, by Immanuel Kant, www.gutenberg.org.

I have also changed UK spellings to US spellings where appropriate, as well as made clarifications in translation noted with brackets and added explanatory footnotes and emphases in italics. This text is intended for academic or personal use and may not be sold or used for profit.

calm deliberation are not only good in many respects, but even seem to constitute part of the intrinsic worth of the person; but they are far from deserving to be called good without qualification, although they have been so unconditionally praised by the ancients. For without the principles of a good will, they may become extremely bad, and the coolness of a villain not only makes him far more dangerous, but also directly makes him more abominable in our eyes than he would have been without it.

A good will is good not because of what it performs or effects, not by its aptness for the attainment of some proposed end, but simply by virtue of the volition; that is, it is good in itself, and considered by itself is to be esteemed much higher than all that can be brought about by it in favor of any inclination, nay even of the sum total of all inclinations. Even if it should happen that, owing to special disfavor of fortune, or the niggardly provision of a step-motherly nature, this will should wholly lack power to accomplish its purpose, if with its greatest efforts it should yet achieve nothing, and there should remain only the good will (not, to be sure, a mere wish, but the summoning of all means in our power), then, like a jewel, it would still shine by its own light, as a thing which has its whole value in itself. Its usefulness or fruitfulness can neither add nor take away anything from this value. It would be, as it were, only the setting to enable us to handle it the more conveniently in common commerce, or to attract to it the attention of those who are not yet connoisseurs, but not to recommend it to true connoisseurs, or to determine its value.

There is, however, something so strange in this idea of the absolute value of the mere will, in which no account is taken of its utility, that notwithstanding the thorough assent of even common reason to the idea, yet a suspicion must arise that it may perhaps really be the product of mere high-flown fancy, and that we may have misunderstood the purpose of nature in assigning reason as the governor of our will. Therefore, we will examine this idea from this point of view.

Reason is the Guide of the Will

In the physical constitution of an organized being, that is, a being adapted suitably to the purposes of life, we assume it as a fundamental principle that no organ for any purpose will be found but what is also the fittest and best adapted for that purpose. Now in a being which has reason and a will, if the proper object of nature were its conservation, its welfare, in a word, its happiness, then nature would have hit upon a very bad arrangement in selecting the reason of the creature to carry out this purpose. For all the actions which the creature has to perform with a view to this purpose, and the whole rule of its conduct, would be far more surely prescribed to it by instinct, and that end would have been attained thereby much more certainly than it ever can be by reason. Should reason have been communicated to this favored creature over and above, it must only have served it to contemplate the happy constitution of its nature, to admire it, to congratulate itself thereon, and to feel thankful for it to the beneficent cause, but not that it should subject its desires to that weak and delusive guidance and meddle bunglingly with the purpose of nature. In a word, nature would have taken care that reason should not break forth into practical exercise, nor have the presumption, with its weak insight, to think out for itself the plan of happiness, and of the means of attaining it. Nature would not only have taken on herself the choice of the ends, but

also of the means, and with wise foresight would have entrusted both to instinct.

And, in fact, we find that the more a cultivated reason applies itself with deliberate purpose to the enjoyment of life and happiness, so much the more does the man fail of true satisfaction. And from this circumstance there arises in many, if they are candid enough to confess it, a certain degree of misology, that is, hatred of reason, especially in the case of those who are most experienced in the use of it, because after calculating all the advantages they derive, I do not say from the invention of all the arts of common luxury, but even from the sciences (which seem to them to be after all only a luxury of the understanding), they find that they have, in fact, only brought more trouble on their shoulders, rather than gained in happiness; and they end by envying, rather than despising, the more common stamp of men who keep closer to the guidance of mere instinct and do not allow their reason much influence on their conduct. And this we must admit, that the judgment of those who would very much lower the lofty eulogies of the advantages which reason gives us in regard to the happiness and satisfaction of life, or who would even reduce them below zero, is by no means morose or ungrateful to the goodness with which the world is governed, but that there lies at the root of these judgments the idea that our existence has a different and far nobler end, for which, and not for happiness, reason is properly intended, and which must, therefore, be regarded as the supreme condition to which the private ends of man must, for the most part, be postponed.

For as reason is not competent to guide the will with certainty in regard to its objects and the satisfaction of all our wants (which it to some extent even multiplies), this being an end to which an implanted instinct would have led with much greater certainty; and since, nevertheless, reason is imparted to us as a practical faculty, i.e., as one which is to have influence on the will, therefore, admitting that nature generally in the distribution of her capacities has adapted the means to the end, its true destination must be to produce a will, not merely good as a means to something else, but good in itself, for which reason was absolutely necessary. This will then, though not indeed the sole and complete good, must be the supreme good and the condition of every other, even of the desire of happiness....

The First Propositions of Morality

*We have then to develop the notion of a will which deserves to be highly esteemed for itself and is good without a view to anything further, a notion which exists already in the sound natural understanding, requiring rather to be cleared up than to be taught, and which in estimating the value of our actions always takes the first place and constitutes the condition of all the rest. In order to do this, we will take the notion of **duty**, which includes that of a good will, although implying certain subjective restrictions and hindrances. These, however, far from concealing it, or rendering it unrecognizable, rather bring it out by contrast and make it shine forth so much the brighter....*

On the other hand, it is a duty to maintain one's life; and, in addition, everyone has also a direct inclination to do so. But on this account the anxious care which most men take for it has no intrinsic worth, and their maxim has no moral import. They preserve their life as duty requires, no doubt, but not because duty requires. On the other hand, if adversity and

hopeless sorrow have completely taken away the relish for life; if the unfortunate one, strong in mind, indignant at his fate rather than desponding or dejected, wishes for death, and yet preserves his life without loving it—not from inclination or fear, but from duty—*then* his maxim has a moral worth.

To be beneficent when we can is a duty; and besides this, there are many minds so sympathetically constituted that, without any other motive of vanity or self-interest, they find a pleasure in spreading joy around them and can take delight in the satisfaction of others so far as it is their own work. But I maintain that in such a case an action of this kind, however proper, however amiable it may be, has nevertheless no true moral worth, but is on a level with other inclinations, e.g., the inclination to honor, which, if it is happily directed to that which is in fact of public utility and accordant with duty and consequently honorable, deserves praise and encouragement, but not esteem. For the maxim lacks the moral import, namely, that such actions be done from duty, not from inclination. Put the case that the mind of that philanthropist were clouded by sorrow of his own, extinguishing all sympathy with the lot of others, and that, while he still has the power to benefit others in distress, he is not touched by their trouble because he is absorbed with his own; and now suppose that he tears himself out of this dead insensibility, and performs the action without any inclination to it, but simply from duty, then first has his action its genuine moral worth. Further still; if nature has put little sympathy in the heart of this or that man; if he, supposed to be an upright man, is by temperament cold and indifferent to the sufferings of others, perhaps because in respect of his own he is provided with the special gift of patience and fortitude and supposes, or even requires, that others should have the same—and such a man would certainly not be the meanest product of nature—but if nature had not specially framed him for a philanthropist, would he not still find in himself a source from whence to give himself a far higher worth than that of a good-natured temperament could be? Unquestionably. *It is just in this that the moral worth of the character is brought out which is incomparably the highest of all, namely, that he is beneficent, not from inclination, but from duty.*

To secure one's own happiness is a duty, at least indirectly; for discontent with one's condition, under a pressure of many anxieties and amidst unsatisfied wants, might easily become a great temptation to transgression of duty. But here again, without looking to duty, all men have already the strongest and most intimate inclination to happiness, because it is just in this idea that all inclinations are combined in one total. But the precept of happiness is often of such a sort that it greatly interferes with some inclinations, and yet a man cannot form any definite and certain conception of the sum of satisfaction of all of them which is called happiness. It is not then to be wondered at that a single inclination, definite both as to what it promises and as to the time within which it can be gratified, is often able to overcome such a fluctuating idea, and that a gouty patient, for instance, can choose to enjoy what he likes, and to suffer what he may, since, according to his calculation, on this occasion at least, he has not sacrificed the enjoyment of the present moment to a possibly mistaken expectation of a happiness which is supposed to be found in health. But even in this case, if the general desire for happiness did not influence his will, and supposing that in his particular case health was not a necessary element in this calculation, there yet remains in this, as in all other cases, this law, namely, that *he should promote his happiness not from inclination but from duty, and by this would his conduct first acquire true moral worth* [this is the **first proposition of**

morality].

It is in this manner, undoubtedly, that we are to understand those passages of Scripture also in which we are commanded to love our neighbor, even our enemy. For love, as an affection, cannot be commanded, but beneficence for duty's sake may; even though we are not impelled to it by any inclination—nay, are even repelled by a natural and unconquerable aversion. This is practical love and not pathological—a love which is seated in the will, and not in the propensions of sense—in principles of action and not of tender sympathy; and it is this love alone which can be commanded.

