

WORDS OF WISDOM: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY



Jody Ondich
Lake Superior College

Lake Superior College

Words of Wisdom: Introduction to Philosophy

Jody Ondich

This text is disseminated via the Open Education Resource (OER) LibreTexts Project (<https://LibreTexts.org>) and like the hundreds of other texts available within this powerful platform, it is freely available for reading, printing and "consuming." Most, but not all, pages in the library have licenses that may allow individuals to make changes, save, and print this book. Carefully consult the applicable license(s) before pursuing such effects.

Instructors can adopt existing LibreTexts texts or Remix them to quickly build course-specific resources to meet the needs of their students. Unlike traditional textbooks, LibreTexts' web based origins allow powerful integration of advanced features and new technologies to support learning.



The LibreTexts mission is to unite students, faculty and scholars in a cooperative effort to develop an easy-to-use online platform for the construction, customization, and dissemination of OER content to reduce the burdens of unreasonable textbook costs to our students and society. The LibreTexts project is a multi-institutional collaborative venture to develop the next generation of open-access texts to improve postsecondary education at all levels of higher learning by developing an Open Access Resource environment. The project currently consists of 14 independently operating and interconnected libraries that are constantly being optimized by students, faculty, and outside experts to supplant conventional paper-based books. These free textbook alternatives are organized within a central environment that is both vertically (from advance to basic level) and horizontally (across different fields) integrated.

The LibreTexts libraries are [Powered by MindTouch®](#) and are supported by the Department of Education Open Textbook Pilot Project, the UC Davis Office of the Provost, the UC Davis Library, the California State University Affordable Learning Solutions Program, and Merlot. This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. 1246120, 1525057, and 1413739. Unless otherwise noted, LibreTexts content is licensed by [CC BY-NC-SA 3.0](#).

Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation nor the US Department of Education.

Have questions or comments? For information about adoptions or adaptions contact info@LibreTexts.org. More information on our activities can be found via Facebook (<https://facebook.com/Libretexts>), Twitter (<https://twitter.com/libretexts>), or our blog (<http://Blog.Libretexts.org>).



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Words of Wisdom can come from anyone. In this text we discuss topics ranging from "Are Humans good by nature?" to "Is there a God?" to "Do I have the right to my own opinion?" Philosophy is the study of wisdom, and can emerge in our conversations in social media, in school, around the family dinner table, and even in the car. The text uses materials that are 2,500 years old, and materials that were in the news this year. Wise people come in all shapes and types, and from every culture on earth.

1: CLASSICS

- 1.1: AESOP'S FABLES
- 1.2: EXCERPTS FROM ARISTOTLE'S "METAPHYSICS"
- 1.3: PLATO'S "ALLEGORY OF THE CAVE"
- 1.4: ARISTOTLE'S ETHICS AND VIRTUES
- 1.5: "THE RING OF GYGES" FROM PLATO'S REPUBLIC
- 1.6: SOCRATES' DIALOGUE WITH EUTHYPHRO

2: MEDIEVAL MATERIALS

- 2.1: AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO- ON THE NATURE OF GOOD
- 2.2: ANSELM OF CANTERBURY- MONOLOGION CHAPTER 1
- 2.3: ANSELM- PROSLOGION 2 AND 3
- 2.4: AQUINAS- SUMMA THEOLOGICAE
- 2.5: AQUINAS- SUMMA THEOLOGICAE THIRD ARTICLE
- 2.6: MACHIAVELLI- EXCERPTS FROM "THE PRINCE"
- 2.7: RUMI
- 2.8: OMAR KHAYYAM
- 2.9: EXCERPTS FROM THE LETTERS OF ABELARD AND HÉLOÏSE

3: SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY AND TALES FROM ACROSS THE WORLD

- 3.1: FROM CHRISTIANITY
- 3.2: FROM ISLAM
- 3.3: MAIMONIDES' "GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED"
- 3.4: 1001 NIGHTS
- 3.5: FROM THE HINDU BHAGAVAD GITA
- 3.6: TEACHINGS FROM SIDDHARTHA GAUTAMA, THE BUDDHA
- 3.7: LAO TZU--DAOISM
- 3.8: NORTH AMERICAN TRIBAL TALES
- 3.9: AFRICAN TALES
- 3.10: BAAL SHEM TOV
- 3.11: BLUEBEARD
- 3.12: FROM JUDAISM
- 3.13: KONG FU TZU
 - 3.13.1: KONG FU TZU/ CONFUCIUS

4: EARLY MODERN WISDOM 1500-1750

- 4.1: RENE DESCARTES
- 4.2: THOMAS HOBBES
- 4.3: BLAISE PASCAL
- 4.4: DAVID HUME

5: MODERN WISDOM

- 5.1: NATIVE AMERICAN VOICES
- 5.2: JL MACKIE
- 5.3: SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR
- 5.4: ELIZABETH ANSCOMBE
- 5.5: GANDHI
- 5.6: DALAI LAMA
- 5.7: NELSON MANDELA

- 5.8: MARTIN LUTHER KING JR
- 5.9: PHILIPPA FOOT
- 5.10: PATRICK STOKES

6: LINKS TO ADDITIONAL GREAT RESOURCES

- 6.1: STEPHEN COLBERT, FROM THE COLBERT REPORT
- 6.2: URSULA LEGUIN
- 6.3: KWAME ANTHONY APPIAH, FROM TEDTALKS
- 6.4: ANNA QUINDLEN, FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES
- 6.5: PETER SINGER, FROM TEDTALKS
- 6.6: CAROL GILLIGAN
- 6.7: PEGGY ORENSTEIN
- 6.8: ASHEY JUDD FOR TEDTALKS
- 6.9: PAUL BLOOM, FOR NEW YORK TIMES
- 6.10: ELIE WIESEL, INTERVIEW WITH BILL MOYERS

7: LATE MODERN WISDOM 1750-1950 CE

- 7.1: AYN RAND
- 7.2: JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU
- 7.3: JEREMY BENTHAM
- 7.4: JOHN STUART MILL
- 7.5: IMMANUEL KANT
- 7.6: SØREN KIERKEGAARD
- 7.7: FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE
- 7.8: KARL MARX AND FRIEDRICH ENGELS
- 7.9: WILLIAM JAMES
- 7.10: BERTRAND RUSSELL--TWO ESSAYS

BACK MATTER

- [INDEX](#)
- [GLOSSARY](#)

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

1: CLASSICS

- 1.1: AESOP'S FABLES
- 1.2: EXCERPTS FROM ARISTOTLE'S "METAPHYSICS"
- 1.3: PLATO'S "ALLEGORY OF THE CAVE"
- 1.4: ARISTOTLE'S ETHICS AND VIRTUES
- 1.5: "THE RING OF GYGES" FROM PLATO'S REPUBLIC
- 1.6: SOCRATES' DIALOGUE WITH EUTHYPHRO

1.1: Aesop's Fables



Aesop, this ancient Greek, is well known by name, but his actual existence is a bit questionable. Crediting all these short stories to him may also be a little problematic! Tradition has him being born about 620 BCE and this collection of fables attributed to him are now known, for better or for worse, as Aesop's Fables. Like all folklore, these little stories try to make a point that would benefit the reader in living their everyday life. Here is a little extra background.

[About Aesop](#),

and [Who is Aesop?](#)

Samples of Aesop's Fables



[The Ants and the Grasshopper](#)

THE ANTS were spending a fine winter's day drying grain collected in the summertime. A Grasshopper, perishing with famine, passed by and earnestly begged for a little food. The Ants inquired of him, "Why did you not treasure up food during the summer?" He replied, "I had not leisure enough. I passed the days in singing." They then said in derision: "If you were foolish enough to sing all the summer, you must dance supperless to bed in the winter."

19994 ==Used on== *w:en:The Farmer and the Stork ==License== {{PD-Gutenberg}} [The Farmer and the Stork](#)

A FARMER placed nets on his newly-sown plowlands and caught a number of Cranes, which came to pick up his seed. With them he trapped a Stork that had fractured his leg in the net and was earnestly beseeching the Farmer to spare his life. "Pray save me, Master," he said, "and let me go free this once. My broken limb should excite your pity. Besides, I am no Crane, I am a Stork, a bird of excellent character; and see how I love and slave for my father and mother. Look too, at my feathers—they are not the least like those of a Crane." The Farmer laughed aloud and said, "It may be all as you say, I only know this: I have taken you with these robbers, the Cranes, and you must die in their company."

Birds of a feather flock together.



The Bear and the Two Travelers

TWO MEN were traveling together, when a Bear suddenly met them on their path. One of them climbed up quickly into a tree and concealed himself in the branches. The other, seeing that he must be attacked, fell flat on the ground, and when the Bear came up and felt him with his snout, and smelt him all over, he held his breath, and feigned the appearance of death as much as he could. The Bear soon left him, for it is said he will not touch a dead body. When he was quite gone, the other Traveler descended from the tree, and jocularly inquired of his friend what it was the Bear had whispered in his ear.

"He gave me this advice," his companion replied. "Never travel with a friend who deserts you at the approach of danger."

Misfortune tests the sincerity of friends.



The Shepherd's Boy and the Wolf

A SHEPHERD-BOY, who watched a flock of sheep near a village, brought out the villagers three or four times by crying out, "Wolf! Wolf!" and when his neighbors came to help him, laughed at them for their pains. The Wolf, however, did truly come at last. The Shepherd-boy, now really alarmed, shouted in an agony of terror: "Pray, do come and help me; the Wolf is killing the sheep;" but no one paid any heed to his cries, nor rendered any assistance. The Wolf, having no cause of fear, at his leisure lacerated or destroyed the whole flock.

There is no believing a liar, even when he speaks the truth.



The Fox and the Woodcutter

A FOX, running before the hounds, came across a Woodcutter felling an oak and begged him to show him a safe hiding-place. The Woodcutter advised him to take shelter in his own hut, so the Fox crept in and hid himself in a corner. The huntsman soon came up with his hounds and inquired of the Woodcutter if he had seen the Fox. He declared that he had not seen him, and yet pointed, all the time he was speaking, to the hut where the Fox lay hidden. The huntsman took no notice of the signs, but believing his word, hastened forward in the chase. As soon as they were well away, the Fox

departed without taking any notice of the Woodcutter: whereon he called to him and reproached him, saying, “You ungrateful fellow, you owe your life to me, and yet you leave me without a word of thanks.” The Fox replied, “Indeed, I should have thanked you fervently if your deeds had been as good as your words, and if your hands had not been traitors to your speech.”



The Project Gutenberg EBook of Aesop's Fables, by Aesop.

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org

Title: Aesop's Fables

Author: Aesop

Translator: George Fyler Townsend

Release Date: June 25, 2008 [EBook #21]

Last Updated: October 28, 2016

Language: English



1.2: Excerpts from Aristotle's "Metaphysics"



Aristotle, 384 – 322 BCE, was a student of Plato and teacher of Alexander the Great. He wrote on physics, poetry, theater, music, logic, rhetoric, politics, government, ethics, biology and zoology. Together with Plato and Socrates, Aristotle is one of the most important writers and people to be found in Western philosophy. Aristotle himself described his subject matter in this collection of his work in a variety of ways: as beginning philosophy, or the study of being, or sometimes simply as wisdom. Metaphysics is a title that was attached to this work long after the time of Aristotle, and it simply refers to a collection of work intended for use in the study of philosophy.

Robert Waldinger is the Director of the Harvard Study of Adult Development, one of the most comprehensive longitudinal studies in history. Hear his ideas in this Ted Talk on:

[What is a Good Life? A study...](#)



Part 1

"ALL men by nature desire to know."

An indication of this is the delight we take in our senses; for even apart from their usefulness they are loved for themselves; and above all others the sense of sight. For not only with a view to action, but even when we are not going to do anything, we prefer seeing (one might say) to everything else. The reason is that this, most of all the senses, makes us know and brings to light many differences between things.

"By nature animals are born with the faculty of sensation, and from sensation memory is produced in some of them, though not in others. And therefore the former are more intelligent and apt at learning than those which cannot remember; those which are incapable of hearing sounds are intelligent though they cannot be taught, e.g. the bee, and any other race of animals that may be like it; and those which besides memory have this sense of hearing can be taught.

"The animals other than man live by appearances and memories, and have but little of connected experience; but the human race lives also by art and reasonings.

From Mirriam Webster:

Definition of wisdom

- 1 a : ability to discern inner qualities and relationships : [insight](#)
- b : good sense : [judgment](#)
- c : generally accepted belief
 - challenges what has become accepted wisdom among many historians
- d : accumulated philosophical or scientific learning : [knowledge](#)

2 : a wise attitude, belief, or course of action

3 : the teachings of the ancient wise men

Now from memory experience is produced in men; for the several memories of the same thing produce finally the capacity for a single experience. And experience seems pretty much like science and art, but really science and art come to men through experience; for ‘experience made art’, as Polus says, ‘but inexperience luck.’ Now art arises when from many notions gained by experience one universal judgement about a class of objects is produced...

With a view to action experience seems in no respect inferior to art, and men of experience succeed even better than those



who have theory without experience.

But yet we think that knowledge and understanding belong to art rather than to experience, and we suppose artists to be wiser than men of experience (which implies that Wisdom depends in all cases rather on knowledge); and this because the former know the cause, but the latter do not.

For men of experience know that the thing is so, but do not know why, while the others know the ‘why’ and the cause. Hence we think also that the masterworkers in each craft are more honourable and know in a truer sense and are wiser than the manual workers, because they know the causes of the things that are done (we think the manual workers are like certain lifeless things which act indeed, but act without knowing what they do, as fire burns,-but while the lifeless things perform each of their functions by a natural tendency, the labourers perform them through habit); thus we view them as being wiser not in virtue of being able to act, but of having the theory for themselves and knowing the causes.

And in general it is a sign of the man who knows and of the man who does not know, that the former can teach, and therefore we think art more truly knowledge than experience is; for artists can teach, and men of mere experience cannot.

Key Point

“Again, we do not regard any of the senses as Wisdom; yet surely these give the most authoritative knowledge of particulars. But they do not tell us the ‘why’ of anything-e.g. why fire is hot; they only say that it is hot.

“At first he who invented any art whatever that went beyond the common perceptions of man was naturally admired by men, not only because there was something useful in the inventions, but because he was thought wise and superior to the rest...

“We have said in the Ethics what the difference is between art and science and the other kindred faculties; but the point



of our present discussion is this, that all men suppose what is called Wisdom to deal with the first causes and the principles of things; so that, as has been said before—

Key Takeaway

“The man of **experience** is thought to be wiser than the possessors of any sense-perception whatever, the **artist** wiser than the men of experience, the **master-worker** than the mechanic, and the **theoretical kinds of knowledge** to be more of the nature of Wisdom than the productive.

Clearly then Wisdom is knowledge about certain principles and causes.”



Written 350 B.C.E

this web edition published by eBooks@Adelaide. Last updated Wednesday, July 15, 2015 at 15:08.

eBooks@Adelaide

The University of Adelaide Library

University of Adelaide

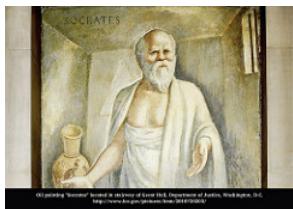
South Australia 5005

Translated by W. D. Ross

Aristotle's Metaphysics G. Bell and Sons, January 1, 1896



1.3: Plato's "Allegory of the Cave"



Plato, 428-348 BCE, was a Greek philosopher, mathematician, writer of philosophy, and the founder of the Academy in Athens. Plato was originally a student of Socrates, and was strongly influenced by his thinking. Twenty four hundred years ago, as part of one of his dialogues, “*The Republic*”, Plato said that life is like being chained up in a cave forced to watch shadows flitting across a stone wall. Beyond sounding a little scary as an image for living, what exactly did he mean by this?

Alex Gendler [\[1\]](#) unravels **Plato’s Allegory of the Cave**, found in **Book VII of The Republic**. You might find this TedEd mini-lecture helpful to listen to!

[The Cave](#)

Then check the link at the end of this chapter for a modern take on this ancient and interesting allegory of The Cave!

[Allegory of the Cave](#)



Socrates: And now, I said, let me show in a figure how far our nature is enlightened or unenlightened:

Behold! human beings living in a underground den, which has a mouth open towards the light and reaching all along the den; here they have been from their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move, and can only see before them, being prevented by the chains from turning round their heads. Above and behind them a fire is blazing at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have in front of them, over which they show the puppets.

Glaucon: I see.

Socrates: The low wall, and the moving figures of which the shadows are seen on the opposite wall of the den. And do you see, I said, men passing along the wall carrying all sorts of vessels, 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.

Glaucon: You have shown me a strange image, and they are strange prisoners.

Socrates: Like ourselves, I replied; and they see only their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave?

Glaucon: True, how could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their heads?

Socrates: And of the objects which are being carried in like manner they would only see the shadows?

Glaucon: Yes.

Socrates: And if they were able to converse with one another, would they not suppose that they were naming what was actually before them

Glaucon: Very true.

Socrates: The prisoners would mistake the shadows for realities. And suppose further that the prison had an echo which came from the other side, would they not be sure to fancy when one of the passers-by spoke that the voice which they heard came from the passing shadow?

Glaucus: No question.

Socrates: To them, I said, the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images.

Glaucon: That is certain.

Socrates: 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 his neck 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 conceive some one saying to him, that what he saw before was an illusion, but that now, when he is approaching nearer to being and his eye is turned towards more real existence, he has a clearer vision,—what will be his reply? And when released, they would still persist in maintaining the superior truth of the shadows. 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?

Glaucon: Far truer.

Socrates: 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 to take refuge in the objects of vision which he can see, and which he will conceive to be in reality clearer than the things which are now being shown to him?

Glaucon: True.

Socrates: When dragged upwards, they would be dazzled by excess of light. 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 sun himself, is he not likely to be pained and irritated? When he approaches the light his eyes will be dazzled, and he will not be able to see anything at all of what are now called realities.

Glaucon: Not all in a moment.

Socrates: He will require 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?

Glaucon: Certainly.



Socrates: Last of all he will be able to see the sun, and not mere reflections of him in the water, but he will see him in his own proper place, and not in another; and he will contemplate him as he is.

Glaucon: Certainly.

Socrates: He will then proceed to argue that this 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 behold?

Glaucon: Clearly, he would first see the sun and then reason about him.

Socrates: They would then pity their old companions of the den. And when he remembered his old habitation, and the wisdom of the den and his fellow-prisoners, do you not suppose that he would felicitate himself on the change, and pity them?

Glaucon: Certainly.

Socrates: 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?

Glaucon: Yes. I think that he would rather suffer anything than entertain these false notions and live in this miserable manner.