The Second Propositions of Morality

The second proposition is: *That an action done from duty derives its moral worth, not from the purpose which is to be attained by it, but from the maxim by which it is determined, and therefore does not depend on the realization of the object of the action, but merely on the principle of volition by which the action has taken place, without regard to any object of desire.* It is clear from what precedes that the purposes which we may have in view in our actions, or their effects regarded as ends and springs of the will, cannot give to actions any unconditional or moral worth. In what, then, can their worth lie, if it is not to consist in the will and in reference to its expected effect? It cannot lie anywhere but in the principle of the will without regard to the ends which can be attained by the action. For the will stands between its *a priori*¹¹³ principle, which is formal, and its *a posteriori*¹¹⁴ spring, which is material, as between two roads, and as it must be determined by something, it that it must be determined by the formal principle of volition when an action is done from duty, in which case every material principle has been withdrawn from it.

The Third Propositions of Morality

The third proposition, which is a consequence of the two preceding, I would express thus: *'Duty' is the necessity of acting from respect for the law. I may have inclination for an object as the effect of my proposed action, but I cannot have respect for it, just for this reason, that it is an effect and not an energy of will.* Similarly I cannot have respect for inclination, whether my own or another's; I can at most, if my own, approve it; if another's, sometimes even love it; i.e., look on it as favorable to my own interest. It is only what is connected with my will as a principle, by no means as an effect—what does not subserve my inclination, but overpowers it, or at least in case of choice excludes it from its calculation—in other words, simply the law of itself, which can be an object of respect, and hence a command. Now an action done from duty must wholly exclude the influence of inclination and with it every object of the will, so that nothing remains which can determine the will except objectively the law, and subjectively pure respect for this practical law, and consequently the maxim that I should follow this law even to the thwarting of all my inclinations.

¹¹³ Latin phrase meaning, without experience. Unlike a the idea of a color, or even color itself, a taste, a smell and so on, there are some ideas that are dependent on meaning or relation, e.g., numbers, or equality. *A priori* refers to the latter type of idea.

¹¹⁴ Latin phrase meaning, after, with, or dependent on experience. The opposite of *a priori*.

Thus, the moral worth of an action *does not lie in the effect expected from it*, nor in any principle of action which requires to borrow its motive from this expected effect. For all these effects—agreeableness of one's condition and even the promotion of the happiness of others—could have been also brought about by other causes, so that for this there would have been no need of the will of a rational being; whereas it is in this alone that the supreme and unconditional good can be found. The pre-eminent good which we call moral can therefore consist in nothing else than the conception of law in itself, which certainly is only possible in a rational being, in so far as this conception, and not the expected effect, determines the will. This is a good which is already present in the person who acts accordingly, and we have not to wait for it to appear first in the result.

The Ultimate Principle of Morality: *The Categorical Imperative*

But what sort of law can that be, the conception of which must determine the will, even without paying any regard to the effect expected from it, in order that this will may be called good absolutely and without qualification? As I have deprived the will of every impulse which could arise to it from obedience to any law, there remains nothing but the universal conformity of its actions to law in general, which alone is to serve the will as a principle, i.e., *I am never to act otherwise than so that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law*. Here, now, it is the simple conformity to law in general, without assuming any particular law applicable to certain actions, that serves the will as its principle and must so serve it, if duty is not to be a vain delusion and a chimerical notion. The common reason of men in its practical judgments perfectly coincides with this and always has in view the principle here suggested. Let the question be, for example: May I when in distress make a promise with the intention not to keep it? I readily distinguish here between the two significations which the question may have: Whether it is prudent, or whether it is right, to make a false promise? The former may undoubtedly of be the case. I see clearly indeed that it is not enough to extricate myself from a present difficulty by means of this subterfuge, but it must be well considered whether there may not hereafter spring from this lie much greater inconvenience than that from which I now free myself, and as, with all my supposed cunning, the consequences cannot be so easily foreseen but that credit once lost may be much more injurious to me than any mischief which I seek to avoid at present, it should be considered whether it would not be more prudent to act herein according to a universal maxim and to make it a habit to promise nothing except with the intention of keeping it. But it is soon clear to me that such a maxim will still only be based on the fear of consequences. Now it is a wholly different thing to be truthful from duty and to be so from apprehension of injurious consequences. In the first case, the very notion of the action already implies a law for me; in the second case, I must first look about elsewhere to see what results may be combined with it which would affect myself. For to deviate from the principle of duty is beyond all doubt wicked; but to be unfaithful to my maxim of prudence may often be very advantageous to me, although to abide by it is certainly safer. The shortest way, however, and an unerring one, to discover the answer to this question whether a lying promise is consistent with duty, is to ask myself, "Should I be content that my maxim (to extricate myself from difficulty by a false promise) should hold good as a universal law, for myself as well as for others? and should I be able to say to myself, "Every one may make a deceitful promise when he finds himself in a difficulty from which he cannot otherwise extricate himself?" Then I presently

become aware that while I can will the lie, I can by no means will that lying should be a universal law. For with such a law there would be no promises at all, since it would be in vain to allege my intention in regard to my future actions to those who would not believe this allegation, or if they over hastily did so would pay me back in my own coin. Hence my maxim, as soon as it should be made a universal law, would necessarily destroy itself....

SECTION II

THE TRANSITION FROM POPULAR MORAL PHILOSOPHY TO THE METAPHYSIC OF MORALS

Morality Derived from Reason, not Empirical Observation

If we have hitherto drawn our notion of duty from the common use of our practical reason, it is by no means to be inferred that we have treated it as an empirical notion.¹¹⁵ On the contrary, if we attend to the experience of men's conduct, we meet frequent and, as we ourselves allow, just complaints that one cannot find a single certain example of the disposition to act from pure duty. Although many things are done in conformity with what duty prescribes, it is nevertheless always doubtful whether they are done *strictly* from duty, so as to have a moral worth. Hence there have at all times been philosophers who have altogether denied that this disposition actually exists at all in human actions, and have ascribed everything to a more or less refined self-love [e.g., Ethical Egoism and Hedonism]. Not that they have on that account questioned the soundness of the conception of morality; on the contrary, they spoke with sincere regret of the frailty and corruption of human nature, which, though noble enough to take its rule an idea so worthy of respect, is yet weak to follow it and employs reason which ought to give it the law only for the purpose of providing for the interest of the inclinations, whether singly or at the best in the greatest possible harmony with one another....

When we add further that, unless we deny that the notion of morality has any truth or reference to any possible object, we must admit that its law must be valid, not merely for men but *for all rational creatures generally*, not merely under certain contingent conditions or with exceptions but with absolute necessity, then it is clear that *no experience could* enable us to infer even the possibility of such [uncontestable] laws. For with what right could we bring into unbounded respect as a universal precept for every rational nature that which perhaps holds only under the contingent conditions of humanity? Or how could laws of the determination of our will be regarded as laws of the determination of the will of rational beings generally, and for us only as such, if they were merely empirical and did not take their origin wholly *a priori* from pure but practical reason....

From what has been said, it is clear that all moral conceptions have their seat and origin completely *a priori* in the reason, and that, moreover, in the commonest reason just as truly as in that which is in the highest degree speculative; that they cannot be obtained by abstraction from any empirical, and therefore merely contingent, knowledge; that it is just

¹¹⁵ By "empirical notion" Kant means an idea derived from sensory perception—*a posteriori*.

this purity of their origin that makes them worthy to serve as our supreme practical principle, and that just in proportion as we add anything empirical, we detract from their genuine influence and from the absolute value of actions; that it is not only of the greatest necessity, in a purely speculative point of view, but is also of the greatest practical importance, to derive these notions and laws from pure reason, to present them pure and unmixed, and even to determine the compass of this practical or pure rational knowledge, i.e., to determine the whole faculty of pure practical reason; and, in doing so, we must not make its principles dependent on the particular nature of human reason, though in speculative philosophy this may be permitted, or may even at times be necessary; but since moral laws ought to hold good for *every rational creature*, we must derive them from *the general concept of a rational being*....

The Difference between Hypothetical and Categorical Imperatives

Everything in nature works according to laws. Rational beings alone have the faculty of acting according to the conception of laws—that is according to principles—i.e., have a *will*. Since the deduction of actions from principles requires *reason*, *the will is nothing but practical reason*. If reason infallibly determines the will, then the actions of such a being which are recognized as objectively necessary are subjectively necessary also, i.e., the will is a faculty to choose that only which reason independent of inclination recognizes as practically necessary, i.e., as good. But if reason of itself does not sufficiently determine the will, if the latter is subject also to subjective conditions (particular impulses) which do not always coincide with the objective conditions; in a word, if the will does not in itself completely accord with reason (which is actually the case with men), then the actions which objectively are recognized as necessary are subjectively contingent, and the determination of such a will according to objective laws is *obligation*, that is to say, the relation of the objective laws to a will that is not thoroughly good is conceived as the determination of the will of a rational being by principles of reason, but which the will from its nature does not of necessity follow.