Socrates: Imagine once more, I said, such an one coming suddenly out of the sun to be replaced in his old situation; would he not be certain to have his eyes full of darkness?

Glaucon: To be sure.

Socrates: 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 den, 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? Men would say of him that up he went and down he came without his eyes; and that it was better not even to think of ascending; and if any one tried to loose another and lead him up to the light, let them only catch the offender, and they would put him to death.

Glaucon: No question.



Socrates: The prison is the world of sight, the light of the fire is the sun. This entire allegory, I said, you may now append, dear Glaucon, to the previous argument; the prison-house 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 intellectual world according to my poor belief, which, at your desire, I have expressed—whether rightly or wrongly God knows. But, whether true or false, my opinion is that in the world of knowledge the idea of good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort; and, when seen, is also inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and of the lord of light in this visible world, and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual; and that this is the power upon which he who would act rationally either in public or private life must have his eye fixed.

Glaucon: I agree, as far as I am able to understand you.

Examples

You might find it interesting to read someone's modern example of the Cave and how one leaves it—check out this column on Philosophy and Addiction:

Out of the Cave—Philosophy and Addiction





The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Republic*, by Plato

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org.

Title: The Republic

Author: Plato

Translator: B. Jowett

Release Date: August 27, 2008 [EBook #1497]

Last Updated: June 22, 2016

Language: English

-
1. Alex Gendler is a freelance writer, editor, translator, and general dilettante with specialties ranging from history and political theory to internet culture and animal videos. He has authored and edited multiple lessons for TED Ed that were covered in The Washington Post and Time Magazine, while his translation credits include PBS News Hour's interview with separatist leaders during the 2014 Ukrainian crisis. He holds a BA in English and Philosophy from Lafayette College and attended the interdisciplinary humanities Masters program at New York University. [◀](#)



1.4: Aristotle's Ethics and Virtues



Aristotle, 384–322 BCE, was a Greek philosopher and scientist born in the city of Stagira in the northern section of Greece. Along with Plato, Aristotle is known as a founding “Father of Western Philosophy”, and philosophy has grown up from his teachings, thousands of years later.

The excerpts that follow include reflection on happiness (in Aristotle’s terms, this is known as eudaimonia) and on moral virtues, which Aristotle considered key to the living on an ethical and good life.

You might want to watch this CrashCourse Video on Aristotle’s “virtues and vices”

[Aristotle and Virtue Theory](#)

Then, before you start your reading spend some time thinking about how you communicate digitally—do you use Snapchat? Email? Texting? Facebook? Did you know that this choice of digital platforms is an ethical choice, requiring thought about a virtue or two?

Check out this Minnesota writer Alexis Elder ^[1] from the publication **The Conversation**.

Aristotle’s advice on which tech to use

Excerpts from Nicomachean Ethics

CHAPTERS 11—13. OF PLEASURE

11. We Must Now Discuss Pleasure. Opinions About It.

The consideration of pleasure and pain also falls within the scope of the political philosopher, since he has to construct the end by reference to which we call everything good or bad.

Moreover, this is one of the subjects we are bound to discuss; for we said that moral virtue and vice have to do with pleasures and pains, and most people say that happiness implies pleasure, which is the reason of the name μακάριος, **blessed**, from χαίρειν, **to rejoice**.

Now,

1. some people think that no pleasure is good, either essentially or accidentally, for they say that good and pleasure are two distinct things;
2. others think that though some pleasures are good most are bad;
3. others, again, think that even though all pleasures be good, yet it is impossible that the supreme good can be pleasure.



Virtue Overcoming Vice

(1) It is argued that pleasure cannot be good,

- (a) because all pleasure is a felt transition to a natural state, but a transition or process is always generically different from an end, e.g. the process of building is generically different from a house;
- (b) because the temperate man avoids pleasures;
- (c) because the prudent man pursues the painless, not the pleasant;
- (d) because pleasures impede thinking, and that in proportion to their intensity (for instance, the sexual pleasures: no one engaged therein could think at all);
- (e) because there is no art of pleasure, and yet every good thing has an art devoted to its production;
- (f) because pleasure is the pursuit of children and brutes.

(2) It is argued that not all pleasures are good, because some are base and disgraceful, and even hurtful; for some pleasant things are unhealthy.

(3) It is argued that pleasure is not the supreme good, because it is not an end, but a process or transition.—These, then, we may take to be the current opinions on the subject

Example

Is happiness everything? Is it the end goal for human living?

Check out this opinion from the New York Times:

[The Universe Doesn't Care About Your Purpose](#)

12. Answers To Arguments Against Goodness Of Pleasure. Ambiguity Of Good And Pleasant. Pleasure Not A Transition, But Unimpeded Activity.

But that these arguments do not prove that pleasure is not good, or even the highest good, may be shown as follows.

In the first place, since “good” is used in two senses (“good in itself” and “relatively good”), natures and faculties will be called good in two senses, and so also will motions and processes: and when they are called bad, this sometimes means that they are bad in themselves, though for particular persons not bad but desirable; sometimes that they are not desirable even for particular persons, but desirable occasionally and for a little time, though in themselves not desirable; while some of them are not even pleasures, though they seem to be—I mean those that involve pain and are used medicinally, such as those of sick people.

In the second place, since the term good may be applied both to activities and to faculties, those activities that restore us to our natural faculties [or state] are accidentally pleasant...

Again, it does not necessarily follow, as some maintain, that there is something else better than pleasure, as the end is better than the process or transition to the end: for a pleasure is not a transition, nor does it always even imply a transition; but it is an activity [or exercise of faculty], and itself an end: further, it is not in becoming something, but in doing something that we feel pleasure: and, lastly, the end is not always something different from the process or transition, but it is only when something is being brought to the completion of its nature that this is the case.

For these reasons it is not proper to say that pleasure is a felt transition, but rather that it is an exercise of faculties that are in their natural state, substituting “unimpeded” for “felt.” Some people, indeed, think that pleasure is a transition, just because it is in the full sense good, supposing that the exercise of faculty is a transition; but it is in fact something different.



“But to say that pleasures are bad because some pleasant things are unhealthy, is like saying that health is bad because some healthy things are bad for money-making. Both are bad in this respect, but that does not make them bad: even philosophic study is sometimes injurious to health.”

As to pleasure being an impediment to thinking, the fact is that neither prudence nor any other faculty is impeded by the pleasure proper to its exercise, but by other pleasures; the pleasure derived from study and learning will make us study and learn more.

That there should be no art devoted to the production of any kind of pleasure, is but natural; for art never produces an activity, but only makes it possible: the arts of perfumery and cookery, however, are usually considered to be arts of pleasure.

As to the arguments that the temperate man avoids pleasure, that the prudent man pursues the painless life, and that children and brutes pursue pleasure, they may all be met in the same way, viz. thus:— As we have already explained in what sense all pleasures are to be called good in themselves, and in what sense not good, we need only say that pleasures of a certain kind are pursued by brutes and by children, and that freedom from the corresponding pains in pursued by the prudent man—the pleasures, namely, that involve appetite and pain, i.e. the bodily pleasures (for these do so), and excess in them, the deliberate pursuit of which constitutes the profligate. These pleasures, then, the temperate man avoids; but he has pleasures of his own.

13. Pleasure Is Good, And The Pleasure That Consists In The Highest Activity Is The Good. All Admit That Happiness Is Pleasant. Bodily Pleasures Not The Only Pleasures.

But all admit that pain is a bad thing and undesirable; partly bad in itself, partly bad as in some sort an impediment to activity. But that which is opposed to what is undesirable, in that respect in which it is undesirable and bad, is good.

It follows, then, that pleasure is a good thing...Moreover, there is no reason why a certain kind of pleasure should not be the supreme good, even though some kinds be bad, just as there is no reason why a certain kind of knowledge should not be, though some kinds be bad.

Key Takeaway

“...if he is to be happy, a man must have the goods of the body and external goods and good fortune, in order that the exercise of his faculties may not be impeded. And those who say that though a man be put to the rack and overwhelmed by misfortune, he is happy if only he be good, whether they know it or not, talk nonsense.”

And on this account all men suppose that the happy life is a pleasant one, and that happiness involves pleasure: and the supposition is reasonable; for no exercise of a faculty is complete if it be impeded; but happiness we reckon among complete things; and so, if he is to be happy, a man must have the goods of the body and external goods and good fortune, in order that the exercise of his faculties may not be impeded. And those who say that though a man be put to the rack and overwhelmed by misfortune, he is happy if only he be good, whether they know it or not, talk nonsense.

Because fortune is a necessary condition, some people consider good fortune to be identical with happiness; but it is not really so, for good fortune itself, if excessive, is an impediment, and is then, perhaps, no longer to be called good fortune; for good fortune can only be defined by its relation to happiness.

Again, the fact that all animals and men pursue pleasure is some indication that it is in some way the highest good:

“Not wholly lost can e'er that saying be
Which many peoples share.”

But as the nature of man and the best development of his faculties neither are nor are thought to be the same for all, so the pleasure which men pursue is not always the same, though all pursue pleasure.

Yet, perhaps, they do in fact pursue a pleasure different from that which they fancy they pursue and would say they pursue—a pleasure which is one and the same for all. For all beings have something divine implanted in them by nature.

But bodily pleasures have come to be regarded as the sole claimants to the title of pleasure, because they are oftenest attained and are shared by all; these then, as the only pleasures they know, men fancy to be the only pleasures that are. But it is plain that unless pleasure—that is, unimpeded exercise of the faculties—be good, we can no longer say that the happy man leads a pleasant life; for why should he need it if it be not good? Nay, he may just as well lead a painful life: for pain is neither bad nor good, if pleasure be neither; so why should he avoid pain? The life of the good man, then, would be no pleasanter than others unless the exercise of his faculties were pleasanter.

Chapter 4 Excerpt showing an example of the extremes of a virtue: Liberality[generosity]

Let us speak next of liberality. It seems to be the mean with regard to wealth; for the liberal man is praised ... with regard to the giving and taking of wealth, and especially in respect of giving. Now by ‘wealth’ we mean all the things whose value is measured by money.



Further, prodigality and meanness are excesses and defects with regard to wealth; and meanness we always impute to those who care more than they ought for wealth, but we sometimes apply the word ‘prodigality’ in a complex sense; for we call those men prodigals who are incontinent and spend money on self-indulgence. Hence also they are thought the poorest characters; for they combine more vices than one. Therefore the application of the word to them is not its proper use; for a ‘prodigal’ means a man who has a single evil quality, that of wasting his substance; since a prodigal is one who is being ruined by his own fault, and the wasting of substance is thought to be a sort of ruining of oneself, life being held to depend on possession of substance.

This, then, is the sense in which we take the word ‘prodigality’.

Now the things that have a use may be used either well or badly; and riches is a useful thing; and everything is used best by the man who has the virtue concerned with it; riches, therefore, will be used best by the man who has the virtue concerned with wealth; and this is the liberal man. Now spending and giving seem to be the using of wealth; taking and keeping rather the possession of it. Hence it is more the mark of the liberal man to give to the right people than to take from the right sources and not to take from the wrong. For it is more characteristic of virtue to do good than to have good done to one, and more characteristic to do what is noble than not to do what is base; and it is not hard to see that giving implies doing good and doing what is noble, and taking implies having good done to one or not acting basely. And gratitude is felt towards him who gives, not towards him who does not take, and praise also is bestowed more on him. It is easier, also, not to take than to give; for men are apter to give away their own too little than to take what is another’s. Givers, too, are called liberal; but those who do not take are not praised for liberality but rather for justice; while those who take are hardly praised at all. And the liberal are almost the most loved of all virtuous characters, since they are useful; and this depends on their giving.



Those who are called by such names as ‘miserly’, ‘close’, ‘stingy’, all fall short in giving, but do not covet the possessions of others nor wish to get them. In some this is due to a sort of honesty and avoidance of what is disgraceful (for some seem, or at least profess, to hoard their money for this reason, that they may not someday be forced to do something disgraceful; to this class belong the cheeseparer and every one of the sort; he is so called from his excess of unwillingness to give anything); while others again keep their hands off the property of others from fear, on the ground that it is not easy, if one takes the property of others oneself, to avoid having one’s own taken by them; they are therefore content neither to take nor to give.

Others again exceed in respect of taking by taking anything and from any source, e.g. those who ply sordid trades, pimps and all such people, and those who lend small sums and at high rates. For all of these take more than they ought and from wrong sources. What is common to them is evidently sordid love of gain; they all put up with a bad name for the sake of gain, and little gain at that. For those who make great gains but from wrong sources, and not the right gains, e.g. despots when they sack cities and

spoil temples, we do not call mean but rather wicked, impious, and unjust. But the gamester and the footpad (and the highwayman) belong to the class of the mean, since they have a sordid love of gain. For it is for gain that both of them ply their craft and endure the disgrace of it, and the one faces the greatest dangers for the sake of the booty, while the other makes gain from his friends, to whom he ought to be giving. Both, then, since they are willing to make gain from wrong sources, are sordid lovers of gain; therefore all such forms of taking are mean.

And it is natural that meanness is described as the contrary of liberality; for not only is it a greater evil than prodigality, but men err more often in this direction than in the way of prodigality as we have described it.



Liberty Fund <http://oll.libertyfund.org/>

Nichomachean Ethics

The Nichomachean Ethics of Aristotle, trans. F.H. Peters, M.A. 5th edition (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Truebner & Co., 1893).

Author: Aristotle

Translator: F.H. Peters

-
1. Professional title Assistant Professor Bio Dr. Elder is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at UMD. She works in Ethics, Social Philosophy, Metaphysics (especially social ontology), Philosophy of Technology, and Moral Psychology. She tends to draw on ancient philosophy - primarily Chinese and Greek - in order to think about current problems. Teaching interests include a variety of courses in applied ethics, where she enjoys working with students to explore the many ways philosophical issues can crop up in life ↵

Contributions and Attributions

This page is licensed under a [CC BY-NC-SA](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Jody Ondich](#). Page content has been edited and updated to conform to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform; a detailed versioning history of the edits to source content is available upon request.

1.5: "The Ring of Gyges" from Plato's Republic



The concept of invisibility has become popular in all kinds of literature. One would have to consider Harry Potter's cloak of invisibility, the way Dr. Faustus gained the ability to be invisible through his deal with the devil, and, of course, one really cannot discuss a ring of invisibility without discussing the One Ring, found in Tolkein's famous Lord of the Ring trilogy.

What does this ring mean for this story? [The One Ring](#)

Below you will find the simple description of the story from Plato's work ***The Republic, Book 2***



Gyges was a shepherd in the service of the king of Lydia; there was a great storm, and an earthquake made an opening in the earth at the place where he was feeding his flock. Amazed at the sight, he descended into the opening, where, among other marvels, he beheld a hollow brazen horse, having doors, at which he stooping and looking in saw a dead body of stature, as appeared to him, more than human, and having nothing on but a gold ring; this he took from the finger of the dead and reascended.

Now the shepherds met together, according to custom, that they might send their monthly report about the flocks to the king; into their assembly he came having the ring on his finger, and as he was sitting among them he chanced to turn the collet of the ring inside his hand, when instantly he became invisible to the rest of the company and they began to speak of him as if he were no longer present. He was astonished at this, and again touching the ring he turned the collet outwards and reappeared; he made several trials of the ring, and always with the same result-when he turned the collet inwards he became invisible, when outwards he reappeared. Whereupon he contrived to be chosen one of the messengers who were sent to the court; where as soon as he arrived he seduced the queen, and with her help conspired against the king and slew him, and took the kingdom.

Suppose now that there were two such magic rings, and the just put on one of them and the unjust the other; no man can be imagined to be of such an iron nature that he would stand fast in justice. No man would keep his hands off what was not his own when he could safely take what he liked out of the market, or go into houses and lie with any one at his pleasure, or kill or release from prison whom he would, and in all respects be like a God among men. Then the actions of the just would be as the actions of the unjust; they would both come at last to the same point. And this we may truly affirm to be a great proof that a man is just, not willingly or because he thinks that justice is any good to him individually, but of necessity, for wherever any one thinks that he can safely be unjust, there he is unjust. For all men believe in their hearts that injustice is far more profitable to the individual than justice, and he who argues as I have been supposing, will say that they are right.

If you could imagine any one obtaining this power of becoming invisible, and never doing any wrong or touching what was another's, he would be thought by the lookers-on to be a most wretched idiot, although they would praise him to one another's faces, and keep up appearances with one another from a fear that they too might suffer injustice.



The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Republic*, by Plato

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org.

Title: The Republic

Author: Plato

Translator: B. Jowett

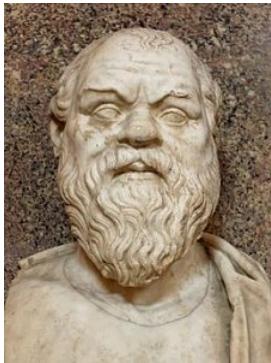
Release Date: August 27, 2008 [EBook #1497]

Last Updated: June 22, 2016

Language: English



1.6: Socrates' Dialogue with Euthyphro



In this dialogue by Plato, we have **Socrates in dialogue with Euthyphro** as they attempt to establish a definitive meaning for the word *piety* (virtue). It is a prime example of a “Socratic” style teaching works, as Socrates keeps asking questions and forces Euthyphro to try and clarify his thinking.

In this case, Euthyphro has come to present charges of murder against his own father, who had allowed one of his workers to die of exposure to the elements without proper care. The dead worker had killed a slave from their family estate. As Euthyphro's father waited to hear about how to deal with this situation from the law, the bound-and-gagged worker died in a ditch. Socrates says that he is astonished by Euthyphro's confidence in being able to prosecute his own father for the serious charge of manslaughter. Euthyphro insists that his prosecution is done by way of piety—virtue. When pressed by Socrates, Euthyphro dismisses the professed astonishment of Socrates, which confirms to the reader his overconfidence in his own critical judgement of all matters religious and ethical.

Scene

The Porch of the King Archon.

Euthyphro. Why have you left the Lyceum, Socrates? And what are you doing in the Porch of the King Archon? Surely you cannot be concerned in a suit before the King, like myself?

Socrates. Not in a suit, Euthyphro; impeachment is the word which the Athenians use.

Euthyphro. What! I suppose that some one has been prosecuting you, for I cannot believe that you are the prosecutor of another.

Socrates. Certainly not.

Euthyphro. Then some one else has been prosecuting you?

Socrates. Yes.

Euthyphro. And who is he?

Socrates. A young man who is little known, Euthyphro; and I hardly know him: his name is Meletus, 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.

Euthyphro. No, I do not remember him, Socrates. But what is the charge which he brings against you?

Socrates. What is 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 state 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 them. 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.

Euthyphro. I hope that he may; but I rather fear, Socrates, 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 state. But in what way does he say that you corrupt the young?



Socrates. 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.

Euthyphro. I understand, Socrates; he means to attack you about the familiar sign which occasionally, as you say, comes to you. He thinks that you are a neologian, 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.

Socrates. Their laughter, friend Euthyphro, is not 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.

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

Socrates. I dare say not, for you are reserved in your behaviour, 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.

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



Socrates. And what is your suit, Euthyphro? are you the pursuer or the defendant?

Euthyphro. I am the pursuer.

Socrates. Of whom?

Euthyphro. You will think me mad when I tell you.

Socrates. Why, has the fugitive wings?

Euthyphro. Nay, he is not very volatile at his time of life.

Socrates. Who is he?

Euthyphro. My father.

Socrates. Your father! my good man?





Euthyphro. Yes.

Socrates. And of what is he accused?

Euthyphro. Of murder, Socrates.

Socrates. By the powers, Euthyphro! how little does the common herd know of the nature of right and truth. A man must be an extraordinary man, and have made great strides in wisdom, before he could have seen his way to bring such an action.

Euthyphro. Indeed, Socrates, he must.

Socrates. 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.

Euthyphro. I am amused, Socrates, at your making a distinction between one who is a relation and one who is not a relation; for surely the pollution is the same in either case, if you knowingly associate with the murderer when you ought to clear yourself and him by proceeding against him. 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 labourer on our farm in Naxos, and one day in a fit of drunken passion he got into a quarrel with one of our domestic servants 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 diviner 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 diviner, he was dead. And my father and family are angry with me for taking the part of the murderer and prosecuting my father. They say that he did not kill him, and that if he did, dead man was but a murderer, and I ought not to take any notice, for that a son is impious who prosecutes a father. Which shows, Socrates, how little they know what the gods think about piety and impiety.



Socrates. Good heavens, Euthyphro! 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?

Euthyphro. The best of Euthyphro, and that which distinguishes him, Socrates, from other men, is his exact knowledge of all such matters. What should I be good for without it?

Socrates. Rare friend! I think that I cannot do better than be your disciple. Then before the trial with Meletus comes on 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, Meletus, as I shall say to him, acknowledge Euthyphro to be a great theologian, 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 Meletus 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.



Euthyphro. Yes, indeed, Socrates; 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.

Socrates. 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 Meletus; 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? Is not piety in every action always the same? and impiety, again- is it not always the opposite of piety, and also the same with itself, having, as impiety, one notion which includes whatever is impious?

Euthyphro. To be sure, Socrates.

Socrates. And what is piety, and what is impiety?



Euthyphro. 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 to consider, Socrates, 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, ought 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 (Cronos) because he wickedly devoured his sons, and that he too had punished his own father (Uranus) for a similar reason, in a nameless manner. 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.

Socrates. May not this be the reason, Euthyphro, why I am charged with impiety-that I cannot away with these stories about the gods? And therefore I suppose that people think me wrong. 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.

Euthyphro. Yes, Socrates; and things more wonderful still, of which the world is in ignorance.

Socrates. And do you really believe that the gods, fought with one another, and had dire 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 Athene, which is carried up to the Acropolis at the great Panathenaea, is embroidered with them. Are all these tales of the gods true, Euthyphro?

Euthyphro. Yes, Socrates; 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.

Socrates. I dare say; and you shall tell me them at some other time when I have leisure. But just 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 you do, charging your father with murder.

Euthyphro. And what I said was true, Socrates.

Socrates. No doubt, Euthyphro; but you would admit that there are many other pious acts?

Euthyphro. There are.

Socrates. Remember that I did not ask you to give me two or three examples of piety, but to explain the general idea which makes all pious things to be pious. Do you not recollect that there was one idea which made the impious impious, and the

pious pious?

Euthyphro. I remember.

Socrates. 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.

Euthyphro. I will tell you, if you like.

Socrates. I should very much like.

Euthyphro. Piety, then, is that which is dear to the gods, and impiety is that which is not dear to them.



Socrates. Very good, Euthyphro; 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.

Euthyphro. Of course.

Socrates. Come, then, and let us examine what we are saying. That thing or person which is dear to the gods is pious, and that thing or person which is hateful to the gods is impious, these two being the extreme opposites of one another. Was not that said?

Euthyphro. It was.

Socrates. And well said?

Euthyphro. Yes, Socrates, I thought so; it was certainly said.

Socrates. And further, Euthyphro, the gods were admitted to have enmities and hatreds and differences?

Euthyphro. Yes, that was also said.

Socrates. And what sort of difference creates enmity 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 a sum?

Euthyphro. True.

Socrates. Or suppose that we differ about magnitudes, do we not quickly end the differences by measuring?

Euthyphro. Very true.

Socrates. And we end a controversy about heavy and light by resorting to a weighing machine?

Euthyphro. To be sure.



Socrates. But what differences are there which cannot be thus decided, and which therefore make us angry and set us at enmity with one another? I dare say the answer does not occur to you at the moment, and therefore I will suggest that these enmities arise when the matters of difference are the just and unjust, good and evil, honourable and dishonourable. 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?

Euthyphro. Yes, Socrates, the nature of the differences about which we quarrel is such as you describe.

Socrates. And the quarrels of the gods, noble Euthyphro, when they occur, are of a like nature?

Euthyphro. Certainly they are.

Socrates. They have differences of opinion, as you say, about good and evil, just and unjust, honourable and dishonourable: there would have been no quarrels among them, if there had been no such differences-would there now?

Euthyphro. You are quite right.

Socrates. Does not every man love that which he deems noble and just and good, and hate the opposite of them?

Euthyphro. Very true.

Socrates. But, as you say, people regard the same things, some as just and others as unjust,-about these they dispute; and so there arise wars and fightings among them.

Euthyphro. Very true.

Socrates. Then the same things are hated by the gods and loved by the gods, and are both hateful and dear to them?

Euthyphro. True.

Socrates. And upon this view the same things, Euthyphro, will be pious and also impious?

Euthyphro. So I should suppose.



Socrates. 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, Euthyphro, in thus chastising your father you may very likely be doing what is agreeable to Zeus but disagreeable to Cronos or Uranus, and what is acceptable to Hephaestus but unacceptable to Hera, and there may be other gods who have similar differences of opinion.

Euthyphro. But I believe, Socrates, that all the gods would be agreed as to the propriety of punishing a murderer: there would be no difference of opinion about that.

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



Euthyphro. I should rather say that these are the questions which they are always arguing, especially in courts of law: they commit all sorts of crimes, and there is nothing which they will not do or say in their own defence.

Socrates. But do they admit their guilt, Euthyphro, and yet say that they ought not to be punished?

Euthyphro. No; they do not.

Socrates. Then there are some things which they do not venture to say and do: for they do not venture to argue that the guilty are to be unpunished, but they deny their guilt, do they not?

Euthyphro. Yes.

Socrates. Then they do not argue that the evil-doer should not be punished, but they argue about the fact of who the evil-doer is, and what he did and when?

Euthyphro. True.

Socrates. And the gods are in the same case, if as you assert they quarrel about 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 is not to be punished?

Euthyphro. That is true, Socrates, in the main.

Socrates. But they join issue about the particulars-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, by others to be unjust. Is not that true?

Euthyphro. Quite true.

Socrates. Well then, my dear friend Euthyphro, 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 an 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.

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

Socrates. I understand; you mean to say that I am not so quick of apprehension as the judges: for to them you will be sure to prove that the act is unjust, and hateful to the gods.

Euthyphro. Yes indeed, Socrates; at least if they will listen to me.

Socrates. 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 Euthyphro does prove to me that all the gods regarded the death of the serf 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 adequately 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, Euthyphro, 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?

Euthyphro. Why not, Socrates?



Socrates. Why not! certainly, as far as I am concerned, Euthyphro, 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.

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

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

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

Socrates. We shall know better, my good friend, in a little while. The point which I should first wish to understand is whether the pious or holy is beloved by the gods because it is holy, or holy because it is beloved of the gods.

Euthyphro. I do not understand your meaning, Socrates.

Socrates. I will endeavour 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?

Euthyphro. I think that I understand.

Socrates. And is not that which is beloved distinct from that which loves?

Euthyphro. Certainly.

Socrates. Well; and now tell me, is that which is carried in this state of carrying because it is carried, or for some other reason?

Euthyphro. No; that is the reason.

Socrates. And the same is true of what is led and of what is seen?

Euthyphro. True.



Socrates. And a thing is not seen because it is visible, but conversely, visible because it is seen; nor is a thing led because it is in the state of being led, or carried because it is in the state of being carried, but the converse of this. And now I think, Euthyphro, that my meaning will be intelligible; and my meaning is, that any state of action or passion implies previous action or passion. It does not become because it is becoming, but it is in a state of becoming because it becomes; neither does it suffer because it is in a state of suffering, but it is in a state of suffering because it suffers. Do you not agree?

Euthyphro. Yes.

Socrates. Is not that which is loved in some state either of becoming or suffering?

Euthyphro. Yes.

Socrates. 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.

Euthyphro. Certainly.

Socrates. And what do you say of piety, Euthyphro: is not piety, according to your definition, loved by all the gods?

Euthyphro. Yes.

Socrates. Because it is pious or holy, or for some other reason?



Euthyphro. No, that is the reason.

Socrates. It is loved because it is holy, not holy because it is loved?

Euthyphro. Yes.

Socrates. And that which is dear to the gods is loved by them, and is in a state to be loved of them because it is loved of them?

Euthyphro. Certainly.

Socrates. Then that which is dear to the gods, Euthyphro, is not holy, nor is that which is holy loved of God, as you affirm; but they are two different things.

Euthyphro. How do you mean, Socrates?

Socrates. I mean to say that the holy has been acknowledged by us to be loved of God because it is holy, not to be holy because it is loved.

Euthyphro. Yes.

Socrates. But that which is dear to the gods is dear to them because it is loved by them, not loved by them because it is dear to them.

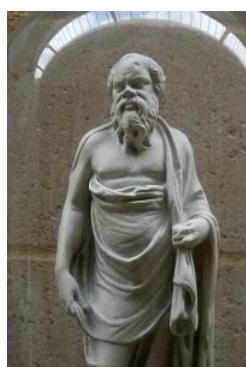
Euthyphro. True.

Socrates. But, friend Euthyphro, if that which is holy is the same with that which is dear to God, and is loved because it is holy, then that which is dear to God would have been loved as being dear to God; but if that which is dear to God is dear to him because loved by him, then that which is holy would have been holy because loved by him. But now you see that the reverse is the case, and that they are quite different from one another. For one (*theophiles*) is of a kind to be loved cause it is loved, and the other (*osion*) is loved because it is of a kind to be loved. Thus you appear to me, Euthyphro, when I ask you what is the essence of holiness, to offer an attribute only, and not the essence—the attribute of being loved by all the gods. But you still refuse to explain to me the nature of holiness. 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 dear to the gods or not (for that is a matter about which we will not quarrel) and what is impiety?

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

Socrates. Your words, Euthyphro, are like the handiwork of my ancestor Daedalus; and if I were the sayer or propounder 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 gibe, for they certainly, as you yourself allow, show an inclination to be on the move.

Euthyphro. Nay, Socrates, I shall still say that you are the Daedalus who sets arguments in motion; not I, certainly, but you make them move or go round, for they would never have stirred, as far as I am concerned.



Socrates. Then I must be a greater than Daedalus: for whereas he only made his own inventions to move, I move those of other people as well. And the beauty of it is, that I would rather not. For I would give the wisdom of Daedalus, and the wealth of Tantalus, 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 labour. Tell me, then—is not that which is pious necessarily just?

Euthyphro. Yes.

Socrates. And is, then, all which is just pious? or, is that which is pious all just, but that which is just, only in part and not all, pious?

Euthyphro. I do not understand you, Socrates.

Socrates. 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 to exert yourself, for there is no real difficulty in understanding me. What I mean I may explain by an illustration of what I do not mean. The poet (Stasinus) sings—

Of Zeus, the author and creator of all these things,

You will not tell: for where there is fear there is also reverence.

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

Euthyphro. By all means.

Socrates. I should not say that where there is fear there is also reverence; for I am sure that many persons fear poverty and disease, and the like evils, but I do not perceive that they reverence the objects of their fear.

Euthyphro. Very true.

Socrates. But where reverence is, there is fear; for he who has a feeling of reverence and shame about the commission of any action, fears and is afraid of an ill reputation.

Euthyphro. No doubt.

Socrates. Then we are wrong in saying that where there is fear there is also reverence; and we should say, where there is reverence there is also fear. But there is not 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?

Euthyphro. Quite well.

Socrates. That was the sort of question which I meant to raise when I asked whether the just is always the pious, or the pious always the just; and whether there may not be justice where there is not piety; for justice is the more extended notion of which piety is only a part. Do you dissent?

Euthyphro. No, I think that you are quite right.

Socrates. Then, if piety is a part of justice, I suppose that we should enquire 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 figure having two equal sides. Do you not agree?

Euthyphro. Yes, I quite agree.

Socrates. In like manner, I want you to tell me what part of justice is piety or holiness, that I may be able to tell Meletus not to do me injustice, or indict me for impiety, as I am now adequately instructed by you in the nature of piety or holiness, and their opposites.

Euthyphro. Piety or holiness, Socrates, appears to me to be that part of justice which attends to the gods, as there is the other part of justice which attends to men.

Socrates. That is good, Euthyphro; yet still there is a little point about which I should like to have further information, What is the meaning of “attention”? For attention 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 attention, and not every person is able to attend to them, but only a person skilled in horsemanship. Is it not so?

Euthyphro. Certainly.





Socrates. I should suppose that the art of horsemanship is the art of attending to horses?

Euthyphro. Yes.

Socrates. Nor is every one qualified to attend to dogs, but only the huntsman?

Euthyphro. True.

Socrates. And I should also conceive that the art of the huntsman is the art of attending to dogs?

Euthyphro. Yes.

Socrates. As the art of the ox herd is the art of attending to oxen?

Euthyphro. Very true.

Socrates. In like manner holiness or piety is the art of attending to the gods?-that would be your meaning, Euthyphro?

Euthyphro. Yes.

Socrates. And is not attention 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 horseman's art they are benefited and improved, are they not?

Euthyphro. True.

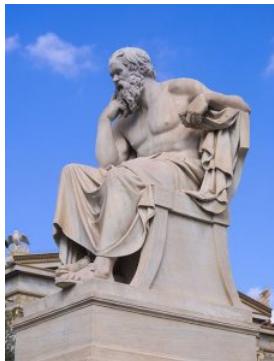
Socrates. As the dogs are benefited by the huntsman's art, and the oxen by the art of the ox herd, and all other things are tended or attended for their good and not for their hurt?

Euthyphro. Certainly, not for their hurt.

Socrates. But for their good?

Euthyphro. Of course.

Socrates. And does piety or holiness, which has been defined to be the art of attending to the gods, benefit or improve



them? Would you say that when you do a holy act you make any of the gods better?

Euthyphro. No, no; that was certainly not what I meant.

Socrates. And I, Euthyphro, never supposed that you did. I asked you the question about the nature of the attention, because I thought that you did not.

Euthyphro. You do me justice, Socrates; that is not the sort of attention which I mean.

Socrates. Good: but I must still ask what is this attention to the gods which is called piety?

Euthyphro. It is such, Socrates, as servants show to their masters.

Socrates. I understand-a sort of ministration to the gods.



Euthyphro. Exactly.

Socrates. Medicine is also a sort of ministration or service, having in view the attainment of some object-would you not say of health?

Euthyphro. I should.

Socrates. Again, there is an art which ministers to the ship-builder with a view to the attainment of some result?

Euthyphro. Yes, Socrates, with a view to the building of a ship.

Socrates. As there is an art which ministers to the housebuilder with a view to the building of a house?

Euthyphro. Yes.

Socrates. And now tell me, my good friend, about the art which ministers to the gods: what work does that help to accomplish? For you must surely know if, as you say, you are of all men living the one who is best instructed in religion.

Euthyphro. And I speak the truth, Socrates.

Socrates. Tell me then, oh tell me-what is that fair work which the gods do by the help of our ministrations?

Euthyphro. Many and fair, Socrates, are the works which they do. Socrates. Why, my friend, and so are those of a general. But the chief of them is easily told. Would you not say that victory in war is the chief of them?

Socrates. Certainly. Many and fair, too, are the works of the husbandman, if I am not mistaken; but his chief work is the production of food from the earth?

Euthyphro. Exactly.

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

Euthyphro. I have told you already, Socrates, 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 states, just as the impious, which is unpleasing to the gods, is their ruin and destruction.



Socrates. I think that you could have answered in much fewer words the chief question which I asked, Euthyphro, if you had chosen. But I see plainly that you are not disposed to instruct me-dearly not: else why, when we reached the point, did you turn, aside? Had you only answered me I should have truly learned of you by this time 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 science of praying and sacrificing?

Euthyphro. Yes, I do.

Socrates. And sacrificing is giving to the gods, and prayer is asking of the gods?

Euthyphro. Yes, Socrates.

Socrates. Upon this view, then piety is a science of asking and giving?

Euthyphro. You understand me capitally, Socrates.

Socrates. Yes, my friend; the. reason is that I am a votary of your science, and give my mind to it, and therefore nothing which you say will be thrown away upon me. Please then to tell me, what is the nature of this service to the gods? Do you

mean that we prefer requests and give gifts to them?

Euthyphro. Yes, I do.

Socrates. Is not the right way of asking to ask of them what we want?

Euthyphro. Certainly.

Socrates. And the right way of giving is to give to them in return what they want of us. There would be no, in an art which gives to any one that which he does not want.

Euthyphro. Very true, Socrates.

Socrates. Then piety, Euthyphro, is an art which gods and men have of doing business with one another?

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

Socrates. But I have no particular liking for anything but the truth. I wish, however, that you would 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 affair of business in which we have very greatly the advantage of them.



Euthyphro. And do you imagine, Socrates, that any benefit accrues to the gods from our gifts?

Socrates. But if not, Euthyphro, what is the meaning of gifts which are conferred by us upon the gods?

Euthyphro. What else, but tributes of honour; and, as I was just now saying, what pleases them?

Socrates. Piety, then, is pleasing to the gods, but not beneficial or dear to them?

Euthyphro. I should say that nothing could be dearer.

Socrates. Then once more the assertion is repeated that piety is dear to the gods?

Euthyphro. Certainly.

Socrates. And when you say this, can you wonder at your words not standing firm, but walking away? Will you accuse me of being the Daedalus who makes them walk away, not perceiving that there is another and far greater artist than Daedalus 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?

Euthyphro. I quite remember.

Socrates. And are you not saying that what is loved of the gods is holy; and is not this the same as what is dear to them-do you see?

Euthyphro. True.

Socrates. Then either we were wrong in former assertion; or, if we were right then, we are wrong now.