The conception of an objective principle, in so far as it is obligatory for a will, is called a *command* (of reason), and *the formula of the command is called an imperative*.

All imperatives are expressed by the word 'ought' [or 'shall'], and thereby indicate the relation of an objective law of reason to a will, which from its subjective constitution is not necessarily determined by it (an obligation). They say that something would be good to do or to forbear, but they say it to a will which does not always do a thing because it is conceived to be good to do it. That is practically good, however, which determines the will by means of the conceptions of reason, and consequently not from subjective causes, but objectively, that is on principles which are valid for every rational being as such. It is distinguished from the pleasant, as that which influences the will only by means of sensation from merely subjective causes, valid only for the sense of this or that one, and not as a principle of reason, which holds for every one.

A perfectly good will would, therefore, be equally subject to objective laws (viz., laws of good), but could not be conceived as obliged thereby to act lawfully, because *of itself* from its

subjective constitution it can only be determined by the conception of good. Therefore, no imperatives hold for the Divine will, or in general for a holy will; ought is here out of place, because the volition is already of itself necessarily in unison with the law. Therefore, *imperatives are only formulae to express the relation of objective laws of all volition to the subjective imperfection of the will of this or that rational being, e.g., the human will.*

*All imperatives command either **hypothetically** or **categorically**.* The former represent the practical necessity of a possible action as means to something else that is willed (or at least which one might possibly will). The **categorical imperative** would be that which represented an action as necessary of itself without reference to another end, i.e., as objectively necessary.

Since every practical law represents a possible action as good and, on this account, for a subject who is practically determinable by reason, necessary, all imperatives are formulae determining an action which is necessary according to the principle of a will good in some respects. If the action is good *only as a means to something else*, then the imperative is **hypothetical**; if it is *conceived as good in itself* and consequently as being necessarily the principle of a will which of itself conforms to reason, then it is **categorical**....

Accordingly the **hypothetical imperative** only says *that the action is good for some purpose*, possible or actual. In the first case it is a problematical, in the second an [asserted] practical principle. The categorical imperative which declares an action to be objectively necessary in itself, without reference to any purpose ... is valid as a [demonstrated] (i.e., practical) principle....

The First Formulation of the Categorical Imperative: *The Universal Law*

....There is, therefore, but one **categorical imperative**, namely, this: ***Act only on that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.*** Now if all imperatives of duty can be deduced from this one imperative as from their principle, then, although it should remain undecided what is called duty is not merely a vain notion, yet at least we shall be able to show what we understand by it and what this notion means....

Four Illustrations of the Universal Law

We will now enumerate a few duties, adopting the usual division of them into duties to ourselves and to others, and into perfect and imperfect.

1. A man reduced to despair by a series of misfortunes feels wearied of life, but is still so far in possession of his reason that he can ask himself whether it would not be contrary to his duty to himself to take his own life. Now he inquires whether the maxim of his action could become a universal law of nature. His maxim is: "From self-love I adopt it as a principle to shorten my life when its longer duration is likely to bring more evil than satisfaction." It is asked then simply whether this principle founded on self-love can become a universal law of nature. Now we see at once that a system of nature of which it should be a law to destroy life

by means of the very feeling whose special nature it is to impel to the improvement of life would contradict itself and, therefore, could not exist as a system of nature; hence that maxim cannot possibly exist as a universal law of nature and, consequently, would be wholly inconsistent with the supreme principle of all duty.

2. Another finds himself forced by necessity to borrow money. He knows that he will not be able to repay it, but sees also that nothing will be lent to him unless he promises stoutly to repay it in a definite time. He desires to make this promise, but he has still so much conscience as to ask himself: "Is it not unlawful and inconsistent with duty to get out of a difficulty in this way?" Suppose however that he resolves to do so: then the maxim of his action would be expressed thus: "When I think myself in want of money, I will borrow money and promise to repay it, although I know that I never can do so." Now this principle of self-love or of one's own advantage may perhaps be consistent with my whole future welfare; but the question now is, "Is it right?" I change then the suggestion of self-love into a universal law, and state the question thus: "How would it be if my maxim were a universal law?" Then I see at once that it could never hold as a universal law of nature, but would necessarily contradict itself. For supposing it to be a universal law that everyone when he thinks himself in a difficulty should be able to promise whatever he pleases, with the purpose of not keeping his promise, the promise itself would become impossible, as well as the end that one might have in view in it, since no one would consider that anything was promised to him, but would ridicule all such statements as vain pretenses.

3. A third finds in himself a talent which with the help of some culture might make him a useful man in many respects. But he finds himself in comfortable circumstances and prefers to indulge in pleasure rather than to take pains in enlarging and improving his happy natural capacities. He asks, however, whether his maxim of neglect of his natural gifts, besides agreeing with his inclination to indulgence, agrees also with what is called duty. He sees then that a system of nature could indeed subsist with such a universal law although men (like the South Sea islanders) should let their talents rest and resolve to devote their lives merely to idleness, amusement, and propagation of their species—in a word, to enjoyment; but he cannot possibly will that this should be a universal law of nature, or be implanted in us as such by a natural instinct. For, as a rational being, he necessarily wills that his faculties be developed, since they serve him and have been given him, for all sorts of possible purposes.

4. A fourth, who is in prosperity, while he sees that others have to contend with great wretchedness and that he could help them, thinks: "What concern is it of mine? Let everyone be as happy as Heaven pleases, or as he can make himself; I will take nothing from him nor even envy him, only I do not wish to contribute anything to his welfare or to his assistance in distress!" Now no doubt if such a mode of thinking were a universal law, the human race might very well subsist and doubtless even better than in a state in which everyone talks of sympathy and good-will, or even takes care occasionally to put it into practice, but, on the other side, also cheats when he can, betrays the rights of men, or otherwise violates them. But although it is possible that a universal law of nature might exist in accordance with that maxim, it is impossible to will that such a principle should have the universal validity of a law of nature. For a will which resolved this would contradict itself, inasmuch as many cases might occur in which one would have need of the love and sympathy of others, and in which,

by such a law of nature, sprung from his own will, he would deprive himself of all hope of the aid he desires.

These are a few of the many actual duties, or at least what we regard as such, which obviously fall into two classes on the one principle that we have laid down. We must be able to will that a maxim of our action should be a universal law. This is the canon of the moral appreciation of the action generally. Some actions are of such a character that their maxim cannot without contradiction be even conceived as a universal law of nature, far from it being possible that we should will that it should be so. In others this intrinsic impossibility is not found, but still it is impossible to will that their maxim should be raised to the universality of a law of nature, since such a will would contradict itself it is easily seen that the former violate strict or rigorous (inflexible) duty; the latter only laxer (meritorious) duty. Thus it has been completely shown how all duties depend as regards the nature of the obligation (not the object of the action) on the same principle.

The Second Formulation of the Categorical Imperative: *Rational Agents as Ends-In-Themselves*

The will is conceived as a faculty of determining oneself to action in accordance with the conception of certain laws. And *such a faculty can be found only in rational beings*. Now that which serves the will as the objective ground of its self-determination is the end, and, if this is assigned by reason alone, it must hold for all rational beings. On the other hand, that which merely contains the ground of possibility of the action of which the effect is the end, this is called the means. The subjective ground of the desire is the spring, the objective ground of the volition is the motive; hence the distinction between subjective ends which rest on springs, and *objective ends which depend on motives valid for every rational being*. Practical principles are formal when they abstract from all subjective ends; they are material when they assume these, and therefore particular springs of action. The ends which a rational being proposes to himself at pleasure as effects of his actions (material ends) are all only relative, for it is only their relation to the particular desires of the subject that gives them their worth, which therefore cannot furnish principles universal and necessary for all rational beings and for every volition, that is to say practical laws. Hence all these relative ends can give rise only to hypothetical imperatives.

Supposing, however, that there were something whose existence has in itself an absolute worth, something which, being an end in itself, could be a source of definite laws; then *in this and this alone* would lie the source of a possible categorical imperative, i.e., a practical law.

Now I say: *man and generally any rational being exists as an end in himself*, not merely as a means to be arbitrarily used by this or that will, but in all his actions, whether they concern himself or other rational beings, must be always regarded at the same time as an end. All objects of the inclinations have only a conditional worth, for if the inclinations and the wants founded on them did not exist, then their object would be without value. But the inclinations, themselves being sources of want, are so far from having an absolute worth for which they should be desired that on the contrary it must be the universal wish of every rational being to be wholly free from them. Thus the worth of any object which is to be acquired by our

action is always conditional. Beings whose existence depends not on our will but on nature's, have nevertheless, if they are irrational beings, only a relative value as means, and are therefore called things; rational beings, on the contrary, are called persons, because their very nature points them out as ends in themselves, that is as something which must not be used merely as means, and so far therefore restricts freedom of action (and is an object of respect). These, therefore, are not merely subjective ends whose existence has a worth for us as an effect of our action, but objective ends....