Euthyphro. One of the two must be true.



Socrates. 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, 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 Euthyphro, and do not hide your knowledge.

Euthyphro. Another time, Socrates; for I am in a hurry, and must go now.

Socrates. Alas! my companion, and 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 Meletus and his indictment. I would have told him that I had been enlightened by Euthyphro, 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.

THE END

The Project Gutenberg EBook of Euthyphro, by Plato

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org

Title: Euthyphro

Author: Plato

Translator: Benjamin Jowett

Release Date: November 23, 2008 [EBook #1642]

Last Updated: January 15, 2013

Language: English

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: MEDIEVAL MATERIALS

- 2.1: AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO- ON THE NATURE OF GOOD
- 2.2: ANSELM OF CANTERBURY- MONOLOGION CHAPTER 1
- 2.3: ANSELM- PROSLOGIAN 2 AND 3
- 2.4: AQUINAS- SUMMA THEOLOGICAE
- 2.5: AQUINAS- SUMMA THEOLOGICAE THIRD ARTICLE
- 2.6: MACHIAVELLI- EXCERPTS FROM "THE PRINCE"
- 2.7: RUMI
- 2.8: OMAR KHAYYAM
- 2.9: EXCERPTS FROM THE LETTERS OF ABELARD AND HÉLOÏSE

2.1: Augustine of Hippo- On the Nature of Good



Augustine of Hippo, 354–430 CE, is an important early Christian church theologian and philosopher whose writings influenced the development of Western Christianity and Western philosophy. He was the bishop of Hippo Regius in north Africa. Among his most important works are *The City of God*, *On Christian Doctrine* and *Confessions*. Augustine was one of the more important fathers of Western Christianity. After his conversion and baptism (387 CE), he developed his own approach to theology, and both the concepts of Just War and Original Sin come from his writings.

Are We Born Good? This is an important question, for ethics and philosophy, but also for science.

This short video can be a discussion starter!

[A clip from the BBC show “Are You Good or Evil?”](#)

Selections from Chapters 1-22



“The highest good, than which there is no higher, is God, and consequently He is unchangeable good, hence truly eternal and truly immortal. All other good things are only from Him, not of Him. For what is of Him, is Himself.

And consequently if He alone is unchangeable, all things that He has made, because He has made them out of nothing, are changeable. For He is so omnipotent, that even out of nothing, that is out of what is absolutely non-existent, He is able to make good things both great and small, both celestial and terrestrial, both spiritual and corporeal. But because He is also just, He has not put those things that He has made out of nothing on an equality with that which He begat out of Himself. Because, therefore, no good things whether great or small, through whatever gradations of things, can exist except from God; but since every nature, so far as it is nature, is good, it follows that no nature can exist save from the most high and true God: because all things even not in the highest degree good, but related to the highest good, and again, because all good things, even those of most recent origin, which are far from the highest good, can have their existence only from the highest good. Therefore every spirit, though subject to change, and every corporeal entity, is from God, and all this, having been made, is nature. For every nature is either spirit or body. Unchangeable spirit is God, changeable spirit, having been made, is nature, but is better than body; but body is not spirit, unless when the wind, because it is invisible to us and yet its power is felt as something not inconsiderable, is in a certain sense called spirit.

But for the sake of those who, not being able to understand that all nature, that is, every spirit and every body, is naturally good, are moved by the iniquity of spirit and the mortality of body, and on this account endeavor to bring in another nature of

wicked spirit and mortal body, which God did not make, we determine thus to bring to their understanding what we say can be brought. For they acknowledge that no good thing can exist save from the highest and true God, which also is true and suffices for correcting them, if they are willing to give heed.

Exercises

You might listen to this talk by James Fallon [1], who will discuss findings from this program in a more personal speech at the Moth World Science Festival:

Confessions of a Pro-Social Psychopath

For we Catholic Christians worship God, from whom are all good things whether great or small; from whom is all measure great or small; from whom is all form great or small; from whom is all order great or small. For all things in proportion as they are better measured, formed, and ordered, are assuredly good in a higher degree; but in proportion as they are measured, formed, and ordered in an inferior degree, are they the less good.

These three things, therefore, measure, form, and order,—not to speak of innumerable other things that are shown to pertain to these three,—these three things, therefore, measure, form, order, are as it were generic goods in things made by God, whether in spirit or in body. God is, therefore, above every measure of the creature, above every form, above every order, nor is He above by local spaces, but by ineffable and singular potency, from whom is every measure, every form, every order. These three things, where they are great, are great goods, where they are small, are small goods; where they are absent, there is no good. And again where these things are great, there are great natures, where they are small, there are small natures, where they are absent, there is no nature. Therefore all nature is good.

When accordingly it is inquired, whence is evil, it must first be inquired, what is evil, which is nothing else than corruption, either of the measure, or the form, or the order, that belong to nature. Nature therefore which has been corrupted, is called evil, for assuredly when incorrupt it is good; but even when corrupt, so far as it is nature it is good, so far as it is corrupted it is evil.

But it may happen, that a certain nature which has been ranked as more excellent by reason of natural measure and form, though corrupt, is even yet better than another incorrupt which has been ranked lower by reason of an inferior natural measure and form: as in the estimation of men, according to the quality which presents itself to view, corrupt gold is assuredly better than incorrupt silver, and corrupt silver than incorrupt lead; so also in more powerful spiritual natures a rational spirit even corrupted through an evil will is better than an irrational though incorrupt, and better is any spirit whatever even corrupt than any body whatever though incorrupt. For better is a nature which, when it is present in a body, furnishes it with life, than that to which life is furnished. But however corrupt may be the spirit of life that has been made, it can furnish life to a body, and hence, though corrupt, it is better than the body though incorrupt.

But if corruption take away all measure, all form, all order from corruptible things, no nature will remain. And consequently every nature which cannot be corrupted is the highest good, as is God. But every nature that can be corrupted is also itself some good; for corruption cannot injure it, except by taking away from or diminishing that which is good.



But to the most excellent creatures, that is, to rational spirits, God has offered this, that if they will not they cannot be corrupted; that is, if they should maintain obedience under the Lord their God, so should they adhere to his incorruptible beauty; but if they do not will to maintain obedience, since willingly they are corrupted in sins, unwillingly they shall be corrupted in punishment, since God is such a good that it is well for no one who deserts Him, and among the things made by God the rational nature is so great a good, that there is no good by which it may be blessed except God. Sinners, therefore, are ordained to punishment; which ordination is punishment for the reason that it is not conformable to their nature, but it is justice because it is conformable to their fault.

But the rest of things that are made of nothing, which are assuredly inferior to the rational soul, can be neither blessed nor miserable. But because in proportion to their fashion and appearance are things themselves good, nor could there be good things in a less or the least degree except from God, they are so ordered that the more infirm yield to the firmer, the weaker to the stronger, the more impotent to the more powerful; and so earthly things harmonize with celestial, as being subject to the things that are pre-eminent. But to things falling away, and succeeding, a certain temporal beauty in its kind belongs, so that neither those things that

die, or cease to be what they were, degrade or disturb the fashion and appearance and order of the universal creation; as a speech well composed is assuredly beautiful, although in it syllables and all sounds rush past as it were in being born and in dying.

What sort of punishment, and how great, is due to each fault, belongs to Divine judgment, not to human; which punishment assuredly when it is remitted in the case of the converted, there is great goodness on the part of God, and when it is deservedly inflicted, there is no injustice on the part of God; because nature is better ordered by justly smarting under punishment than by rejoicing with impunity in sin; which nature nevertheless, even thus having some measure, form, and order, in whatever extremity there is as yet some good, which things, if they were absolutely taken away, and utterly consumed, there will be accordingly no good, because no nature will remain.



All corruptible natures therefore are natures at all only so far as they are from God, nor would they be corruptible if they were of Him; because they would be what He Himself is. Therefore of whatever measure, of whatever form, of whatever order, they are, they are so because it is God by whom they were made; but they are not immutable, because it is nothing of which they were made. For it is sacrilegious audacity to make nothing and God equal, as when we wish to make what has been born of God such as what has been made by Him out of nothing.

Wherefore neither can God's nature suffer harm, nor can any nature under God suffer harm unjustly: for when by sinning unjustly some do harm, an unjust will is imputed to them; but the power by which they are permitted to do harm is from God alone, who knows, while they themselves are ignorant, what they ought to suffer, whom He permits them to harm.

All these things are so perspicuous, so assured, that if they who introduce another nature which God did not make, were willing to give attention, they would not be filled with so great blasphemies, as that they should place so great good things in supreme evil, and so great evil things in God. For what the truth compels them to acknowledge, namely, that all good things are from God alone, suffices for their correction, if they were willing to give heed, as I said above. Not, therefore, are great good things from one, and small good things from another; but good things great and small are from the supremely good alone, which is God.

Let us, therefore, bring before our minds good things however great, which it is fitting that we attribute to God as their author, and these having been eliminated let us see whether any nature will remain. All life both great and small, all power great and small, all safety great and small, all memory great and small, all virtue great and small, all intellect great and small, all tranquillity great and small, all plenty great and small, all sensation great and small, all light great and small, all suavity great and small, all measure great and small, all beauty great and small, all peace great and small, and whatever other like things may occur, especially such as are found throughout all things, whether spiritual or corporeal, every measure, every form, every order both great and small, are from the Lord God. All which good things whoever should wish to abuse, pays the penalty by divine judgment; but where none of these things shall have been present at all, no nature will remain.

But in all these things, whatever are small are called by contrary names in comparison with greater things; as in the form of a man because the beauty is greater, the beauty of the ape in comparison with it is called deformity. And the imprudent are deceived, as if the former is good, and the latter evil, nor do they regard in the body of the ape its own fashion, the equality of members on both sides, the agreement of parts, the protection of safety, and other things which it would be tedious to enumerate.



But that what we have said may be understood, and may satisfy those too slow of comprehension, or that even the pertinacious and those repugnant to the most manifest truth may be compelled to confess what is true, let them be asked, whether corruption can harm the body of an ape. But if it can, so that it may become more hideous, what diminishes but the good of beauty? Whence as long as the nature of the body subsists, so long something will remain. If, accordingly, good having been

consumed, nature is consumed, the nature is therefore good. So also we say that slow is contrary to swift, but yet he who does not move at all cannot even be called slow. So we say that a heavy voice is contrary to a sharp voice, or a harsh to a musical; but if you completely remove any kind of voice, there is silence where there is no voice, which silence, nevertheless, for the simple reason that there is no voice, is usually opposed to voice as something contrary thereto. So also lucid and obscure are called as it were two contrary things, yet even obscure things have something of light, which being absolutely wanting, darkness is the absence of light in the same way in which silence is the absence of voice.'

Yet even these privations of things are so ordered in the universe of nature, that to those wisely considering they not unfittingly have their vicissitudes. For by not illuminating certain places and times, God has also made the darkness as fittingly as the day. For if we by restraining the voice fittingly interpose silence in speaking, how much more does He, as the perfect framer of all things, fittingly make privations of things? Whence also in the hymn of the three children, light and darkness alike praise God, that is, bring forth praise in the hearts of those who well consider.

No nature, therefore, as far as it is nature, is evil; but to each nature there is no evil except to be diminished in respect of good. But if by being diminished it should be consumed so that there is no good, no nature would be left; not only such as the Manichéans introduce, where so great good things are found that their exceeding blindness is wonderful, but such as any one can introduce.

Example

Is nature Good? Created good? Naturally good? Trying reading this column from Julian Baggini [2] called:

Nature is not evil, simply immoral

For neither is that material, which the ancients called *Hyle*, to be called an evil. I do not say that which Manichéus with most senseless vanity, not knowing what he says, denominates *Hyle*, namely, the former of corporeal beings; whence it is rightly said to him, that he introduces another god. For nobody can form and create corporeal beings but God alone; for neither are they created unless there subsist with them measure, form, and order, which I think that now even they themselves confess to be good things, and things that cannot be except from God. But by *Hyle* I mean a certain material absolutely formless and without quality, whence those qualities that we perceive are formed, as the ancients said. For hence also wood is called in Greek υλή, because it is adapted to workmen, not that itself may make anything, but that it is the material of which something may be made. Nor is that *Hyle*, therefore, to be called an evil which cannot be perceived through any appearance, but can scarcely be thought of through any sort of privation of appearance. For this has also a capacity of forms; for if it cannot receive the form imposed by the workman, neither assuredly may it be called material. Hence if form is some good, whence those who excel in it are called beautiful, as from appearance they are called handsome, even the capacity of form is undoubtedly something good. As because wisdom is a good, no one doubts that to be capable of wisdom is a good. And because every good is from God, no one ought to doubt that even matter, if there is any, has its existence from God alone.

Magnificently and divinely, therefore, our God said to his servant: "I am that I am," and "Thou shalt say to the children of Israel, He who is sent me to you." For He truly is because He is unchangeable. For every change makes what was not, to be: therefore He truly is, who is unchangeable; but all other things that were made by Him have received being from Him each in its own measure. To Him who is highest, therefore, nothing can be contrary, save what is not; and consequently as from Him everything that is good has its being, so from Him is everything that by nature exists; since everything that exists by nature is good. Thus every nature is good, and everything good is from God; therefore every nature is from God.

But pain which some suppose to be in an especial manner an evil, whether it be in mind or in body, cannot exist except in good natures. For the very fact of resistance in any being leading to pain, involves a refusal not to be what it was, because it was something good; but when a being is compelled to something better, the pain is useful, when to something worse, it is useless. Therefore in the case of the mind, the will resisting a greater power causes pain; in the case of the body, sensation resisting a more powerful body causes pain. But evils without pain are worse: for it is worse to rejoice in iniquity than to bewail corruption; yet even such rejoicing cannot exist save from the attainment of inferior good things. But iniquity is the desertion of better things. Likewise in a body, a wound with pain is better than painless putrescence, which is especially called the corruption which the dead flesh of the Lord did not see, that is, did not suffer, as was predicted in prophecy: "Thou shall not suffer Thy Holy one to see corruption." For who denies that He was wounded by the piercing of the nails, and that He was stabbed with the lance? But even what is properly called by men corporeal corruption, that is, putrescence itself, if as yet there is anything left to consume, increases by the diminution of the good. But if corruption shall have absolutely consumed it, so that there is no good, no nature will remain,

for there will be nothing that corruption may corrupt; and so there will not even be putrescence, for there will be nowhere at all for it to be.

Therefore now by common usage things small and mean are said to have measure, because some measure



remains in them, without which they would no longer be moderate-sized, but would not exist at all. But those things that by reason of too much progress are called immoderate, are blamed for very excessiveness; but yet it is necessary that those things themselves be restrained in some manner under God who has disposed all things in extension, number, and weight.

But God cannot be said to have measure, lest He should seem to be spoken of as limited. Yet He is not immoderate by whom measure is bestowed upon all things, so that they may in any measure exist. Nor again ought God to be called measured, as if He received measure from any one. But if we say that He is the highest measure, by chance we say something; if indeed in speaking of the highest measure we mean the highest good. For every measure in so far as it is a measure is good; whence nothing can be called measured, modest, modified, without praise, although in another sense we use measure for limit, and speak of no measure where there is no limit, which is sometimes said with praise as when it is said: "And of His kingdom there shall be no limit." For it might also be said, "There shall be no measure," so that measure might be used in the sense of limit; for He who reigns in no measure, assuredly does not reign at all.



Of the Nature of Good, Augustine, translated by Albert Henry Newman, 1852-1933, professor of church history at McMaster University in Toronto, Canada. Newman then taught successively at Baylor University (1901-1907), Southwestern Baptist Seminary (1907-1913), Baylor again (1913-1921), Mercer (1921-1927) and again McMaster (1927-1929).

Of the Nature of Good

1. https://www.faculty.uci.edu/profile.cfm?faculty_id=2303 ↪
2. Born 1968 (age 49–50) Nationality British Education PhD in philosophy (1996) Alma mater University College London Occupation Philosopher, writer Website <http://www.microp hilosophy.net> ↪

Contributions and Attributions

This page is licensed under a [CC BY-NC-SA](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Jody Ondich](#). Page content has been edited and updated to conform to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform; a detailed versioning history of the edits to source content is available upon request.

2.2: Anselm of Canterbury- Monologion Chapter 1



Anselm of Canterbury, 1033-1109 CE, was a French-born Catholic priest who eventually became the Archbishop of Canterbury in England. Anselm composed dialogues and treatises with a rational and philosophical approach. Despite getting little recognition in this field while he was alive, Anselm is now seen as the originator of the “ontological argument” for the existence of God—“that than which nothing greater can be thought”. What is the biggest Good you can imagine? That, says Anselm, is God.

You might enjoy watching the Crash Course video on
[Anselm and the Argument for God](#)

The Monologian is the beginning of his argument in favor of the existence of God. Excerpts are found below. Start here with our modern definition. This will help you get a handle on what we as 21st century readers are thinking, before going back to the 11th century!

Mirriam Webster's:

Definition of god

1: capitalized : the supreme or ultimate reality: such as

- a : the Being perfect in power, wisdom, and goodness who is worshipped as creator and ruler of the universe
- b Christian Science : the incorporeal divine Principle ruling over all as eternal Spirit : infinite Mind

2 : a being or object believed to have more than natural attributes and powers and to require human worship; specifically : one controlling a particular aspect or part of reality

- Greek gods of love and war

3 : a person or thing of supreme value

- had photos of baseball's gods pinned to his bedroom wall

4 : a powerful ruler

- Hollywood gods that control our movies' fates

Chapter 1



“If any man, either from ignorance or disbelief, has no knowledge of the existence of one Nature which is highest of all existing beings, which is also sufficient to itself in its eternal blessedness, and

which confers upon and effects in all other beings, through its omnipotent goodness, the very fact of their existence, and the fact that in any way their existence is good; and if he has no knowledge of many other things, which we necessarily believe regarding God and his creatures, he still believes that he can at least convince himself of these truths in great part, even if his mental powers are very ordinary, by the force of reason alone.

And, although he could do this in many ways, I shall adopt one which I consider easiest for such a man. **For, since all desire to enjoy only those things which they suppose to be good, it is natural that this man should, at some time, turn his mind's eye to the examination of that cause by which these things are good,** which he does not desire, except as he judges them to be good. So that, as reason leads the way and follows up these considerations, he advances rationally to those truths of which, without reason, he has no knowledge. And if, in this discussion, I use any argument which no greater authority adduces, I wish it to be received in this way: although, on the grounds that I shall see fit to adopt, the conclusion is reached as if necessarily, yet it is not, for this reason, said to be absolutely necessary, but merely that it can appear so for the time being.

Key Takeaways

"It is easy, then, for one to say to himself: Since there are goods so innumerable, whose great diversity we experience by the bodily senses, and discern by our mental faculties, **must we not believe that there is some one thing, through which all goods whatever are good?**"

It is easy, then, for one to say to himself: Since there are goods so innumerable, whose great diversity we experience by the bodily senses, and discern by our mental faculties, **must we not believe that there is some one thing, through which all goods whatever are good?** Or are they good one through one thing and another through another? To be sure, it is most certain and clear, for all who are willing to see, that whatsoever things are said to possess any attribute in such a way that in mutual comparison they may be said to possess it in greater, or less, or equal degree, are said to possess it by virtue of some fact, which is not understood to be one thing in one case and another in another, but to be the same in different cases, whether it is regarded as existing in these cases in equal or unequal degree. For, whatsoever things are said to be *just*, when compared one with another, whether equally, or more, or less, cannot be understood as just, except through the quality of *justness*, which is not one thing in one instance, and another in another.

Since it is certain, then, that all goods, if mutually compared, would prove either equally or unequally good,



necessarily they are all good by virtue of something which is conceived of as the same in different goods, although sometimes they seem to be called good, the one by virtue of one thing, the other by virtue of another. For, apparently it is by virtue of one quality, that a horse is called *good*, because he is strong, and by virtue of another, that he is called *good*, because he is swift. For, though he seems to be called good by virtue of his strength, and good by virtue of his swiftness, yet swiftness and strength do not appear to be the same thing.

But if a horse, because he is strong and swift, is therefore good, how is it that a strong, swift robber is bad? Rather, then, just as a strong, swift robber is bad, because he is harmful, so a strong, swift horse is good, because he is useful. And, indeed, **nothing is ordinarily regarded as good, except either for some utility**—as, for instance, safety is called good, and those things which promote safety—or for some honorable character—as, for instance, beauty is reckoned to be good, and what promotes beauty.

But, since the reasoning which we have observed is in no wise refutable, necessarily, again, all things, whether useful or honorable, if they are truly good, are good through that same being through which all goods exist, whatever that being is.

But who can doubt this very being, through which all goods exist, to be a great good? This must be, then, a good through itself, since every other good is through it.

It follows, therefore, that all other goods are good through another being than that which they themselves are, and this being alone is good through itself.

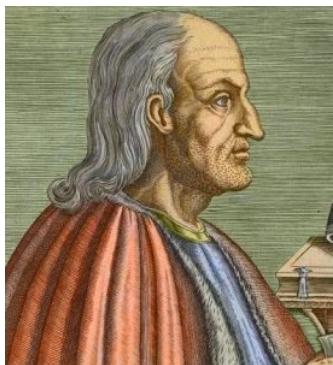
Hence, this alone is supremely good, which is alone good through itself. For it is supreme, in that it so surpasses other beings, that it is neither equaled nor excelled. But that which is supremely good is also supremely great.

There is, therefore, some one being which is supremely good, and supremely great, that is, the highest of all existing beings.”



Monologion Translated by Sidney Norton Deane, Associate Professor of Greek, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts, who gained his full professorship in 1914. Worked as a curator at the Museum of Classical Antiquities and as Librarian for the college. [Monologion](#)

2.3: Anselm- Proslogian 2 and 3



from *The Devotions of St. Anselm* (1903)

translated by Clement Webb

Anselm spent much time in his writings attempting to prove the existence of God through logical, rational thought. Below are writings that indicate, again, that concept of God being that “which we cannot conceive anything greater”. It might be interesting to compare these thoughts, found below, with modern thoughts about the universe and the divine.

On the occasion of Stephen Hawking’s death many news media issued comments about Hawking’s ideas concerning heaven and the concept of God.

Time Magazine’s report on Stephen Hawking’s ideas concerning God, heaven, religion and his own death.

Chapter II



Therefore, O Lord, who grantest to faith understanding, grant unto me that, so far as Thou knowest it to be expedient for me, I may understand that Thou art, as we believe; and also that Thou art what we believe Thee to be. And of a truth we believe that Thou art somewhat than which no greater can be conceived. Is there then nothing real that can be thus described? for the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.

Yet surely even that fool himself when he hears me speak of somewhat than which nothing greater can be conceived understands what he hears, and what he understands is in his understanding, even if he do not understand that it really exists. It is one thing for a thing to be in the understanding, and another to understand that the thing really exists.

For when a painter considers the work which he is to make, he has it indeed in his understanding; but he doth not yet understand that really to exist which as yet he has not made. But when he has painted his picture, then he both has the picture in his understanding, and also understands it really to exist. Thus even the fool is certain that something exists, at least in his understanding, than which nothing greater can be conceived; because, when he hears this mentioned, he understands it, and whatsoever is understood, exists in the understanding. And surely that than which no greater can be conceived cannot exist only in the understanding. For if it exist indeed in the understanding only, it can be thought to exist also in reality; and real existence is more than existence in the understanding only. If then that than which no greater can be conceived exists in the understanding only,

then that than which no greater can be conceived is something a greater than which can be conceived: but this is impossible. Therefore it is certain that something than which no greater can be conceived exists both in the understanding and also in reality.

Chapter III

Not only does this something than which no greater can be conceived exist, but it exists in so true a sense



that it cannot even be conceived not to exist. For it is possible to form the conception of an object whose non-existence shall be inconceivable; and such an object is of necessity greater than any object whose existence is conceivable: wherefore if that than which no greater can be conceived can be conceived not to exist; it follows that that than which no greater can be conceived is not that than which no greater can be conceived [for there can be thought a greater than it, namely, an object whose non-existence shall be inconceivable]; and this brings us to a contradiction. And thus it is proved that that thing than which no greater can be conceived exists in so true a sense, that it cannot even be conceived not to exist: and this thing art Thou, O Lord our God! And so Thou, O Lord my God, existest in so true a sense that Thou canst not even be conceived not to exist. And this is as is fitting. For if any mind could conceive aught better than Thee, then the creature would be ascending above the Creator, and judging the Creator; which is a supposition very absurd. Thou therefore dost exist in a truer sense than all else beside Thee, and art more real than all else beside Thee; because whatsoever else existeth, existeth in a less true sense than Thou, and therefore is less real than Thou. Why then said the fool in his heart, There is no God, when it is so plain to a rational mind that Thou art more real than any thing else? Why, except that he is a fool indeed?



<https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Proslogion>

The Devotions of St. Anselm (1903)

translated by Clement Webb, British academic; Oriel Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion

- This Wikisource page was last edited on 3 September 2016, at 09:42.
- Text is available under the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License](#); additional terms may apply.

Contributions and Attributions

This page is licensed under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Jody Ondich. Page content has been edited and updated to conform to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform; a detailed versioning history of the edits to source content is available upon request.

2.4: Aquinas- Summa Theologicae

The problem with Good and Evil



Thomas Aquinas, 1225 –1274 CE, is known as Dr. Angelicus, or as the Doctor of the Church. This 13th century Italian Catholic priest was a highly influential writer, theologian, philosopher and legal scholar in his time. He wrote about the nature of God, about sin, about ethics, about politics, and about the goal of human living. Here we are going to look at some of his ideas about the concepts of Good and Evil.

You might want to start with the Crash Course presentation:

The Problem of Evil

The you will find below excerpts from the writing of Aquinas on the cause of evil, the character of God, and whether there is a source that is not God for the existence of evil.

THE CAUSE OF EVIL (In Three Articles)

We next inquire into the cause of evil. Concerning this there are three points of inquiry:

- (1) Whether good can be the cause of evil?
- (2) Whether the supreme good, God, is the cause of evil?
- (3) Whether there be any supreme evil, which is the first cause of all evils?

FIRST ARTICLE [I, Q. 49, Art. 1]



Whether Good Can Be the Cause of Evil?

Objection 1: It would seem that good cannot be the cause of evil. For it is said (Matt. 7:18): “A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit.”

Obj. 2: Further, one contrary cannot be the cause of another. But evil is the contrary to good. Therefore good cannot be the cause of evil.

Obj. 3: Further, a deficient effect can proceed only from a deficient cause. But evil is a deficient effect. Therefore its cause, if it has one, is deficient. But everything deficient is an evil. Therefore the cause of evil can only be evil.

Obj. 4: Further, Dionysius says that evil has no cause. Therefore good is not the cause of evil.

On the contrary, Augustine says : “There is no possible source of evil except good.”

I answer that, It must be said that every evil in some way has a cause. For **evil is the absence of the good**, which is natural and due to a thing. But that anything fail from its natural and due disposition can come only from some cause drawing it out of its proper disposition. For a heavy thing is not moved upwards except by some impelling force; nor does an agent fail in its action except from some impediment. But only good can be a cause; because nothing can be a cause except inasmuch as it is a being, and every being, as such, is good.

And if we consider the special kinds of causes, we see that the agent, the form, and the end, import some kind of perfection which belongs to the notion of good. Even matter, as a potentiality to good, has the nature of good. Now that good is the cause of evil by way of the material cause was shown above (Q. 48, A. 3). For it was shown that good is the subject of evil. But evil has no formal cause, rather is it a privation of form; likewise, neither has it a final cause, but rather is it a privation of order to the proper

end; since not only the end has the nature of good, but also the useful, which is ordered to the end. Evil, however, has a cause by way of an agent, not directly, but accidentally.

In proof of this, we must know that evil is caused in the action otherwise than in the effect. In the action



evil is caused by reason of the defect of some principle of action, either of the principal or the instrumental agent; thus the defect in the movement of an animal may happen by reason of the weakness of the motive power, as in the case of children, or by reason only of the ineptitude of the instrument, as in the lame.

On the other hand, evil is caused in a thing, but not in the proper effect of the agent, sometimes by the power of the agent, sometimes by reason of a defect, either of the agent or of the matter. It is caused by reason of the power or perfection of the agent when there necessarily follows on the form intended by the agent the privation of another form; as, for instance, when on the form of fire there follows the privation of the form of air or of water.

Therefore, as the more perfect the fire is in strength, so much the more perfectly does it impress its own form, so also the more perfectly does it corrupt the contrary. Hence that evil and corruption befall air and water comes from the perfection of the fire: but this is accidental; because fire does not aim at the privation of the form of water, but at the bringing in of its own form, though by doing this it also accidentally causes the other. But if there is a defect in the proper effect of the fire—as, for instance, that it fails to heat—this comes either by defect of the action, which implies the defect of some principle, as was said above, or by the indisposition of the matter, which does not receive the action of the fire, the agent. But this very fact that it is a deficient being is accidental to good to which of itself it belongs to act. Hence it is true that evil in no way has any but an accidental cause; and thus is good the cause of evil.

Reply Obj. 1: As Augustine says : “**The Lord calls an evil will the evil tree, and a good will a good tree.**” Now, a good will does not produce a morally bad act, since it is from the good will itself that a moral act is judged to be good. Nevertheless the movement itself of an evil will is caused by the rational creature, which is good; and thus good is the cause of evil.

Reply Obj. 2: Good does not cause that evil which is contrary to itself, but some other evil: thus the goodness of the fire causes evil to the water, and man, good as to his nature, causes an act morally evil. And, as explained above (Q. 19, A. 9), this is by accident. Moreover, it does happen sometimes that one contrary causes another by accident: for instance, the exterior surrounding cold heats (the body) through the concentration of the inward heat.

Reply Obj. 3: Evil has a deficient cause in voluntary things otherwise than in natural things. For the natural agent produces the same kind of effect as it is itself, unless it is impeded by some exterior thing; and this amounts to some defect belonging to it. Hence evil never follows in the effect, unless some other evil pre-exists in the agent or in the matter, as was said above. But in voluntary things the defect of the action comes from the will actually deficient, inasmuch as it does not actually subject itself to its proper rule. This defect, however, is not a fault, but fault follows upon it from the fact that the will acts with this defect.

Reply Obj. 4: Evil has no direct cause, but only an accidental cause, as was said above.

 [2.0], via Wikimedia Commons Take some time to listen to Elie Wisel: Moyers Moment: Is Humanity Good or Evil?



SECOND ARTICLE [I, Q. 49, Art. 2]

Whether the Supreme Good, God, Is the Cause of Evil?

Objection 1: It would seem that the supreme good, God, is the cause of evil. For it is said (Isa. 45:5,7): “I am the Lord, and there is no other God, forming the light, and creating darkness, making peace, and creating evil.” And Amos 3:6, “Shall there be evil in a city, which the Lord hath not done?”

Obj. 2: Further, the effect of the secondary cause is reduced to the first cause. But good is the cause of evil, as was said above (A. 1). Therefore, since God is the cause of every good, as was shown above (Q. 2, A. 3; Q. 6, AA. 1, 4), it follows that also every evil is from God.

Obj. 3: Further, as is said by the Philosopher (Phys. ii, text 30), the cause of both safety and danger of the ship is the same. But God is the cause of the safety of all things. Therefore He is the cause of all perdition and of all evil.

On the contrary, Augustine says that, “God is not the author of evil because He is not the cause of tending to not-being.”

I answer that, As appears from what was said (A. 1), **the evil which consists in the defect of action** is always caused by the defect of the agent. But in God there is no defect, but the highest perfection, as was shown above (Q. 4, A. 1). Hence, the evil which consists in defect of action, or which is caused by defect of the agent, is not reduced to God as to its cause.

But the evil which consists in the corruption of some things is reduced to God as the cause. And this appears as regards both natural things and voluntary things. For it was said (A. 1) that some agent inasmuch as it produces by its power a form to which follows corruption and defect, causes by its power that corruption and defect. But it is manifest that the form which God chiefly intends in things created is the good of the order of the universe. Now, the order of the universe requires, as was said above (Q. 22, A. 2, ad 2; Q. 48, A. 2), that there should be some things that can, and do sometimes, fail. And thus God, by causing in things the good of the order of the universe, consequently and as it were by accident, causes the corruptions of things, according to 1 Kings 2:6: “The Lord killeth and maketh alive.”

But when we read that “God hath not made death” (Wis. 1:13), the sense is that God does not will death for its



own sake. Nevertheless the order of justice belongs to the order of the universe; and this requires that penalty should be dealt out to sinners. And so God is the author of the evil which is penalty, but not of the evil which is fault, by reason of what is said above.

Reply Obj. 1: These passages refer to the evil of penalty, and not to the evil of fault.

Reply Obj. 2: The effect of the deficient secondary cause is reduced to the first non-deficient cause as regards what it has of being and perfection, but not as regards what it has of defect; just as whatever there is of motion in the act of limping is caused by the motive power, whereas what there is of obliqueness in it does not come from the motive power, but from the curvature of the leg.

And, likewise, whatever there is of being and action in a bad action, is reduced to God as the cause; whereas whatever defect is in it is not caused by God, but by the deficient secondary cause.

Reply Obj. 3: The sinking of a ship is attributed to the sailor as the cause, from the fact that he does not fulfill what the safety of the ship requires; but God does not fail in doing what is necessary for the safety of all. Hence there is no parity.



THIRD ARTICLE [I, Q. 49, Art. 3]

[Whether There Be One Supreme Evil Which Is the Cause of Every Evil?](#)

Objection 1: It would seem that there is one supreme evil which is the cause of every evil. For contrary effects have contrary causes. But contrariety is found in things, according to Eccl. 33:15: “Good is set against evil, and life against death; so also is the sinner against a just man.” Therefore there are many contrary principles, one of good, the other of evil.

Obj. 2: Further, if one contrary is in nature, so is the other. But the supreme good is in nature, and is the cause of every good, as was shown above (Q. 2, A. 3; Q. 6, AA. 2, 4). Therefore, also, there is a supreme evil opposed to it as the cause of every evil.



Obj. 3: Further, as we find good and better things, so we find evil and worse. But good and better are so considered in relation to what is best. Therefore evil and worse are so considered in relation to some supreme evil.

Obj. 4: Further, everything participated is reduced to what is essential. But things which are evil among us are evil not essentially, but by participation. Therefore we must seek for some supreme essential evil, which is the cause of every evil.

Obj. 5: Further, whatever is accidental is reduced to that which is *per se*. But good is the accidental cause of evil. Therefore, we must suppose some supreme evil which is the *per se* cause of evils. Nor can it be said that evil has no *per se* cause, but only an accidental cause; for it would then follow that evil would not exist in the many, but only in the few.

Obj. 6: Further, the evil of the effect is reduced to the evil of the cause; because the deficient effect comes from the deficient cause, as was said above (AA. 1, 2). But we cannot proceed to infinity in this matter. Therefore, we must suppose one first evil as the cause of every evil.

On the contrary, The supreme good is the cause of every being, as was shown above (Q. 2, A. 3; Q. 6, A. 4). Therefore there cannot be any principle opposed to it as the cause of evils.

I answer that, It appears from what precedes that there is no one first principle of evil, as there is one first principle of good.

First, indeed, because the first principle of good is essentially good, as was shown above (Q. 6, AA. 3, 4). But nothing can be essentially bad. For it was shown above that every being, as such, is good (Q. 5, A. 3); and that evil can exist only in good as in its subject (Q. 48, A. 3).

Secondly, because the first principle of good is the highest and perfect good which pre-contains in itself all goodness, as shown above (Q. 6, A. 2). But there cannot be a supreme evil; because, as was shown above (Q. 48, A. 4), although evil always lessens good, yet it never wholly consumes it; and thus, while good ever remains, nothing can be wholly and perfectly bad. Therefore, the Philosopher says (Ethic. iv, 5) that “if the wholly evil could be, it would destroy itself”; because all good being destroyed (which it need be for something to be wholly evil), evil itself would be taken away, since its subject is good.

Thirdly, because the very nature of evil is against the idea of a first principle; both because every evil is caused by good, as was shown above (A. 1), and because evil can be only an accidental cause, and thus it cannot be the first cause, for the accidental cause is subsequent to the direct cause.



Those, however, who upheld two first principles, one good and the other evil, fell into this error from the same cause, whence also arose other strange notions of the ancients; namely, because they failed to consider the universal cause of all being, and considered only the particular causes of particular effects. For on that account, if they found a thing hurtful to something by the power of its own nature, they thought that the very nature of that thing was evil; as, for instance, if one should say that the nature of fire was evil because it burnt the house of a poor man. The judgment, however, of the goodness of anything does not depend upon its order to any particular thing, but rather upon what it is in itself, and on its order to the whole universe, wherein every part has its own perfectly ordered place, as was said above (Q. 47, A. 2, ad 1).

Likewise, because they found two contrary particular causes of two contrary particular effects, they did not know how to reduce these contrary particular causes to the universal common cause; and therefore they extended the contrariety of causes even to the first principles. But since all contraries agree in something common, it is necessary to search for one common cause for them above their own contrary proper causes; as above the contrary qualities of the elements exists the power of a heavenly body; and above all things that exist, no matter how, there exists one first principle of being, as was shown above (Q. 2, A. 3).