If then there is a supreme practical principle or, in respect of the human will, a categorical imperative, it must be one which, being drawn from the conception of that which is necessarily an end for everyone because it is an end in itself, constitutes an objective principle of will, and can therefore serve as a universal practical law. The foundation of this principle is: *rational nature exists as an end in itself*. Man necessarily conceives his own existence as being so; so far then this is a subjective principle of human actions. But every other rational being regards its existence similarly, just on the same rational principle that holds for me: so that it is at the same time an objective principle, from which as a supreme practical law all laws of the will must be capable of being deduced. Accordingly the **practical imperative** will be as follows: *So act as to treat humanity, whether in [your] own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end [itself], never as means only*. We will now inquire whether this can be practically carried out.

Four Illustrations

To abide by the previous examples: **Firstly**, under the head of *necessary duty to oneself*: He who contemplates suicide should ask himself whether his action can be consistent with the idea of humanity as an end in itself. If he destroys himself in order to escape from painful circumstances, he uses a person merely as a mean to maintain a tolerable condition up to the end of life. But a man is not a thing, that is to say, something which can be used merely as means, but must in all his actions be always considered as an end in himself. I cannot, therefore, dispose in any way of a man in my own person so as to mutilate him, to damage or kill him. (It belongs to ethics proper to define this principle more precisely, so as to avoid all misunderstanding, e. g., as to the amputation of the limbs in order to preserve myself, as to exposing my life to danger with a view to preserve it, etc. This question is therefore omitted here.)

Secondly, as regards *necessary duties*, or those of strict obligation, *towards others*: He who is thinking of making a lying promise to others will see at once that he would be using another man merely as a mean, without the latter containing at the same time the end in himself. For he whom I propose by such a promise to use for my own purposes cannot possibly assent to my mode of acting towards him and, therefore, cannot himself contain the end of this action. This violation of the principle of humanity in other men is more obvious if we take in examples of attacks on the freedom and property of others. For then it is clear that he who transgresses the rights of men intends to use the person of others merely as a means, without considering that as rational beings they ought always to be esteemed also as ends, that is, as beings who must be capable of containing in themselves the end of the very same action.

Thirdly, as regards *contingent* (i.e., meritorious) *duties to oneself*: It is not enough that the action does not violate humanity in our own person as an end in itself, it must also harmonize with it. Now there are in humanity capacities of greater perfection, which belong to the end that nature has in view in regard to humanity in ourselves as the subject: to neglect these might perhaps be consistent with the maintenance of humanity as an end in itself, but not with the advancement of this end.

Fourthly, as regards *meritorious duties towards others*: The natural end which all men have is their own happiness. Now humanity might indeed subsist, although no one should contribute anything to the happiness of others, provided he did not intentionally withdraw anything from it; but after all this would only harmonize negatively not positively with humanity as an end in itself, if every one does not also endeavor, as far as in him lies, to forward the ends of others. For the ends of any subject which is an end in himself ought as far as possible to be my ends also, if that conception is to have its full effect with me.

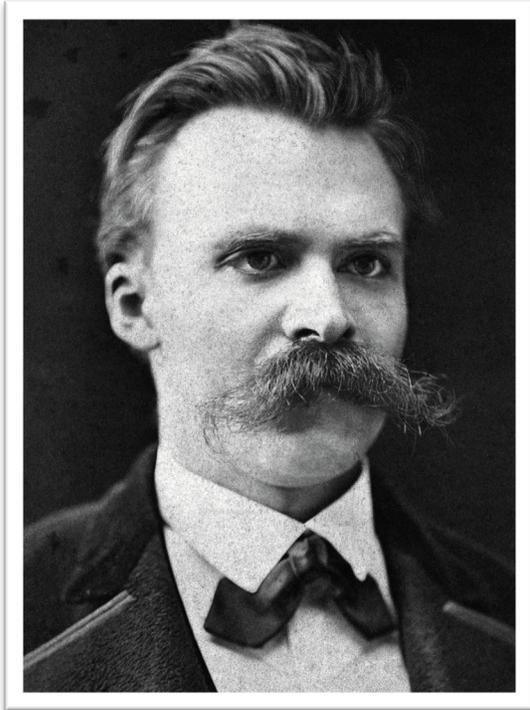
The Third Formulation of the Categorical Imperative: *The Autonomy of the Will*

This principle, that humanity and generally every rational nature is an end in itself (which is the supreme limiting condition of every man's freedom of action), is not borrowed from experience, firstly, because it is universal, applying as it does to all rational beings whatever, and experience is not capable of determining anything about them; secondly, because it does not present humanity as an end to men (subjectively), that is as an object which men do of themselves actually adopt as an end; but as an objective end, which must as a law constitute the supreme limiting condition of all our subjective ends, let them be what we will; it must therefore spring from pure reason. In fact the objective principle of all practical legislation lies (according to the first principle) in the rule and its form of universality which makes it capable of being a law (say, e. g., a law of nature); but the subjective principle is in the end; now by the second principle the subject of all ends is each rational being, inasmuch as it is an end in itself. Hence follows **the third practical principle of the will**, which is the ultimate condition of its harmony with universal practical reason, viz.,: *the idea of the will of every rational being as a universally legislative will*.

On this principle all maxims are rejected which are inconsistent with the will being itself universal legislator. Thus the will is not subject simply to the law, but so subject that it must be regarded as itself giving the law and, on this ground only, subject to the law (of which it can regard itself as the author)....

Thus the principle that every human will is a will which in all its maxims gives universal laws, provided it be otherwise justified, would be very well adapted to be the categorical imperative, in this respect, namely, that just because of the idea of universal legislation it is not based on interest, and therefore it alone among all possible imperatives can be unconditional. Or still better, converting the proposition, if there is a categorical imperative (i.e., a law for the will of every rational being), it can only command that everything be done from maxims of one's will regarded as a will which could at the same time will that it should itself give universal laws, for in that case only the practical principle and the imperative which it obeys are unconditional, since they cannot be based on any interest.

Looking back now on all previous attempts to discover the principle of morality, we need not wonder why they all failed. It was seen that man was bound to laws by duty, but it was not observed that the laws to which he is subject are only those of his own giving, though at the same time they are universal, and that he is only bound to act in conformity with his own will; a will, however, which is designed by nature to give universal laws. For when one has conceived man only as subject to a law (no matter what), then this law required some interest, either by way of attraction or constraint, since it did not originate as a law from his own will, but this will was according to a law obliged by something else to act in a certain manner. Now by this necessary consequence all the labor spent in finding a supreme principle of duty was irrevocably lost. For men never elicited duty, but only a necessity of acting from a certain interest. Whether this interest was private or otherwise, in any case the imperative must be conditional and could not by any means be capable of being a moral command. I will therefore call this the principle of *autonomy* of the will, in contrast with every other which I accordingly reckon as *heteronomy*.



THE GENEALOGY OF MORALS: A Polemic

By: Friedrich Nietzsche

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Additions, corrections by Barry F. Vaughan¹¹⁶

FIRST ESSAY: “GOOD AND EVIL,” “GOOD AND BAD.”

2.

All honor, then, to the noble spirits who would fain dominate these historians of morality. But it is certainly a pity that they lack the historical sense itself, that they

themselves are quite deserted by all the beneficent spirits of history. The whole train of their thought runs, as was always the way of old-fashioned philosophers, on thoroughly unhistorical lines: there is no doubt on this point. The crass ineptitude of their genealogy of morals is immediately apparent when the question arises of ascertaining the origin of the idea and judgment of ‘good’. “Man had originally,” so speaks their decree, “praised and called ‘good’ altruistic acts from the standpoint of those on whom they were conferred, that is, those to whom they were useful; subsequently the origin of this praise was forgotten, and altruistic acts, simply because, as a sheer matter of habit, they were praised as good, came also to be felt as good—as though they contained in themselves some intrinsic goodness.” The thing is obvious: this initial derivation contains already all the typical and idiosyncratic traits of the English psychologists—we have “utility,” “forgetting,” “habit,” and finally “error,” the whole assemblage forming the basis of a system of values, on which the higher man has up to the present prided himself as though it were a kind of privilege of man in general. This pride must be brought low, this system of values must lose its values: is that attained?