Reply Obj. 1: Contraries agree in one genus, and they also agree in the nature of being; and therefore, although they have contrary particular causes, nevertheless we must come at last to one first common cause.

Reply Obj. 2: Privation and habit belong naturally to the same subject. Now the subject of privation is a being in potentiality, as was said above (Q. 48, A. 3). Hence, since evil is privation of good, as appears from what was said above (Q. 48, AA. 1, 2, 3), it is opposed to that good which has some potentiality, but not to the supreme good, who is pure act.

Reply Obj. 3: Increase in intensity is in proportion to the nature of a thing. And as the form is a perfection, so privation removes a perfection. Hence every form, perfection, and good is intensified by approach to the perfect term; but privation and evil by receding from that term. Hence a thing is not said to be evil and worse, by reason of access to the supreme evil, in the same way as it is said to be good and better, by reason of access to the supreme good.

Reply Obj. 4: No being is called evil by participation, but by privation of participation. Hence it is not necessary to reduce it to any essential evil.



Reply Obj. 5: Evil can only have an accidental cause, as was shown above (A. 1). Hence reduction to any ‘per se’ cause of evil is impossible. And to say that evil is in the greater number is simply false. For things which are generated and corrupted, in which alone can there be natural evil, are the smaller part of the whole universe. And again, in every species the defect of nature is in the smaller number. In man alone does evil appear as in the greater number; because the good of man as regards the senses is not the good of man as man—that is, in regard to reason; and more men seek good in regard to the senses than good according to reason.

Reply Obj. 6: In the causes of evil we do not proceed to infinity, but reduce all evils to some good cause, whence evil follows accidentally.



The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Summa Theologica*, Part II-II (Secunda Secundae), by Thomas Aquinas

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org

Title: Summa Theologica, Part II-II (Secunda Secundae)

Author: Thomas Aquinas

Translator: Fathers of the English Dominican Province

Release Date: July 4, 2006 [EBook #18755]

Language: English

Contributions and Attributions

This page is licensed under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Jody Ondich. Page content has been edited and updated to conform to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform; a detailed versioning history of the edits to source content is available upon request.

2.5: Aquinas- Summa Theologicae Third Article

Five Ways to Prove the Existence of God



Arguing over the existence of God is something often done in college! Perhaps referring to a little science before we get to theology or philosophy would be a good way to start.

From Eric Seigel [\[1\]](#) comes a column called:

[Can Science Prove the Existence of God?](#)

What do you think? Does this prove anything for or against the existence of God?

Thomas Aquinas had five different ways that he attempted to prove the existence of God. You can read them starting below.

Whether God Exists?

Objection 1: It seems that God does not exist; because if one of two contraries be infinite, the other would be altogether destroyed. But the word “God” means that He is infinite goodness. If, therefore, God existed, there would be no evil discoverable; but there is evil in the world. Therefore God does not exist.

Obj. 2: Further, it is superfluous to suppose that what can be accounted for by a few principles has been produced by many. But it seems that everything we see in the world can be accounted for by other principles, supposing God did not exist. For all natural things can be reduced to one principle which is nature; and all voluntary things can be reduced to one principle which is human reason, or will. Therefore there is no need to suppose God’s existence.

On the contrary, It is said in the person of God: “I am Who am.” (Ex. 3:14)

I answer that, The existence of God can be proved in five ways.

[The first and more manifest way is the argument from motion.](#)

It is certain, and evident to our senses, that in the world some things are in motion. Now whatever is in motion is put in motion by another, for nothing can be in motion except it is in potentiality to that towards which it is in motion; whereas a thing moves inasmuch as it is in act. For motion is nothing else than the reduction of something from potentiality to actuality. But nothing can be reduced from potentiality to actuality, except by something in a state of actuality. Thus that which is actually hot, as fire, makes wood, which is potentially hot, to be actually hot, and thereby moves and changes it. Now it is not possible that the same thing should be at once in actuality and potentiality in the same respect, but only in different respects. For what is actually hot cannot simultaneously be potentially hot; but it is simultaneously potentially cold. It is therefore impossible that in the same respect and in the same way a thing should be both mover and moved, i.e. that it should move itself. Therefore, whatever is in motion must be put in motion by another. If that by which it is put in motion be itself put in motion, then this also must needs be put in motion by another, and that by another again. But this cannot go on to infinity, because then there would be no first mover, and, consequently, no other mover; seeing that subsequent movers move only inasmuch as they are put in motion by the first mover; as the staff moves only because it is put in motion by the hand. Therefore it is necessary to arrive at a first mover, put in motion by no other; and this everyone understands to be God.

The second way is from the nature of the efficient cause.

In the world of sense we find there is an order of efficient causes. There is no case known (neither is it, indeed, possible) in which a thing is found to be the efficient cause of itself; for so it would be prior to itself, which is impossible. Now in efficient causes it is not possible to go on to infinity, because in all efficient causes following in order, the first is the cause of the intermediate cause, and the intermediate is the cause of the ultimate cause, whether the intermediate cause be several, or only one. Now to take away the cause is to take away the effect. Therefore, if there be no first cause among efficient causes, there will be no ultimate, nor any intermediate cause. But if in efficient causes it is possible to go on to infinity, there will be no first efficient cause, neither will there be an ultimate effect, nor any intermediate efficient causes; all of which is plainly false. Therefore it is necessary to admit a first efficient cause, to which everyone gives the name of God.



The third way is taken from possibility and necessity, and runs thus.

We find in nature things that are possible to be and not to be, since they are found to be generated, and to corrupt, and consequently, they are possible to be and not to be. But it is impossible for these always to exist, for that which is possible not to be at some time is not. Therefore, if everything is possible not to be, then at one time there could have been nothing in existence. Now if this were true, even now there would be nothing in existence, because that which does not exist only begins to exist by something already existing. Therefore, if at one time nothing was in existence, it would have been impossible for anything to have begun to exist; and thus even now nothing would be in existence—which is absurd. Therefore, not all beings are merely possible, but there must exist something the existence of which is necessary. But every necessary thing either has its necessity caused by another, or not. Now it is impossible to go on to infinity in necessary things which have their necessity caused by another, as has been already proved in regard to efficient causes. Therefore we cannot but postulate the existence of some being having of itself its own necessity, and not receiving it from another, but rather causing in others their necessity. This all men speak of as God.

The fourth way is taken from the gradation to be found in things.

Among beings there are some more and some less good, true, noble and the like. But *more* and *less* are predicated of different things, according as they resemble in their different ways something which is the maximum, as a thing is said to be hotter according as it more nearly resembles that which is hottest; so that there is something which is truest, something best, something noblest and, consequently, something which is uttermost being; for those things that are greatest in truth are greatest in being, as it is written in *Metaph.* ii. Now the maximum in any genus is the cause of all in that genus; as fire, which is the maximum heat, is the cause of all hot things. Therefore there must also be something which is to all beings the cause of their being, goodness, and every other perfection; and this we call God.

The fifth way is taken from the governance of the world.

We see that things which lack intelligence, such as natural bodies, act for an end, and this is evident from their acting always, or nearly always, in the same way, so as to obtain the best result. Hence it is plain that not fortuitously, but designedly, do they achieve their end. Now whatever lacks intelligence cannot move towards an end, unless it be directed by some being endowed with knowledge and intelligence; as the arrow is shot to its mark by the archer. Therefore some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to their end; and this being we call God.



You might enjoy the more relaxed approach of [The Cosmological Arguments](#)



Project Gutenberg's Summa Theologica, Part I (Prima Pars), by Thomas Aquinas

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org

Title: Summa Theologica, Part I (Prima Pars) From the Complete American Edition

Author: Thomas Aquinas

Translator: Fathers of the English Dominican Province

Release Date: January 26, 2006 [EBook #17611]

Language: English

-
1. The Universe is: Expanding, cooling, and dark. It starts with a bang! #Cosmology Science writer, astrophysicist, science communicator & NASA columnist. [←](#)

2.6: Machiavelli- excerpts from "The Prince"



Niccolò Machiavelli, 1469-1527 CE was an Italian politician, writer and diplomat. From 1494 to 1512 he held an official post at Florence, Italy which included diplomatic missions to various European courts. He has been called the father of modern political science, writing theater, poetry, philosophy, and songs. His most famous work was *The Prince*, written when he was in exile from politics. Machiavellian is a term that often characterizes unscrupulous politicians of the sort Machiavelli described in *The Prince*. Machiavelli described immoral behavior, such as dishonesty and killing, as being both normal and effective in politics.

Take some time to watch the BBC documentary about Machiavelli:-

[Nicolo Machiavelli](#)

And then read excerpts from *The Prince* below.

"It is better to be feared than loved, if you cannot be both." Niccolo Machiavelli

Chapter 3 Concerning Mixed Principalities



Now I say that those dominions which, when acquired, are added to an ancient state by him who acquires them, are either of the same country and language, or they are not. When they are, it is easier to hold them, especially when they have not been accustomed to self-government; and to hold them securely it is enough to have destroyed the family of the prince who was ruling them; because the two peoples, preserving in other things the old conditions, and not being unlike in customs, will live quietly together, as one has seen in Brittany, Burgundy, Gascony, and Normandy, which have been bound to France for so long a time: and, although there may be some difference in language, nevertheless the customs are alike, and the people will easily be able to get on amongst themselves. He who has annexed them, if he wishes to hold them, has only to bear in mind two considerations: the one, that the family of their former lord is extinguished; the other, that neither their laws nor their taxes are altered, so that in a very short time they will become entirely one body with the old principality.

But when states are acquired in a country differing in language, customs, or laws, there are difficulties, and good fortune and great energy are needed to hold them, and one of the greatest and most real helps would be that he who has acquired them should go and reside there. This would make his position more secure and durable, as it has made that of the Turk in Greece, who, notwithstanding all the other measures taken by him for holding that state, if he had not settled there, would not have been able to keep it. Because, if one is on the spot, disorders are seen as they spring up, and one can quickly remedy them; but if one is not at hand, they are heard of only when they are great, and then one can no longer remedy them. Besides this, the country is not pillaged by your officials; the subjects are satisfied by prompt recourse to the prince; thus, wishing to be good, they have more cause to love him, and wishing to be otherwise, to fear him. He who would attack that state from the outside must have the utmost caution; as long as the prince resides there it can only be wrested from him with the greatest difficulty.

Mach-i-a-vel-li-an

,mäkēə'vēlēən,, makēə'vēlēən/

adjective

cunning, scheming, and unscrupulous, especially in politics or in advancing one's career.

synonyms: devious, cunning, crafty, artful, wily, sly, scheming, treacherous, two-faced, Janus-faced, tricky, double-dealing, unscrupulous, deceitful, dishonest;

The other and better course is to send colonies to one or two places, which may be as keys to that state, for it is necessary either to do this or else to keep there a great number of cavalry and infantry. A prince does not spend much on colonies, for with little or no expense he can send them out and keep them there, and he offends a minority only of the citizens from whom he takes lands and houses to give them to the new inhabitants; and those whom he offends, remaining poor and scattered, are never able to injure him; whilst the rest being uninjured are easily kept quiet, and at the same time are anxious not to err for fear it should happen to them as it has to those who have been despoiled. In conclusion, I say that these colonies are not costly, they are more faithful, they injure less, and the injured, as has been said, being poor and scattered, cannot hurt. Upon this, one has to remark that men ought either to be well treated or crushed, because they can avenge themselves of lighter injuries, of more serious ones they cannot; therefore the injury that is to be done to a man ought to be of such a kind that one does not stand in fear of revenge.

But in maintaining armed men there in place of colonies one spends much more, having to consume on the  creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/, via Wikimedia Commons **garrison all the income from the state**, so that the acquisition turns into a loss, and many more are exasperated, because the whole state is injured; through the shifting of the garrison up and down all become acquainted with hardship, and all become hostile, and they are enemies who, whilst beaten on their own ground, are yet able to do hurt. For every reason, therefore, such guards are as useless as a colony is useful.

Again, the prince who holds a country differing in the above respects ought to make himself the head and defender of his less powerful neighbours, and to weaken the more powerful amongst them, taking care that no foreigner as powerful as himself shall, by any accident, get a footing there; for it will always happen that such a one will be introduced by those who are discontented, either through excess of ambition or through fear, as one has seen already. The Romans were brought into Greece by the Aetolians; and in every other country where they obtained a footing they were brought in by the inhabitants. And the usual course of affairs is that, as soon as a powerful foreigner enters a country, all the subject states are drawn to him, moved by the hatred which they feel against the ruling power. So that in respect to those subject states he has not to take any trouble to gain them over to himself, for the whole of them quickly rally to the state which he has acquired there. He has only to take care that they do not get hold of too much power and too much authority, and then with his own forces, and with their goodwill, he can easily keep down the more powerful of them, so as to remain entirely master in the country. And he who does not properly manage this business will soon lose what he has acquired, and whilst he does hold it he will have endless difficulties and troubles.

The Romans, in the countries which they annexed, observed closely these measures; they sent colonies and maintained friendly relations with the minor powers, without increasing their strength; they kept down the greater, and did not allow any strong foreign powers to gain authority. Greece appears to me sufficient for an example. The Achaeans and Aetolians were kept friendly by them, the kingdom of Macedonia was humbled, Antiochus was driven out; yet the merits of the Achaeans and Aetolians never secured for them permission to increase their power, nor did the persuasions of Philip ever induce the Romans to be his friends without first humbling him, nor did the influence of Antiochus make them agree that he should retain any lordship over the country. Because the Romans did in these instances what all prudent princes ought to do, who have to regard not only present troubles, but also future ones, for which they must prepare with every energy, because, when foreseen, it is easy to remedy them; but if you wait until they approach, the medicine is no longer in time because the malady has become incurable; for it happens in this, as the physicians say it happens in hectic fever, that in the beginning of the malady it is easy to cure but difficult to detect, but in the course of time, not having been either detected or treated in the beginning, it becomes easy to detect but difficult to cure. Thus it happens in affairs of state, for when the evils that arise have been foreseen (which it is only given to a wise man to see), they can be quickly redressed, but when, through not having been foreseen, they have been permitted to grow in a way that every one can see them, there is no longer a remedy. Therefore, the Romans, foreseeing troubles, dealt with them at once, and, even to avoid a war, would not let them come to a head, for they knew that war is not to be avoided, but is only to be put off to the advantage of others; moreover they wished to fight with Philip and Antiochus in Greece so as not to have to do it in Italy; they could have avoided both, but this they did not wish; nor did that ever please them which is forever in the mouths of the wise ones of our time:—Let us enjoy the benefits of the time—but rather the benefits of their own valour and prudence, for time drives everything before it, and is able to bring with it good as well as evil, and evil as well as good.

From a column by Erika Anderson in Forbes Magazine in 2014 [Machiavelli](#), 15 quotes that she likes from Machiavelli.

“Princes and governments are far more dangerous than other elements within society.”

“For whoever believes that great advancement and new benefits make men forget old injuries is mistaken.”

“It is essential that in entering a new province you should have the good will of its inhabitants.”

“He who is highly esteemed is not easily conspired against;”



"Therefore the best fortress is to be found in the love of the people, for although you may have fortresses they will not save you if you are hated by the people."



But let us turn to France and inquire whether she has done any of the things mentioned. I will speak of Louis [1] (and not of Charles) [2] as the one whose conduct is the better to be observed, he having held possession of Italy for the longest period; and you will see that he has done the opposite to those things which ought to be done to retain a state composed of divers elements.

King Louis was brought into Italy by the ambition of the Venetians, who desired to obtain half the state of Lombardy by his intervention. I will not blame the course taken by the king, because, wishing to get a foothold in Italy, and having no friends there—seeing rather that every door was shut to him owing to the conduct of Charles—he was forced to accept those friendships which he could get, and he would have succeeded very quickly in his design if in other matters he had not made some mistakes. The king, however, having acquired Lombardy, regained at once the authority which Charles had lost: Genoa yielded; the Florentines became his friends; the Marquess of Mantua, the Duke of Ferrara, the Bentivogli, my lady of Forli, the Lords of Faenza, of Pesaro, of Rimini, of Camerino, of Piombino, the Lucchese, the Pisans, the Sienese—everybody made advances to him to become his friend. Then could the Venetians realize the rashness of the course taken by them, which, in order that they might secure two towns in Lombardy, had made the king master of two-thirds of Italy.



Is this true? Donald Trump is the American Machiavelli

Let any one now consider with what little difficulty the king could have maintained his position in Italy had he observed the rules above laid down, and kept all his friends secure and protected; for although they were numerous they were both weak and timid, some afraid of the Church, some of the Venetians, and thus they would always have been forced to stand in with him, and by their means he could easily have made himself secure against those who remained powerful. But he was no sooner in Milan than he did the contrary by assisting Pope Alexander to occupy the Romagna. It never occurred to him that by this action he was weakening himself, depriving himself of friends and of those who had thrown themselves into his lap, whilst he aggrandized the Church by adding much temporal power to the spiritual, thus giving it greater authority. And having committed this prime error, he was obliged to follow it up, so much so that, to put an end to the ambition of Alexander, and to prevent his becoming the master of Tuscany, he was himself forced to come into Italy.

And as if it were not enough to have aggrandized the Church, and deprived himself of friends, he, wishing to have the kingdom of Naples, divided it with the King of Spain, and where he was the prime arbiter in Italy he takes an associate, so that the ambitious of that country and the malcontents of his own should have somewhere to shelter; and whereas he could have left in the kingdom his own pensioner as king, he drove him out, to put one there who was able to drive him, Louis, out in turn.

The wish to acquire is in truth very natural and common, and men always do so when they can, and for this they will be praised not blamed; but when they cannot do so, yet wish to do so by any means, then there is folly and blame. Therefore, if France could have attacked Naples with her own forces she ought to have done so; if she could not, then she ought not to have divided it. And if the partition which she made with the Venetians in Lombardy was justified by the excuse that by it she got a foothold in Italy, this other partition merited blame, for it had not the excuse of that necessity.

From a column by Erika Anderson in Forbes Magazine, here are the next 5:

"There is no other way to guard yourself against flattery than by making men understand that telling you the truth will not offend you."

"The first method for estimating the intelligence of a ruler is to look at the men he has around him."

"Without an opportunity, their abilities would have been wasted, and without their abilities, the opportunity would have arisen in vain."

"It is not titles that honor men, but men that honor titles."

"All courses of action are risky, so prudence is not in avoiding danger (it's impossible), but calculating risk and acting decisively."



Therefore Louis made these five errors:

- he destroyed the minor powers,
- he increased the strength of one of the greater powers in Italy,
- he brought in a foreign power,
- he did not settle in the country,
- he did not send colonies.

Which errors, had he lived, were not enough to injure him had he not made a sixth by taking away their dominions from the Venetians; because, had he not aggrandized the Church, nor brought Spain into Italy, it would have been very reasonable and necessary to humble them; but having first taken these steps, he ought never to have consented to their ruin, for they, being powerful, would always have kept off others from designs on Lombardy, to which the Venetians would never have consented except to become masters themselves there; also because the others would not wish to take Lombardy from France in order to give it to the Venetians, and to run counter to both they would not have had the courage.

And if any one should say: "King Louis yielded the Romagna to Alexander and the kingdom to Spain to avoid war," I answer for the reasons given above that a blunder ought never to be perpetrated to avoid war, because it is not to be avoided, but is only deferred to your disadvantage. And if another should allege the pledge which the king had given to the Pope that he would assist him in the enterprise, in exchange for the dissolution of his marriage [3] and for the cap to Rouen, [4] to that I reply what I shall write later on concerning the faith of princes, and how it ought to be kept.

Here are the last 5 of Erika Anderson's favorite Machiavelli quotes in Forbes Magazine:

"Where the willingness is great, the difficulties cannot be great."

"It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things."

"Men intrinsically do not trust new things that they have not experienced themselves."

"He who becomes a Prince through the favor of the people should always keep on good terms with them; which it is easy for him to do, since all they ask is not to be oppressed."

"Minds are of three kinds: one is capable of thinking for itself; another is able to understand the thinking of others; and a third can neither think for itself nor understand the thinking of others. The first is of the highest excellence, the second is excellent, and the third is worthless."

Thus King Louis lost Lombardy by not having followed any of the conditions observed by those who have taken possession of countries and wished to retain them. Nor is there any miracle in this, but much that is reasonable and quite natural. And on these matters I spoke at Nantes with Rouen, when Valentino, as Cesare Borgia, the son of Pope Alexander, was usually called, occupied the Romagna, and on Cardinal Rouen observing to me that the Italians did not understand war, I replied to him that the French did not understand statecraft, meaning that otherwise they would not have allowed the Church to reach such greatness. And in fact it has been seen that the greatness of the Church and of Spain in Italy has been caused by France, and her ruin may be attributed to them. From this a general rule is drawn which never or rarely fails: that he who is the cause of another becoming powerful is ruined; because that predominancy has been brought about either by astuteness or else by force, and both are distrusted by him who has been raised to power.



The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Prince*, by Nicolo Machiavelli

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org.

Title: The Prince

Author: Nicolo Machiavelli

Translator: W. K. Marriott Release Date: February 11, 2006 [EBook #1232]

Last updated: August 26, 2016 Language: English

1. (*) Louis XII, King of France, "The Father of the People," born 1462, died 1515. ↵
2. Charles VIII, King of France, born 1470, died 1498. ↵
3. Louis XII divorced his wife, Jeanne, daughter of Louis XI, and married in 1499 Anne of Brittany, widow of Charles VIII, in order to retain the Duchy of Brittany for the crown. ↵
4. The Archbishop of Rouen. He was Georges d'Amboise, created a cardinal by Alexander VI. Born 1460, died 1510. ↵



2.7: Rumi



Rumi, 1207– 1273 CE, was a 13th-century Persian Muslim poet, jurist, Islamic scholar, theologian, and Sufi mystic. Rumi's influence transcends national borders and ethnic divisions in the Muslim world and beyond. His poems have been widely translated into many of the world's languages. Rumi has become a widely read and popular poet, even in the US.

About Rumi: from Coleman Barks^[1]

Opening the Heart Through Ecstatic Poetry

You will find several selections of his works translated below. Rumi speaks of Love in much of his poetry, and there is some equation of love with the divine, as well. His works help the discussion of the concept of God, and the definition of Love.



“BE SILENT”

Be silent that the Lord who gave thee language may speak,
For as He fashioned a door and lock, He has also made a key.

“I SAW THE WINTER WEAVING”

I saw the winter weaving from flakes a robe of Death;
And the spring found earth in mourning, all naked, lone, and bare.
I heard Time's loom a-whirring that wove the Sun's dim Veil;
I saw a worm a-weaving in Life-threads its own lair.
I saw the Great was Smallest, and saw the Smallest Great;
For God had set His likeness on all the things that were.

THE SILENCE OF LOVE

Love is the astrolabe of God's mysteries.
A lover may hanker after this love or that love,
But at the last he is drawn to the KING of Love.
However much we describe and explain Love,
When we fall in love we are ashamed of our words.
Explanation by the tongue makes most things clear,
But Love unexplained is better.

WOMAN

Woman is a ray of God, not a mere mistress,
The Creator's Self, as it were, not a mere creature!



THE GIFTS OF THE BELOVED

Where will you find one more liberal than God?
He buys the worthless rubbish which is your wealth,
He pays you the Light that illumines your heart.
He accepts these frozen and lifeless bodies of yours,
And gives you a Kingdom beyond what you dream of,
He takes a few drops of your tears,
And gives you the Divine Fount sweeter than sugar.
He takes your sighs fraught with grief and sadness,
And for each sigh gives rank in heaven as interest.
In return for the sigh-wind that raised tear-clouds,
God gave Abraham the title of "Father of the Faithful."



ALL RELIGIONS ARE ONE

In the adorations and benedictions of righteous men
The praises of all the prophets are kneaded together.
All their praises are mingled into one stream,
All the vessels are emptied into one ewer.
Because He that is praised is, in fact, only One.
In this respect all religions are only one religion.
Because all praises are directed towards God's Light,
These various forms and figures are borrowed from it.

The Speech

Listen to this Ted Talk by Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf^[2]:

[Lose Your Ego, Find Your Compassion](#)



The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Persian Mystics*

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org.

Title: Jalálu'd-dín Rúmí *The Persian Mystics*

Author: Jalálu'd-dín Rúmí

Translator: Frederick Hadland Davis



Release Date: March 17, 2014 [EBook #45159]

Language: English

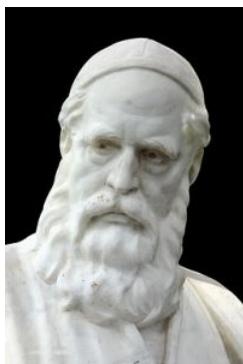
1. For 30 years, until retirement in 1997, Dr. Coleman Barks taught poetry and creative writing at the University of Georgia. As a professor emeritus, Dr. Barks still resides in Athens and writes and publishes under his own imprint, Maypop Books, as well as HarperCollins, the University of Georgia ↵
2. Feisal Abdul Rauf (Arabic: فيصل عبد الرؤوف, born 1948) is an Egyptian American Sufi[1][2] imam, author, and activist whose stated goal is to improve relations between the Muslim world and the West.[3] From 1983 to 2009, he served as Imam of Masjid al-Farah, a mosque in New York City.[4][5] He has written three books on Islam and its place in contemporary Western society, including What's Right with Islam Is What's Right with America, and founded two non-profit organizations whose stated missions are to enhance the discourse on Islam in society. ↵



2.8: Omar Khayyam

Selections from the Rubaiyat

(Translation by Edward Fitzgerald)



Omar Khayyam, 1048 – 1131 CE, was a Persian mathematician, astronomer, and poet. He was born in Nishapur, in northeastern Iran. Omar Khayyam's poetry was written in the form of quatrains (*rubā'iyāt*). This poetry became widely known to the English-reading world due to the translation by Edward Fitzgerald (*Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, 1859).

Spend some time getting to know Khayyam through this BBC documentary:

[Omar Khayyam: the Poet of Uncertainty](#)

And then enjoy his poetry about life and love and living well.

VII

Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling:
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter—and the Bird is on the Wing

XII

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

XVI

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes—or it prospers; and anon,
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face,
Lighting a little hour or two—is gone. \

XXV

Alike for those who for To-day prepare,
And those that after some To-morrow stare,
A Muezzin from the Tower of Darkness cries
“Fools! your Reward is neither Here nor There.”

LXXI

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit

Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it!

XCIX

Ah, Love! could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!

About the Rubaiyat From the **Introduction** to this translation:

[fdl.html] or CC-BY-SA-3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>), via Wikimedia Commons **The “Rubbīyāt” is a string of quatrains**, each of which has all the complete and independent significance of an epigram. Yet there is so little of that lightness which should characterize an epigram that we can scarcely put Omar in the same category with Martial, and it is easy to understand why the author should have been contented to name his book the “Rubbīyāt,” or Quatrains, leaving it to each individual to make, if he chooses, a more definite description of the work.

To English readers, Mr. Edward Fitzgerald’s version of the poem has provided one of the most masterly translations that was ever made from an Oriental classic. For Omar, like Hōfiz, is one of the most Persian of Persian writers. There is in this volume all the gorgeousness of the East: all the luxury of the most refined civilization. Omar’s bowers are always full of roses; the notes of the nightingale tremble through his stanzas. The intoxication of wine and the bright eyes of lovely women are ever present to his mind. The feast, the revel, the joys of love, and the calm satisfaction of appetite make up the grosser elements in his song. But the prevailing note of his music is that of deep and settled melancholy, breaking out occasionally into words of misanthropy and despair. The keenness and intensity of this poet’s style seem to be inspired by an ever-present fear of death. This sense of approaching Fate is never absent from him, even in his most genial moments; and the strange fascination which he exercises over his readers is largely due to the thrilling sweetness of some passage which ends in a note of dejection and anguish.

Strange to say, Omar was the greatest mathematician of his day. The exactness of his fine and analytic mind is reflected in the exquisite finish, the subtle wit, the delicate descriptive touches, that abound in his Quatrains. His verses hang together like gems of the purest water exquisitely cut and clasped by “jacinth work of subtlest jewelry.” But apart from their masterly technique, these Quatrains exhibit in their general tone the revolt of a clear intellect from the prevailing bigotry and fanaticism of an established religion. There is in the poet’s mind the lofty indignation of one who sees, in its true light, the narrowness of an ignorant and hypocritical clergy, yet can find no solid ground on which to build up for himself a theory of supernaturalism, illumined by hope. Yet there are traces of Mysticism in his writings, which only serve to emphasize his profound longing for some knowledge of the invisible, and his foreboding that the grave is the “be-all” and “end-all” of life. The poet speaks in tones of bitterest lamentation when he sees succumb to Fate all that is bright and fresh and beautiful. At his brightest moments he gives expression to a vague pantheism, but all his views of the power that lies behind life are obscured and perturbed by skeptical despondency.

He is the great man of science, who, like other men of genius too deeply immersed in the study of natural law or abstract reasoning, has lost all touch with that great world of spiritual things which we speak of as religion, and which we can only come in contact with through those instinctive emotions which scientific analysis very often does so much to stifle. There are many men of science who, like Darwin, have come, through the study of material phenomena in nature, to a condition of mind which is indifferent in matters of religion. But the remarkable feature in the case of Omar is that he, who could see so clearly and feel so acutely, has been enabled also to embody in a poem of imperishable beauty the opinions which he shared with many of his contemporaries. The range of his mind can only be measured by supposing that Sir Isaac Newton had written Manfred or Childe Harold. But even more remarkable is what we may call the modernity of this twelfth century Persian poet. We sometimes hear it said that great periods of civilization end in a manifestation of infidelity and despair. There can be no doubt that a great deal of restlessness and misgiving characterizes the minds of to-day in regard to all questions of religion. Europe, in the nineteenth century, as reflected in the works of Byron, Spencer, Darwin, and Schopenhauer, is very much in the same condition as intellectual Persia in the twelfth century, so far as the pessimism of Omar is representative of his day. This accounts for the wide popularity of Fitzgerald’s “Rubbīyāt.” The book has been read eagerly and fondly studied, as if it were a new book of *fin du siècle* production: the last efflorescence of intellectual satiety, cynicism, and despair. Yet the book is eight centuries old, and it has been the task of this seer of the East to reveal to the West the heart-sickness under which the nations were suffering.



Omar Khayyām—that is, Omar the tent-maker—was born in the year 1050 AD at Nīshāpūr, the little Damascus (as it is called) of Persia: famous as a seat of learning, as a place of religion, and a centre of commerce. In the days of Omar it was by far the most important city of Khorasan. The poet, like his father before him, held a court office under the Vizir of his day. It was from the stipend which he thus enjoyed that he secured leisure for mathematical and literary work. His father had been a khayyām, or tent-maker, and his gifted son doubtless inherited the handicraft as well as the name; but his position at Court released him from the drudgery of manual labor. He was thus also brought in contact with the luxurious side of life, and became acquainted with those scenes of pleasure which he recalls only to add poignancy to the sorrow with which he contemplates the yesterday of life. Omar's astronomical researches were continued for many years, and his algebra has been translated into French: but his greatest claim to renown is based upon his immortal Quatrains, which will always live as the best expression of a phase of mind constantly recurring in the history of civilization, from the days of Anaxagoras to those of Darwin and Spencer.”



The Project Gutenberg eBook, Persian Literature, Volume 1,Comprising *The Shah Nameh*, *The Rubaiyat*, *The Divan*, and *The Gulistan*, by Anonymous, et al

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.net

Title: Persian Literature, Volume 1,Comprising *The Shah Nameh*, *The Rubaiyat*, *The Divan*, and *The Gulistan*

Author: Anonymous

Release Date: November 26, 2003 [eBook #10315]

Language: English

Contributions and Attributions

This page is licensed under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Jody Ondich. Page content has been edited and updated to conform to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform; a detailed versioning history of the edits to source content is available upon request.

2.9: Excerpts from the letters of Abelard and Héloïse



The Love Letters of Abelard and Héloïse

Both Abelard and Héloïse were well known intellectuals from 12th century CE France. Abelard was a lecturer in philosophy. Héloïse was an unusually well educated woman who spoke and read Latin, Greek and Hebrew. When Héloïse was 19, she and Abelard fell in love, which was unfortunate, as he was her tutor at the time, and this caused a scandal. As a result of their affair, they had a child, Astrolabe, out of wedlock. When this situation was discovered by Héloïse's uncle, the uncle hired a man to assault and castrate Abelard, which was carried out successfully. Héloïse was, after the birth of her child, forced to enter a convent. Abelard was exiled to Brittany, where he lived as monk. Héloïse became abbess of the Oratory of the Paraclete, an abbey which Abelard had founded.

It was at this time that they exchanged their famous letters. It started when a letter from Abelard to another person falls into Héloïse's hands, where she reads his version of their love story. She finds that he is still suffering, and she knows that she has not found peace. So she writes to Abelard with passion and frustration and anger and despair; he replies in a letter that struggles between faith and equal passion. A short series of letters follow, and then there is nothing more that has survived of any more correspondence between the two.

Abelard died in 1142 CE at the age of sixty-three, and twenty years later Héloïse died and was buried beside him. Abelard, although known at the time as a leader and philosopher, is only survived by his letters.

Héloïse, the beautiful and the learned is known merely as an example of the passionate devotion of a woman.

This story is part of a tale that focuses on the struggle to forget—to sink the love of the human in the love of the divine.

The letters are beautiful, and rather long. Here follow excerpts of key points from these beautiful letters.

Discussion of the types of love, the role of sexuality and relationship within religions, and the misuse of power from the clergy might be assisted through the reading of portions of the novel [The Cloister, by James Carroll](#). You can hear an interview with the author at [The Lawrence Community Access Television](#)

You can listen to an interview with James Carroll at Boston WBUR about the novel [The Cloister](#), but there is no transcript nor closed captions. [Faith, History and the Catholic Church](#)



From Héloïse to Abelard:

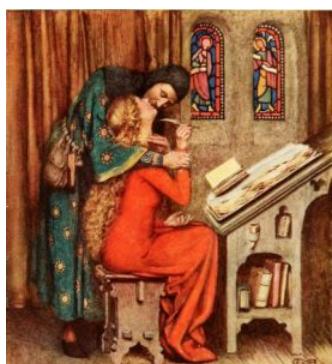
We tarnish the lustre of our most beautiful actions when we applaud them ourselves. This is true, and yet there is a time when we may with decency commend ourselves; when we have to do with those whom base ingratitude has stupefied we cannot too much praise our own actions. Now if you were this sort of creature this would be a home reflection on you. Irresolute as I am I still love you, and yet I must hope for nothing. I have renounced life, and stript myself of everything,

but I find I neither have nor can renounce my Abelard. Though I have lost my lover I still preserve my love. O vows! O convent! I have not lost my humanity under your inexorable discipline! You have not turned me to marble by changing my habit; my heart is not hardened by my imprisonment; I am still sensible to what has touched me, though, alas! I ought not to be! Without offending your commands permit a lover to exhort me to live in obedience to your rigorous rules. Your yoke will be lighter if that hand support me under it; your exercises will be pleasant if he show me their advantage. Retirement and solitude will no longer seem terrible if I may know that I still have a place in his memory. A heart which has loved as mine cannot soon be indifferent. We fluctuate long between love and hatred before we can arrive at tranquillity, and we always flatter ourselves with some forlorn hope that we shall not be utterly forgotten.

Yes, Abelard, I conjure you by the chains I bear here to ease the weight of them, and make them as agreeable as I would they were to me.

Teach me the maxims of Divine Love; since you have forsaken me I would glory in being wedded to Heaven. My heart adores that title and disdains any other; tell me how this Divine Love is nourished, how it works, how it purifies. When we were tossed on the ocean of the world we could hear of nothing but your verses, which published everywhere our joys and pleasures. Now we are in the haven of grace is it not fit you should discourse to me of this new happiness, and teach me everything that might heighten or improve it? Show me the same complaisance in my present condition as you did when we were in the world. Without changing the ardour of our affections let us change their objects; let us leave our songs and sing hymns; let us lift up our hearts to God and have no transports but for His glory!

I expect this from you as a thing you cannot refuse me. God has a peculiar right over the hearts of great men He has created. When He pleases to touch them He ravishes them, and lets them not speak nor breathe but for His glory. Till that moment of grace arrives, O think of me—do not forget me—remember my love and fidelity and constancy: love me as your mistress, cherish me as your child, your sister, your wife! Remember I still love you, and yet strive to avoid loving you. What a terrible saying is this! I shake with horror, and my heart revolts against what I say. I shall blot all my paper with tears. I end my long letter wishing you, if you desire it (would to Heaven I could!), for ever adieu!



From Abelard to Héloïse:

Without growing severe to a passion that still possesses you, learn from your own misery to succour your weak sisters; pity them upon consideration of your own faults. And if any thoughts too natural should importune you, fly to the foot of the Cross and there beg for mercy—there are wounds open for healing; lament them before the dying Deity. At the head of a religious society be not a slave, and having rule over queens, begin to govern yourself. Blush at the least revolt of your senses. Remember that even at the foot of the altar we often sacrifice to lying spirits, and that no incense can be more agreeable to them than the earthly passion that still burns in the heart of a religious. If during your abode in the world your soul has acquired a habit of loving, feel it now no more save for Jesus Christ. Repent of all the moments of your life which you have wasted in the world and on pleasure; demand them of me, 'tis a robbery of which I am guilty; take courage and boldly reproach me with it.