Now **the first argument** that comes ready to my hand is that the real homestead of the concept ‘good’ is sought and located in the wrong place: *the judgment ‘good’ did not originate among those to whom goodness was shown*. Much rather has it been the good themselves, that is, the aristocratic, the powerful, the high-stationed, the high-minded, who have felt that they themselves *were good*, and that their *actions were good*, that is to say of

¹¹⁶ This text is adapted from the Project Gutenberg’s *Genealogy of Morals*, by Friedrich Nietzsche, www.gutenberg.org. For the full text visit the Project Gutenberg website. This edited version is intended for academic or personal use and may not be sold or used for profit. I have changed UK spellings to US spellings where appropriate, as well as made clarifications in translation (noted with brackets).

the first order, in contradistinction to all the low, the low-minded, the vulgar, and the plebeian.¹¹⁷ It was out of this pathos of distance that they first arrogated the right to *create values* for their own profit, and to coin the names of such values: what had they to do with utility? The standpoint of utility is as alien and as inapplicable as it could possibly be, when we have to deal with so volcanic an effervescence of supreme values, creating and demarcating as they do a hierarchy within themselves: it is at this juncture that one arrives at an appreciation of the contrast to that tepid temperature, which is the presupposition on which every combination of worldly wisdom and every calculation of practical expediency is always based—and not for one occasional, not for one exceptional instance, but chronically. The pathos of nobility and distance, as I have said, the chronic and despotic *esprit de corps*¹¹⁸ and fundamental instinct of a higher dominant race coming into association with a meaner race, an “under race,” *this is the origin of the antithesis of good and bad*. (The masters’ right of giving names goes so far that it is permissible to look upon language itself as the expression of the power of the masters: they say “this is that, and that,” they seal finally every object and every event with a sound, and thereby at the same time take possession of it.)

It is because of this origin that the word ‘good’ is far from having any necessary connection with altruistic acts, in accordance with the superstitious belief of these moral philosophers. On the contrary, *it is on the occasion of the decay of aristocratic values, that the antitheses between “egoistic” and “altruistic” presses more and more heavily on the human conscience*—it is, to use my own language, *the herd instinct* which finds in this antithesis an expression in many ways. And even then it takes a considerable time for this instinct to become sufficiently dominant, for the valuation to be inextricably dependent on this antithesis (as is the case in contemporary Europe); for to-day that prejudice is predominant, which, acting even now with all the intensity of an obsession and brain disease, holds that ‘moral’, ‘altruistic’, and “*désintéressé*”¹¹⁹ are concepts of equal value.

3.

[**The second argument**], quite apart from the fact that this hypothesis as to the genesis of the value ‘good’ cannot be historically upheld, it suffers from *an inherent psychological contradiction*. The utility of altruistic conduct has presumably been the origin of its being praised, and this origin has become forgotten. But in what conceivable way is this forgetting possible! Has perchance the utility of such conduct ceased at some given moment? The contrary is the case. This utility has rather been experienced every day at all times, and is consequently a feature that obtains a new and regular emphasis with every fresh day; it follows that, so far from vanishing from the consciousness, so far indeed from being forgotten, it must necessarily become impressed on the consciousness with ever-increasing distinctness. How much more logical is that contrary theory (it is not the truer for that) which is represented, for instance, by Herbert Spencer,¹²⁰ who places the concept ‘good’ as essentially similar to the concept ‘useful’, ‘purposive’, so that in the judgments ‘good’ and

¹¹⁷ From the Latin, *pleb*. “Lower class”, “common person”, “person of no distinction.”

¹¹⁸ French, literally, “spirit of the group”; the morale of a group.

¹¹⁹ French, “selfless”, “disinterest.”

¹²⁰ Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), philosopher and polymath who—after reading Darwin’s *Origin of Species*—coined the phrase “survival of the fittest”. Probably the most influential and popular thinker in the 19th Century English speaking world.

‘bad’ mankind is simply summarizing and investing with a sanction its unforgotten and unforgettable experiences concerning the ‘useful–purposive’ and the ‘mischievous–non–purposive’. According to this theory, ‘good’ is the attribute of that which has previously shown itself useful; and so is able to claim to be considered “valuable in the highest degree,” “valuable in itself.” This method of explanation is also, as I have said, **wrong**, but at any rate the explanation itself is coherent, and psychologically tenable.

4.

The guide–post which first put me on the right track was this question—what is the true etymological significance of the various symbols¹²¹ for the idea ‘good’ which have been coined in the various languages? I then found that *they all led back to the same evolution of the same idea—that everywhere ‘aristocrat’, ‘noble’ (in the social sense), is the root idea, out of which have necessarily developed ‘good’ in the sense of “with aristocratic soul,” ‘noble’, in the sense of “with a soul of high caliber,” “with a privileged soul”—a development which invariably runs parallel with that other evolution by which “vulgar,” “plebeian,” “low,” are made to change finally into ‘bad’*. The most eloquent proof of this last contention is the German word “*schlecht*” itself: this word is identical with “*schlicht*”—(compare “*schlechtweg*” and “*schlechterdings*”)—which, originally and as yet without any sinister innuendo, simply denoted the plebeian man in contrast to the aristocratic man. It is at the sufficiently late period of the Thirty Years’ War¹²² that this sense becomes changed to the sense now current.

From the standpoint of the Genealogy of Morals this discovery seems to be substantial: the lateness of it is to be attributed to the retarding influence exercised in the modern world by democratic prejudice in the sphere of all questions of origin. This extends, as will shortly be shown, even to the province of natural science and physiology, which, *prima facie*¹²³ is the most objective. The extent of the mischief which is caused by this prejudice (once it is free of all trammels except those of its own malice), particularly to Ethics and History, is shown by the notorious case of [Henry Thomas] Buckle:¹²⁴ it was in Buckle that that plebeianism of the modern spirit, which is of English origin, broke out once again from its malignant soil with all the violence of a slimy volcano, and with that salted, rampant, and vulgar eloquence with which up to the present time all volcanoes have spoken.

5.

With regard to our problem—which can justly be called an intimate problem—and which elects to appeal to only a limited number of ears: it is of no small interest to ascertain

¹²¹ Words.

¹²² The “Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648) was a European religious conflict between Roman Catholic and Protestant states which began in the German “Holy Roman Empire” and then spread across Europe. Historians estimate nearly eight million people were killed or died due to famine caused by the generation-long war.

¹²³ Latin, “on face value”, “at first glance”.

¹²⁴ Henry Buckle (1821-1862), English historian who’s unfinished History of Civilization attempted to give a more scientific, and what we would call—‘sociological’—account of historical phenomena. It was a massive work which received mixed reviews in its day and would be considered methodologically questionable and naïvely Eurocentric by today’s standards of History. Nietzsche’s objections rest in Buckle’s celebration of the movement toward democracy and political Liberalism as intellectually rooted progress.

that in those words and roots which denote ‘good’ we catch glimpses of that arch–trait, on the strength of which the aristocrats feel themselves to be *beings of a higher order* than their fellows. Indeed, they call themselves in perhaps the most frequent instances simply after their *superiority in power* (e.g. ‘the powerful’, ‘the lords’, ‘the commanders’), or after the most obvious sign of their superiority, as for example ‘the rich’, ‘the possessors’ (that is the meaning of *arya*; and the Iranian and Slav[ic] languages correspond. But they also call themselves after some characteristic idiosyncrasy; and this is the case which now concerns us.

They name themselves, for instance, ‘the truthful’: this is first done by the Greek nobility whose mouthpiece is found in Theognis, the Megarian poet.¹²⁵ The word ἔσθλος [*esthlos* - brave], which is coined for the purpose, signifies etymologically ‘one who is’, who has reality, who is real, who is true; and then with a subjective twist, the ‘true’, as the ‘truthful’: at this stage in the evolution of the idea, it becomes the motto and party cry of the nobility, and quite completes the transition to the meaning ‘noble’, so as to place outside the pale the lying, vulgar man, as Theognis conceives and portrays him—till finally the word after the decay of the nobility is left to delineate psychological noblesse, and becomes as it were ripe and mellow. In the word κακός [*kakos* - bad] as in δειλός [*deilos* - coward] (the plebeian in contrast to the ἀγαθός) [*agathos* - good] the cowardice is emphasized. This affords perhaps an inkling on what lines the etymological origin of the very ambiguous ἀγαθός [*agathos*] is to be investigated. In the Latin *malus* [bad] (which I place side by side with μέλας [*melas* - dark]) the vulgar man can be distinguished as the dark-colored, and above all as the black-haired (“*hic niger est*”)¹²⁶, as the pre-Aryan inhabitants of the Italian soil, whose complexion formed the clearest feature of distinction from the dominant blondes, namely, the Aryan conquering race: at any rate Gaelic has afforded me the exact analogue—*Fin* (for instance, in the name *Fin-Gal*),¹²⁷ the distinctive word of the nobility, finally—good, noble, clean, but originally the blonde-haired man in contrast to the dark black-haired aboriginals....

6.

Above all, there is no exception (though there are *opportunities* for exceptions) to this rule, that *the idea of political superiority always resolves itself into the idea of psychological superiority*, in those cases where the highest caste is at the same time the priestly caste, and in accordance with its general characteristics confers on itself the privilege of a title which alludes specifically to its priestly function. It is in these cases, for instance, that ‘clean’ and ‘unclean’ confront each other for the first time as badges of class distinction; here again there develops a ‘good’ and a ‘bad’ in a sense which has ceased to be merely social. Moreover, care should be taken not to take these ideas of ‘clean’ and ‘unclean’ too seriously, too broadly, or too symbolically: all the ideas of ancient man have, on the contrary, got to be understood in their initial stages, in a sense which is, to an almost inconceivable extent, crude, coarse, physical, and narrow, and above all essentially unsymbolical. The ‘clean man’ is originally only a man who washes himself, who abstains from certain foods which are

¹²⁵ Theognis of Megara, (active c. 550 BCE) was an Archaic lyric poet.

¹²⁶ Latin, “one with a dark heart”, a person with bad intension.

¹²⁷ In old Gaelic, ‘*fin*’ translates “white”, “fair”, “bright” and ‘*gal*’ translates “able”, “capable”, “strong”.

conducive to skin diseases, who does not sleep with the unclean women of the lower classes, who has a horror of blood—not more, not much more! On the other hand, the very nature of a priestly aristocracy shows the reasons why just at such an early juncture there should ensue a really dangerous sharpening and intensification of opposed values: it is, in fact, through these opposed values that gulfs are cleft in the social plane, which a veritable Achilles of free thought would shudder to cross. There is from the outset a certain diseased taint in such sacerdotal aristocracies, and in the habits which prevail in such societies—habits which, averse as they are to action, constitute a compound of introspection and explosive emotionalism, as a result of which there appears that introspective morbidity and neurasthenia, which adheres almost inevitably to all priests at all times: with regard, however, to the remedy which they themselves have invented for this disease—the philosopher has no option but to state, that it has proved itself in its effects a hundred times more dangerous than the disease, from which it should have been the deliverer. Humanity itself is still diseased from the effects of the naïvetés of this priestly cure. Take, for instance, certain kinds of diet ([e.g.,] abstention from flesh), fasts, sexual continence, flight into the wilderness consider too the whole metaphysic of the priests, with its war on the senses, its enervation, its hair-splitting; consider its self-hypnotism on the fakir and Brahman principles and that climax which we can understand only too well of an unusual satiety with its panacea of nothingness (or God: the demand for a *unio mystica* [mystical union] with God is the demand of the Buddhist for nothingness, Nirvana—and nothing else!). In sacerdotal societies every element is on a more dangerous scale, not merely cures and remedies, but also pride, revenge, cunning, exaltation, love, ambition, virtue, morbidity. Further, it can fairly be stated that it is on the soil of this essentially dangerous form of human society—the sacerdotal form—that man really becomes for the first time an interesting animal. It is in this form that the soul of man has in a higher sense attained depths and become evil—and those are the two fundamental forms of the superiority which up to the present man has exhibited over every other animal.

7.

The reader will have already surmised with what ease the priestly mode of valuation can branch off from the knightly aristocratic mode, and then develop into the very antithesis of the latter: special impetus is given to this opposition, by every occasion when the castes of the priests and warriors confront each other with mutual jealousy and cannot agree over the prize. The *knightly-aristocratic 'values' are based on a cult of the physical*, on a flowering, rich, and even effervescing healthiness, that goes considerably beyond what is necessary for maintaining life, on war, adventure, the chase, the dance, the tourney—on everything, in fact, which is contained in strong, free, and joyous action. The priestly-aristocratic mode of valuation is—we have seen—based on other hypotheses: it is bad enough for this class when it is a question of war! Yet the priests are, as is notorious, the worst enemies—why? *Because they are the weakest [enemies]. Their weakness causes their hate to expand into a monstrous and sinister shape, a shape which is most crafty and most poisonous.* The really great haters in the history of the world have always been priests, who are also the cleverest haters—in comparison with the cleverness of priestly revenge, every other piece of cleverness is practically negligible.

Human history would be too fatuous for anything were it not for the cleverness imported into it by the weak—take at once the most important instance. All the world's efforts against the “aristocrats,” the “mighty,” the “masters,” the “holders of power,” are negligible by comparison with what has been accomplished against those classes by the Jews—the Jews, that priestly nation which eventually realized that the one method of effecting satisfaction on its enemies and tyrants was by means of a *radical transvaluation of values*, which was at the same time an act of the cleverest revenge. Yet the method was only appropriate to a nation of priests, to a nation of the most jealously nursed priestly revengefulness. It was the Jews who, in opposition to the aristocratic equation (**good** = *aristocratic* = *beautiful* = *happy* = *loved by the gods*), dared with a terrifying logic to suggest the contrary equation, and indeed to maintain with the teeth of the most profound hatred (the hatred of weakness) this contrary equation, namely,

“the wretched are alone the good; the poor, the weak, the lowly, are alone the good; the suffering, the needy, the sick, the loathsome, are the only ones who are pious, the only ones who are blessed, for them alone is salvation—but you, on the other hand, you aristocrats, you men of power, you are to all eternity the evil, the horrible, the covetous, the insatiate, the godless; eternally also shall you be the unblessed, the cursed, the damned!”

We know who it was who reaped the heritage of this Jewish transvaluation. In the context of the monstrous and inordinately fateful initiative which the Jews have exhibited in connection with this most fundamental of all declarations of war, I remember the passage which came to my pen on another occasion¹²⁸—that it was, in fact, with the Jews that *the revolt of the slaves begins in the sphere of morals*; that revolt which has behind it a history of two millennia, and which at the present day has only moved out of our sight, because it—has achieved victory.

8.

But you [do not] understand this? You have no eyes for a force which has taken two thousand years to achieve victory? There is nothing [odd] in this: all lengthy processes are hard to see and to realize. But this is what took place: from the trunk of that tree of revenge and hate, Jewish hate—that most profound and sublime hate, which creates ideals and changes old values to new creations, the like of which has never been on earth—there grew a phenomenon which was equally incomparable, a new love, the most profound and sublime of all kinds of love: and from what other trunk could it have grown?

But beware of supposing that this love has soared on its upward growth, as in any way a real negation of that thirst for revenge, as an antithesis to the Jewish hate! No, the contrary is the truth! This love grew out of that hate, as its crown, as its triumphant crown, circling wider and wider amid the clarity and fullness of the sun, and pursuing in the very kingdom of light and height its goal of hatred, its victory, its spoil, its strategy, with the same intensity with which the roots of that tree of hate sank into everything which was deep and evil with increasing stability and increasing desire. This Jesus of Nazareth, the incarnate gospel of love, this “Redeemer” bringing salvation and victory to the poor, the sick, the

¹²⁸ Beyond Good and Evil, *Aph.* 195

sinful—was he not really temptation in its most sinister and irresistible form, temptation to take the tortuous path to those very Jewish values and those very Jewish ideals? Has not Israel really obtained the final goal of its sublime revenge, by the tortuous paths of this “Redeemer,” for all that he might pose as Israel’s adversary and Israel’s destroyer? Is it not due to the black magic of a really great policy of revenge, of a far-seeing, burrowing revenge, both acting and calculating with slowness, that Israel himself must repudiate before all the world the actual instrument of his own revenge and nail it to the cross, so that all the world—that is, all the enemies of Israel—could nibble without suspicion at this very bait? Could, moreover, any human mind with all its elaborate ingenuity invent a bait that was more truly dangerous? Anything that was even equivalent in the power of its seductive, intoxicating, defiling, and corrupting influence to that symbol of the holy cross, to that awful paradox of a “god on the cross,” to that mystery of the unthinkable, supreme, and utter horror of the self-crucifixion of a god for the salvation of man?

It is at least certain that *sub hoc signo*¹²⁹ Israel, with its revenge and transvaluation of all values, has up to the present always triumphed again over all other ideals, over all more aristocratic ideals....

10.

The revolt of the slaves in morals begins in the very *principle of resentment* becoming creative and giving birth to values—a resentment experienced by creatures who, deprived as they are of the proper outlet of action, are forced to find their compensation in an imaginary revenge. While every *aristocratic morality springs from a triumphant affirmation of its own demands*, the slave morality says “no” from the very outset to what is “outside itself,” “different from itself,” and “not itself”: and this “no” is its creative deed. This [outward look] of the valuing standpoint—this inevitable gravitation to the objective instead of back to the subjective—is typical of *resentment: the slave-morality requires as the condition of its existence an external and objective world*, to employ physiological terminology, it requires objective stimuli to be capable of action at all—its action is fundamentally a reaction.

The contrary is the case when we come to the aristocrat’s system of values: it acts and grows spontaneously, it merely seeks its antithesis in order to pronounce a more grateful and exultant “yes” to its own self—its negative conception, ‘low’, ‘vulgar’, ‘bad’, is merely a pale late-born foil in comparison with its positive and fundamental conception (saturated as it is with life and passion), of “we aristocrats, we good ones, we beautiful ones, we happy ones.” When the aristocratic morality goes astray and commits sacrilege on reality, this is limited to that particular sphere with which it is not sufficiently acquainted—a sphere, in fact, from the real knowledge of which it disdainfully defends itself. It misjudges, in some cases, the sphere which it despises, the sphere of the common vulgar man and the low people: on the other hand, due weight should be given to the consideration that in any case the mood of

¹²⁹ Latin, “in this sign conquer.” This is supposedly the statement Constantine I heard in a dream before his victory over his rival emperor, Maxentius Augustus, at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge (312 CE). Early Christian historians often pointed to this as the moment of transformation from a pagan to Christian Roman Empire.

contempt, of disdain, of superciliousness,¹³⁰ even on the supposition that it falsely portrays the object of its contempt, will always be far removed from that degree of falsity which will always characterize the attacks—in effigy, of course—of the vindictive hatred and revengefulness of the weak in onslaughts on their enemies. In point of fact, there is in contempt too strong an admixture of nonchalance, of casualness, of boredom, of impatience, even of personal exultation, for it to be capable of distorting its victim into a real caricature or a real monstrosity.

Attention again should be paid to the almost benevolent nuances which, for instance, the Greek nobility imports into all the words by which it distinguishes the common people from itself; note how continuously a kind of pity, care, and consideration imparts its honeyed flavor, until at last almost all the words which are applied to the vulgar man survive finally as expressions for ‘unhappy’, ‘worthy of pity’.... The ‘well-born’ simply felt themselves the ‘happy’; they did not have to manufacture their happiness artificially through looking at their enemies, or in cases to talk and lie themselves into happiness (as is the custom with all resentful men); and similarly, complete men as they were, exuberant with strength, and consequently necessarily energetic, they were too wise to dissociate happiness from action—*activity becomes in their minds necessarily counted as happiness* ... all in sharp contrast to the ‘happiness’ of the weak and the oppressed, with their festering venom and malignity, among whom happiness appears essentially as a narcotic, a deadening, a quietude, a peace, a “Sabbath,” an enervation of the mind and relaxation of the limbs,—in short, a purely passive phenomenon.

While the aristocratic man lived in confidence and openness with himself (*gennaios*, “noble-born,” emphasizes the nuance “sincere,” and perhaps also “naive”), the resentful man, on the other hand, is neither sincere nor naive, nor honest and candid with himself. His soul squints; his mind loves hidden crannies, tortuous paths and back-doors, everything secret appeals to him as his world, his safety, his balm; he is past master in silence, in not forgetting, in waiting, in provisional self-depreciation and self-abasement. A race of such resentful men will of necessity eventually prove more prudent than any aristocratic race, it will honor prudence on quite a distinct scale, as, in fact, a paramount condition of existence, while prudence among aristocratic men is apt to be tinged with a delicate flavor of luxury and refinement; so among them it plays nothing like so integral a part as that complete certainty of function of the governing unconscious instincts, or as indeed a certain lack of prudence, such as a vehement and valiant charge, whether against danger or the enemy, or as those ecstatic bursts of rage, love, reverence, gratitude, by which at all times noble souls have recognized each other. When the resentment of the aristocratic man manifests itself, it fulfills and exhausts itself in an immediate reaction, and consequently instills no venom: on the other hand, it never manifests itself at all in countless instances, when in the case of the feeble and weak it would be inevitable.

An inability to take seriously for any length of time their enemies, their disasters, their misdeeds—that is the sign of the full strong natures who possess a [excess] of molding plastic force, that heals completely and produces forgetfulness. A good example of this in

¹³⁰ An air of superiority.

the modern world is Mirabeau,¹³¹ who had no memory for any insults and meannesses which were practiced on him, and who was only incapable of forgiving because he forgot. Such a man indeed shakes off with a shrug many a worm which would have buried itself in another; it is only in characters like these that we see the possibility (*supposing, of course, that there is such a possibility in the world*) of the real “love of one’s enemies.” What respect for his enemies is found, forsooth, in an aristocratic man—and such a reverence is already a bridge to love! He insists on having his enemy to himself as his distinction. He tolerates no other enemy but a man in whose character there is nothing to despise and much to honor! On the other hand, imagine the “enemy” as the resentful man conceives him—and it is here exactly that we see his work, his creativeness; he has conceived “the evil enemy,” the “evil one,” and indeed that is the root idea from which he now evolves as a contrasting and corresponding figure a “good one,” himself—his very self!

11

The method of this man is quite contrary to that of the aristocratic man, who conceives the root idea ‘good’ spontaneously and straight away, that is to say, out of himself, and from that material then creates for himself a concept of ‘bad’! This ‘bad’ of aristocratic origin and that “evil” out of the cauldron of unsatisfied hatred—the former an imitation, an “extra,” an additional nuance; the latter, on the other hand, the original, the beginning, the essential act in the conception of a slave–morality—these two words ‘bad’ and ‘evil’, how great a difference do they mark, in spite of the fact that they have an identical contrary in the idea ‘good’. But the idea ‘good’ is not the same: much rather let the question be asked, “Who is really evil according to the meaning of the morality of resentment?” In all sternness let it be answered thus: *just the good man of the other morality, just the aristocrat, the powerful one, the one who rules*, who is distorted by the venomous eye of resentfulness, into a new color, a new signification, a new appearance.

This particular point we would be the last to deny: the man who learned to know those ‘good’ ones only as enemies, learned at the same time not to know them only as “evil enemies” and the same men who inter pares were kept so rigorously in bounds through convention, respect, custom, and gratitude, though much more through mutual vigilance and jealousy inter pares, these men who in their relations with each other find so many new ways of manifesting consideration, self–control, delicacy, loyalty, pride, and friendship, these men are in reference to what is outside their circle (where the foreign element, a foreign country, begins), not much better than beasts of prey, which have been let loose. They enjoy there freedom from all social control, they feel that in the wilderness they can give vent with impunity to that tension which is produced by enclosure and imprisonment in the peace of society, they revert to the innocence of the beast–of–prey conscience, like jubilant monsters, who perhaps come from a ghastly bout of murder, arson, rape, and torture, with bravado and a moral equanimity, as though merely some wild student’s prank had been played, perfectly convinced that the poets have now an ample theme to sing and celebrate. *It is impossible not to recognize at the core of all these aristocratic races the beast of prey*; the magnificent blonde brute, avidly rampant for spoil and victory; this hidden core needed an outlet from

¹³¹ Probably a reference to Honore Gabriel Riqueti, Comte de Mirabeau (1749-1791), a nobleman who was an early voice of the French Revolution and argued for a moderate reconfiguration of the French nation into a constitutional monarchy based on the British model.

time to time, the beast must get loose again, must return into the wilderness—the Roman, Arabic, German, and Japanese nobility, the Homeric heroes, the Scandinavian Vikings, are all alike in this need. It is the aristocratic races who have left the idea “barbarian” on all the tracks in which they have marched; nay, a consciousness of this very barbarianism, and even a pride in it, manifests itself even in their highest civilization ...

This audacity of aristocratic races, mad, absurd, and spasmodic as may be its expression; the incalculable and fantastic nature of their enterprises, Pericles sets in special relief and glory the ῥαθυμία [*rathumia* – “relaxation”] of the Athenians, their nonchalance and contempt for safety, body, life, and comfort, their awful joy and intense delight in all destruction, in all the ecstasies of victory and cruelty, all these features become crystallized, for those who suffered thereby in the picture of the “barbarian,” of the “evil enemy,” perhaps of the “Goth” and of the “Vandal.” The profound, icy mistrust which the German provokes, as soon as he arrives at power—even at the present time—is always still an aftermath of that inextinguishable horror with which for whole centuries Europe has regarded the wrath of the blonde Teuton beast (*although between the old Germans and ourselves there exists scarcely a psychological, let alone a physical, relationship*).

I have once called attention to the embarrassment of Hesiod,¹³² when he conceived the series of social ages, and endeavored to express them in gold, silver, and bronze. He could only dispose of the contradiction, with which he was confronted, by the Homeric world, an age magnificent indeed, but at the same time so awful and so violent, by making two ages out of one, which he henceforth placed one behind each other—first, the age of the heroes and demigods, as that world had remained in the memories of the aristocratic families, who found therein their own ancestors; secondly, the bronze age, as that corresponding age appeared to the descendants of the oppressed, spoiled, ill-treated, exiled, enslaved; namely, as an age of bronze, as I have said, hard, cold, terrible, without feelings and without conscience, crushing everything, and bespattering everything with blood.

Granted the truth of the theory now believed to be true, that the very essence of all civilization is to train out of man, the beast of prey, a tame and civilized animal, a domesticated animal, it follows indubitably that we must regard as the real tools of civilization all those instincts of reaction and resentment, by the help of which the aristocratic races, together with their ideals, were finally degraded and overpowered; though that has not yet come to be synonymous with saying that the bearers of those tools also represented the civilization. It is rather the contrary that is not only probable—nay, it is palpable today; these bearers of vindictive instincts that have to be bottled up, these descendants of all European and non-European slavery, especially of the pre-Aryan population—these people, I say, represent the decline of humanity! These “tools of civilization” are a disgrace to humanity, and constitute in reality more of an argument against civilization, more of a reason why civilization should be suspected. One may be perfectly justified in being always afraid of the blonde beast that lies at the core of all aristocratic races, and in being on one’s guard: but who would not a hundred times prefer to be afraid, when one at the same time admires, than to be immune from fear, at the cost of being perpetually obsessed with the loathsome

¹³² Hesiod (active c. 750-650 BCE), Archaic Greek author of *Theogony* (“Birth of the Gods”) which is the Greek creation myth, and second most important poet after Homer.

spectacle of the distorted, the dwarfed, the stunted, the envenomed? And is that not our fate? What produces today our repulsion towards “man”—for we suffer from “man,” there is no doubt about it....

13.

But let us come back to it; the problem of another origin of ‘the good’—of the good, as the resentful man has thought it out—demands its solution.

It is not surprising that the lambs should bear a grudge against the great birds of prey, but that is no reason for blaming the great birds of prey for taking the little lambs. And when the lambs say among themselves, “These birds of prey are evil, and he who is as far removed from being a bird of prey, who is rather its opposite, a lamb—is he not good?” Then there is nothing to cavil at in the setting up of this ideal, though it may also be that the birds of prey will regard it a little sneeringly, and perchance say to themselves, “We bear no grudge against them, these good lambs, we even like them: nothing is tastier than a tender lamb.”

To require of strength that it should not express itself as strength, that it should not be a wish to overpower, a wish to overthrow, a wish to become master, a thirst for enemies and antagonisms and triumphs, is just as absurd as to require of weakness that it should express itself as strength. A quantum of force is just such a quantum of movement, will, action—rather it is nothing else than just those very phenomena of moving, willing, acting, and can only appear otherwise in the misleading errors of language (and the fundamental fallacies of reason which have become petrified therein), which understands, and understands wrongly, all working as conditioned by a worker, by a “subject.” And just exactly as the people separate the lightning from its flash, and interpret the latter as a thing done, as the working of a subject which is called lightning, so also does the popular morality separate strength from the expression of strength, as though behind the strong man there existed some indifferent neutral substratum, which enjoyed a caprice and option as to whether or not it should express strength. But there is no such substratum, there is no “being” behind doing, working, becoming; “the doer” is a mere appendage to the action. The action is everything. In point of fact, the people duplicate the doing, when they make the lightning lighten, that is a “doing–doing”: they make the same phenomenon first a cause, and then, secondly, the effect of that cause. The scientists fail to improve matters when they say, “Force moves, force causes,” and so on. Our whole science is still, in spite of all its coldness, of all its freedom from passion, a dupe of the tricks of language, and has never succeeded in getting rid of that superstitious changeling “the subject”....

What wonder, if the suppressed and stealthily simmering passions of revenge and hatred exploit for their own advantage this belief, and indeed hold no belief with a more steadfast enthusiasm than this: “the strong has the option of being weak, and the bird of prey of being a lamb.” Thereby do they win for themselves the right of attributing to the birds of prey the responsibility for being birds of prey: when the oppressed, down-trodden, and overpowered say to themselves with the vindictive guile of weakness:

“Let us be otherwise than the evil, namely, **good**; and good is everyone who does not oppress, who hurts no one, who does not attack, who does not pay back, who hands over

revenge to God, who holds himself, as we do, in hiding; who goes out of the way of evil, and demands, in short, little from life; like ourselves the patient, the meek, the just.”

Yet all this, in its cold and unprejudiced interpretation, means nothing more than “once for all, the weak are weak; it is good to do nothing for which we are not strong enough”; but this dismal state of affairs, this prudence of the lowest order, which even insects possess (which in a great danger are fain to sham death so as to avoid doing “too much”), has, thanks to the counterfeiting and self-deception of weakness, come to masquerade in the pomp of an ascetic, mute, and expectant virtue, just as though the very weakness of the weak—that is, forsooth, its being, its working, its whole unique inevitable inseparable reality—were a voluntary result, something wished, chosen, a deed, an act of merit. This kind of man finds the belief in a neutral, free-choosing “subject” necessary from an instinct of self-preservation, of self-assertion, in which every lie is fain to sanctify itself. The subject (or, to use popular language, the *soul*) has perhaps proved itself the best dogma in the world simply because it rendered possible to the horde of mortal, weak, and oppressed individuals of every kind, that most sublime specimen of self-deception, the interpretation of weakness as freedom, of being this, or being that, as merit....

16.

Let us come to a conclusion. The two opposing values, “good and bad,” “good and evil,” have fought a dreadful, thousand-year fight in the world, and though indubitably the second value has been for a long time in the preponderance, there are not wanting places where the fortune of the fight is still undecided. It can almost be said that in the meanwhile the fight reaches a higher and higher level, and that in the meanwhile it has become more and more intense, and always more and more psychological; so that nowadays there is perhaps no more decisive mark of the higher nature, of the more psychological nature, than to be in that sense self-contradictory, and to be actually still a battleground for those two opposites.

The symbol of this fight, written in a writing which has remained worthy of perusal throughout the course of history up to the present time, is called “Rome against Judea, Judea against Rome.” Hitherto there has been no greater event than that fight, the putting of that question, that deadly antagonism. Rome found in the Jew the incarnation of the unnatural, as though it were its diametrically opposed monstrosity, and in Rome the Jew was held to be convicted of hatred of the whole human race: and rightly so, in so far as it is right to link the well-being and the future of the human race to the unconditional mastery of the aristocratic values, of the Roman values.

What, conversely, did the Jews feel against Rome? One can surmise it from a thousand symptoms, but it is sufficient to carry one’s mind back to the Johannian Apocalypse, that most obscene of all the written outbursts, which has revenge on its conscience. (One should also appraise at its full value the profound logic of the Christian instinct, when over this very book of hate it wrote the name of the Disciple of Love, that self-same disciple to whom it attributed that impassioned and ecstatic Gospel—therein lurks a portion of truth, however much literary forging may have been necessary for this purpose.) The Romans were the strong and aristocratic; a nation stronger and more aristocratic has never existed in the world, has never even been dreamed of; every relic of them, every

inscription enraptures, granted that one can divine what it is that writes the inscription. The Jews, conversely, were that priestly nation of resentment par excellence, possessed by a unique genius for popular morals: just compare with the Jews the nations with analogous gifts, such as the Chinese or the Germans, so as to realize afterwards what is first rate, and what is fifth rate.

Which of them has been provisionally victorious, Rome or Judea? But there is not a shadow of doubt; just consider to whom in Rome itself nowadays you bow down, as though before the quintessence of all the highest values—and not only in Rome, but almost over half the world, everywhere where man has been tamed or is about to be tamed—to three Jews, as we know, and one Jewess (to Jesus of Nazareth, to Peter the fisher, to Paul the tent-maker, and to the mother of the aforesaid Jesus, named Mary). This is very remarkable: Rome is undoubtedly defeated.

At any rate there took place in the Renaissance a brilliantly sinister revival of the classical ideal, of the aristocratic valuation of all things: Rome herself, like a man waking up from a trance, stirred beneath the burden of the new Judaized Rome that had been built over her, which presented the appearance of an ecumenical synagogue and was called the “Church”: but immediately Judea triumphed again, thanks to that fundamentally popular (German and English) movement of revenge, which is called the Reformation, and taking also into account its inevitable corollary, the restoration of the Church—the restoration also of the ancient graveyard peace of classical Rome.

Judea proved yet once more victorious over the classical ideal in the French Revolution, and in a sense which was even more crucial and even more profound: the last political aristocracy that existed in Europe, that of the French seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, broke into pieces beneath the instincts of a resentful populace—never had the world heard a greater jubilation, a more uproarious enthusiasm: indeed, there took place in the midst of it the most monstrous and unexpected phenomenon; the ancient ideal itself swept before the eyes and conscience of humanity with all its life and with unheard-of splendor, and in opposition to resentment’s lying war-cry of the prerogative of the most, in opposition to the will to lowliness, abasement, and equalization, the will to a retrogression and twilight of humanity, there rang out once again, stronger, simpler, more penetrating than ever, the terrible and enchanting counter-war cry of the prerogative of the few! Like a final signpost to other ways, there appeared Napoleon, the most unique and violent anachronism that ever existed, and in him the incarnate problem of the aristocratic ideal in itself—consider well what a problem it is: Napoleon, that synthesis of Monster and Superman.