I have been indeed your master, but it was only to teach sin. You call me your father; before I had any claim to the title, I deserved that of parricide. I am your brother, but it is the affinity of sin that brings me that distinction. I am called your husband, but it is after a public scandal. If you have abused the sanctity of so many holy terms in the superscription of your letter to do me honour and flatter your own passion, blot them out and replace them with those of murderer, villain and enemy, who has conspired against your honour, troubled your quiet, and betrayed your innocence. You would have perished through my means but for an extraordinary act of grace which, that you might be saved, has thrown me down in the middle of my course.



This is the thought you ought to have of a fugitive who desires to deprive you of the hope of ever seeing him again. But when love has once been sincere how difficult it is to determine to love no more! 'Tis a thousand times more easy to renounce the world than love. I hate this deceitful, faithless world; I think no more of it; but my wandering heart still eternally seeks you, and is filled with anguish at having lost you, in spite of all the powers of my reason. In the meantime, though I should be so cowardly as to retract what you have read, do not suffer me to offer myself to your thoughts save in this last fashion. Remember my last worldly endeavours were to seduce your heart; you perished by my means and I with you: the same waves swallowed us up. We waited for death with indifference, and the same death had carried us headlong to the same punishments. But Providence warded off the blow, and our shipwreck has thrown us into a haven. There are some whom God saves by suffering. Let my salvation be the fruit of your prayers; let me owe it to your tears and your exemplary holiness. Though my heart, Lord, be filled with the love of Thy creature, Thy hand can, when it pleases, empty me of all love save for Thee. To love Héloïse truly is to leave her to that quiet which retirement and virtue afford. I have resolved it: this letter shall be my last fault. Adieu.



From Héloïse to Abelard:

How dangerous it is for a great man to suffer himself to be moved by our sex! He ought from his infancy to be inured to insensibility of heart against all our charms. 'Hearken, my son' (said formerly the wisest of men), attend and keep my instructions; if a beautiful woman by her looks endeavour to entice thee, permit not thyself to be overcome by a corrupt inclination; reject the poison she offers, and follow not the paths she directs. Her house is the gate of destruction and death.' I have long examined things, and have found that death is less dangerous than beauty. It is the shipwreck of liberty, a fatal snare, from which it is impossible ever to get free. It was a woman who threw down the first man from the glorious position in which Heaven had placed him; she, who was created to partake of his happiness, was the sole cause of his ruin. How bright had been the glory of Samson if his heart had been proof against the charms of Delilah, as against the weapons of the Philistines. A woman disarmed and betrayed he who had been a conqueror of armies. He saw himself delivered into the hands of his enemies; he was deprived of his eyes, those inlets of love into the soul; distracted and despairing he died without any consolation save that of including his enemies in his ruin. Solomon, that he might please women, forsook pleasing God; that king whose wisdom princes came from all parts to admire, he whom God had chosen to build the temple, abandoned the worship of the very altars he had raised, and proceeded to such a pitch of folly as even to burn incense to idols. Job had no enemy more cruel than his wife; what temptations did he not bear? The evil spirit who had declared himself his persecutor employed a woman as an instrument to shake his constancy. And the same evil spirit made Héloïse an instrument to ruin Abelard. All the poor comfort I have is that I am not the voluntary cause of your misfortunes. I have not betrayed you; but my constancy and love have been destructive to you. If I have committed a crime in loving you so constantly I cannot repent it. I have endeavoured to please you even at the expense of my virtue, and therefore deserve the pains I feel.

In order to expiate a crime it is not sufficient to bear the punishment; whatever we suffer is of no avail if the passion still continues and the heart is filled with the same desire. It is an easy matter to confess a weakness, and inflict on ourselves some punishment, but it needs perfect power over our nature to extinguish the memory of pleasures, which by a loved habitude have gained possession of our minds. How many persons do we see who make an outward confession of their faults, yet, far from being in distress about them, take a new pleasure in relating them. Contrition of the heart ought to accompany the confession of the mouth, yet this very rarely happens.

All who are about me admire my virtue, but could their eyes penetrate, into my heart what would they not discover? My passions there are in rebellion; I preside over others but cannot rule myself. I have a false covering, and this seeming virtue is a real vice. Men judge me praiseworthy, but I am guilty before God; from His all-seeing eye nothing is hid, and He views through all their windings the secrets of the heart. I cannot escape His discovery. And yet it means great effort to me

merely to maintain this appearance of virtue, so surely this troublesome hypocrisy is in some sort commendable. I give no scandal to the world which is so easy to take bad impressions; I do not shake the virtue of those feeble ones who are under my rule. With my heart full of the love of man, I teach them at least to love only God. Charmed with the pomp of worldly pleasures, I endeavour to show them that they are all vanity and deceit. I have just strength enough to conceal from them my longings, and I look upon that as a great effect of grace. If it is not enough to make me embrace virtue, 'tis enough to keep me from committing sin.

And yet it is in vain to try and separate these two things: they must be guilty who are not righteous, and they depart from virtue who delay to approach it. Besides, we ought to have no other motive than the love of God. Alas! what can I then hope for? I own to my confusion I fear more to offend a man than to provoke God, and I study less to please Him than to please you. Yes, it was your command only, and not a sincere vocation, which sent me into these cloisters.



From Héloïse to Abelard:

You have not answered my last letter, and thanks to Heaven, in the condition I am now in it is a relief to me that you show so much insensibility for the passion which I betrayed. At last, Abelard, you have lost Héloïse for ever.

Great God! shall Abelard possess my thoughts for ever? Can I never free myself from the chains of love? But perhaps I am unreasonably afraid; virtue directs all my acts and they are all subject to grace. Therefore fear not, Abelard; I have no longer those sentiments which being described in my letters have occasioned you so much trouble. I will no more endeavour, by the relation of those pleasures our passion gave us, to awaken any guilty fondness you may yet feel for me. I free you from all your oaths; forget the titles of lover and husband and keep only that of father. I expect no more from you than tender protestations and those letters so proper to feed the flame of love. I demand nothing of you but spiritual advice and wholesome discipline. The path of holiness, however thorny it be, will yet appear agreeable to me if I may but walk in your footsteps. You will always find me ready to follow you. I shall read with more pleasure the letters in which you shall describe the advantages of virtue than ever I did those in which you so artfully instilled the poison of passion. You cannot now be silent without a crime. When I was possessed with so violent a love, and pressed you so earnestly to write to me, how many letters did I send you before I could obtain one from you? You denied me in my misery the only comfort which was left me, because you thought it pernicious. You endeavoured by severities to force me to forget you, nor do I blame you; but now you have nothing to fear. This fortunate illness, with which Providence has chastised me for my good, has done what all human efforts and your cruelty in vain attempted. I see now the vanity of that happiness we had set our hearts upon, as if it were eternal. What fears, what distress have we not suffered for it!

No, Lord, there is no pleasure upon earth but that which virtue gives.

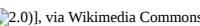


From Abelard to Héloïse:

Write no more to me, Heloise, write no more to me; 'tis time to end communications which make our penances of nought avail. We retired from the world to purify ourselves, and, by a conduct directly contrary to Christian morality, we became odious to Jesus Christ. Let us no more deceive ourselves with remembrance of our past pleasures; we but make our lives troubled and spoil the sweets of solitude. Let us make good use of our austerities and no longer preserve the memories of our crimes amongst the severities of penance. Let a mortification of body and mind, a strict fasting, continual solitude, profound and holy meditations, and a sincere love of God succeed our former irregularities.

Let us try to carry religious perfection to its farthest point. It is beautiful to find Christian minds so disengaged from earth, from the creatures and themselves, that they seem to act independently of those bodies they are joined to, and to use them as their slaves. We can never raise ourselves to too great heights when God is our object. Be our efforts ever so great they will always come short of attaining that exalted Divinity which even our apprehension cannot reach. Let us act for God's glory independent of the creatures or ourselves, paying no regard to our own desires or the opinions of others. Were we in this temper of mind, Heloise, I would willingly make my abode at the Paraclete, and by my earnest care for the house I have founded draw a thousand blessings on it. I would instruct it by my words and animate it by my example: I would watch over the lives of my Sisters, and would command nothing but what I myself would perform: I would direct you to pray, meditate, labour, and keep vows of silence; and I would myself pray, labour, meditate, and be silent.

I know everything is difficult in the beginning; but it is glorious to courageously start a great action, and glory increases proportionately as the difficulties are more considerable. We ought on this account to surmount bravely all obstacles which might hinder us in the practice of Christian virtue. In a monastery men are proved as gold in a furnace. No one can continue long there unless he bear worthily the yoke of the Lord.

Attempt to break those shameful chains which bind you to the flesh, and if by the assistance of grace you are so happy as to accomplish this, I entreat you to think of me in your prayers. Endeavour with all your strength to be the pattern of a perfect Christian; it is difficult, I confess, but not impossible; and I expect this beautiful triumph from your teachable disposition. If your first efforts prove weak do not give way to despair, for that would be cowardice; besides, I would have you know that you must necessarily take great pains, for you strive to conquer a terrible enemy, to extinguish a raging fire, to reduce to subjection your dearest affections. You have to fight against your own desires, so be not pressed down with the weight of your corrupt nature. You have to do with a cunning adversary who will use all means to seduce you; be always upon your guard. While we live we are exposed to temptations; this made a great saint say, 'The life of man is one long temptation': the devil, who never sleeps, walks continually around us in order to surprise us on some unguarded side, and enters into our soul in order to destroy it.

Question not, Heloise, but you will hereafter apply yourself in good earnest to the business of your salvation; this ought to be your whole concern. Banish me, therefore, for ever from your heart—it is the best advice I can give you, for the remembrance of a person we have loved guiltily cannot but be hurtful, whatever advances we may have made in the way of virtue. When you have extirpated your unhappy inclination towards me, the practice of every virtue will become easy; and when at last your life is conformable to that of Christ, death will be desirable to you. Your soul will joyfully leave this body, and direct its flight to heaven. Then you will appear with confidence before your Saviour; you will not read your reprobation written in the judgment book, but you will hear your Saviour say, Come, partake of My glory, and enjoy the eternal reward I have appointed for those virtues you have practised.

Farewell, Heloise, this is the last advice of your dear Abelard; for the last time let me persuade you to follow the rules of the Gospel. Heaven grant that your heart, once so sensible of my love, may now yield to be directed by my zeal. May the idea of your loving Abelard, always present to your mind, be now changed into the image of Abelard truly penitent; and may you shed as many tears for your salvation as you have done for our misfortunes.



Written c. 1130-1140. Translated c. 1736 by John Hughes [Letters of Abelard and Heloise](#)

Edited by Israel Gollancz (English literary scholar; chair of English language and literature at King's College, London) and Honnor Morten (1861-1913) in 1901.



CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY AND TALES FROM ACROSS THE WORLD

- 3.1: FROM CHRISTIANITY
 - 3.2: FROM ISLAM
 - 3.3: MAIMONIDES' "GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED"
 - 3.4: 1001 NIGHTS
 - 3.5: FROM THE HINDU BHAGAVAD GITA
 - 3.6: TEACHINGS FROM SIDDHARTHA GAUTAMA, THE BUDDHA
 - 3.7: LAO TZU--DAOISM
 - 3.8: NORTH AMERICAN TRIBAL TALES
 - 3.9: AFRICAN TALES
 - 3.10: BAAL SHEM TOV
 - 3.11: BLUEBEARD
 - 3.12: FROM JUDAISM
 - 3.13: KONG FU TZU
- 3.13.1: KONG FU TZU/ CONFUCIUS

3.1: From Christianity



Christianity is a direct outgrowth from Judaism, and as such, will have very similar values, teachings and beliefs. The difference, which grew until it changed the little outgrowth of Judaism into a major worldwide religion, was the belief in the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth. Two teachings seem to summarize the teachings that come from the Gospels.

The Gospels that were included in the Bible are four books about Jesus, written by different authors, that try to give an account of the time when Jesus of Nazareth was teaching, and an account of his death. They form the core of the Christian scriptures. There are teachings and writings from other Christian writers in the Christian scriptures, but they are written as letters and interpretation. The Gospel accounts attempt to give oral tradition in written form.

The first key section, the Great Commandment, is a reworking of a passage from Deuteronomy in the Hebrew scriptures, and clearly sets the Jewish historical roots for Christianity. The second section here is a sermon, usually considered a compilation of teachings and sayings by Jesus, called the Beatitudes, which just means Blessings.

Frontline has a very nice series on the history of the transition from Judaism to Christianity.

From Jesus to Christ



Matthew 22:35-40 The Great Commandment

³⁵ Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,

³⁶ Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

³⁷ Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

³⁸ This is the first and great commandment.

³⁹ And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.



Matthew 5 The Beatitudes

5 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

² And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

³ Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

⁵ Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

⁶ Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

⁷ Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.



⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

¹⁰ Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

¹² Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

¹³ Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

¹⁴ Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

¹⁵ Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

¹⁷ Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

¹⁸ For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

¹⁹ Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

²⁰ For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

²¹ Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

²² But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in



danger of hell fire.

²³ Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

²⁴ Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

²⁵ Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

²⁶ Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

²⁷ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

²⁸ But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.



²⁹ And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

³⁰ And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

³¹ It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorce:

³² But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

³³ Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

³⁴ But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

³⁵ Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

³⁶ Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

³⁷ But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

³⁸ Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

³⁹ But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

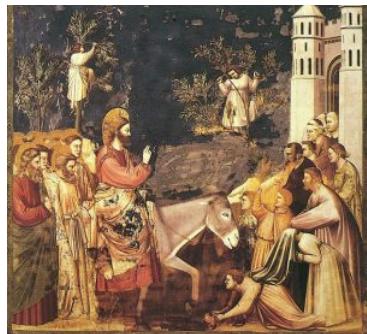
⁴⁰ And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

⁴¹ And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

⁴² Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

⁴³ Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

⁴⁴ But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;



⁴⁵ That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

⁴⁶ For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

⁴⁷ And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

⁴⁸ Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.



King James Version of the Bible

3.2: From Islam



Islam came into being about six centuries after Christianity, and clearly falls into the tradition of both Judaism and Christianity. The three are called the Abrahamic traditions, referring to the story of Abraham, the earliest person considered to be called by Yahweh into a relationship with this one, singular deity. Like both Judaism and Christianity, there are layers of history, geography and belief in Islam, but in the West, there has been a struggle to understand its basic meaning.

A little time listening to this interview might be useful: The Spirit of Islam. Omid Safi^[1] and Seemi Bushra Ghazi^[2] are North American Muslims who discuss what the meaning and intent and living of Islam is meant to be.

The Ayah al-Kursi is considered a central passage from the Qu-ran about Allah. Allah is the Arabic word for God. The 5 Pillars of Islam are the central tenants for how Muslims are to live, no matter where in the world they are to be found. These five activities define how one is to be a Muslim.



Ayah al-Kursi

“Allah: there is no true God but Him. The Ever-Living, the Eternal Master of all. Neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth. Who is there that can intercede with Him, except by His permission? He knows all that lies open before them and all that lies hidden from them; whereas they cannot attain to anything of His knowledge save as He wills. His *Kursi* extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of both does not tire Him. He is the Most High, the Most Great.” (Quran 2:255)

The Five Pillars consist of:

- **Shahadah:** sincerely reciting the Muslim profession of faith “there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah”
- **Salat:** performing ritual prayers in the proper way five times each day
- **Zakat:** paying an alms (or charity) tax to benefit the poor and the needy (about 2.5%)
- **Sawm:** fasting during the month of Ramadan
- **Hajj:** pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime

1. Director of Duke University's Islamic Studies Center and weekly columnist for On Being. He is the editor of the volume Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender, and Pluralism and the author of Memories of Muhammad. ↪
2. He is a lecturer at the University of British Columbia, musician, and non-clerical reciter of the Qur'an. ↪

3.3: Maimonides' "Guide for the Perplexed"

by Moses Maimonides

translated by M. Friedländer

[1903]



Moses ben Maimon, commonly known as **Maimonides**, was a medieval Sephardic Jewish philosopher who became one of the most important Torah scholars of the Middle Ages, and became well enough known to influence mainstream philosophy as well as Jewish scholarship. Born in Córdoba, Spain in about 1135 CE, he worked as a rabbi, physician, and philosopher in Morocco and Egypt. He died in Egypt in 1204 CE and was transported and buried in Tiberias, in what is now Israel. He wrote the Guide for the Perplexed to make 3 major points:

- God cannot really be described in human terms, using anthropomorphic images, even though the scriptures do this
- Creation in Genesis is a metaphor, and the physical universe is the result of intelligences being created by God, and everything else coming from those intelligences.
- The universe has moral aspects, and the problem of evil is solved because it is solely the work of humans.

This section is solely focused on the moral aspects of the universe and the character of Evil.

Section III CHAPTER XII—on the character of Evil



MEN frequently think that the evils in the world are more numerous than the good things; many sayings and songs of the nations dwell on this idea. They say that a good thing is found only exceptionally, whilst evil things are numerous and lasting.

Not only common people make this mistake, but even many who believe that they are wise. Al-Razi wrote a well-known book *On Metaphysics* [or Theology]. Among other mad and foolish things, it contains also the idea, discovered by him, that there exists more evil than good. For if the happiness of man and his pleasure in the times of prosperity be compared with the mishaps that befall him,—such as grief, acute pain, defects, paralysis of the limbs, fears, anxieties, and troubles,—it would seem as if the existence of man is a punishment and a great evil for him. This author commenced to verify his opinion by counting all the evils one by one; by this means he opposed those who hold the correct view of the benefits bestowed by God and His evident kindness, viz., that God is perfect goodness, and that all that comes from Him is absolutely good.

The origin of the error is to be found in the circumstance that this ignorant man, and his party among the common people, judge the whole universe by examining one single person. For an ignorant man believes that the whole universe only exists for him; as if nothing else required any consideration. If, therefore, anything happens to him contrary to his

expectation, he at once concludes that the whole universe is evil. If, however, he would take into consideration the whole universe, form an idea of it, and comprehend what a small portion he is of the Universe, he will find the truth. For it is clear that persons who have fallen into this widespread error as regards the multitude of evils in the world, do not find the evils among the angels, the spheres and stars, the elements, and that which is formed of them, viz., minerals and plants, or in the various species of living beings, but only in some individual instances of mankind. They wonder that a person, who became leprous in consequence of bad food, should be afflicted with so great an illness and suffer such a misfortune; or that he who indulges so much in sensuality as to weaken his sight, should be struck With blindness! and the like.

What we have, in truth, to consider is this:—The whole mankind at present in existence, and *a fortiori*,



every other species of animals, form an infinitesimal portion of the permanent universe. Comp. “Man is like to vanity” (Ps. cxliv. 4); “How much less man, that is a worm; and the son of man, which is a worm” (Job xxv. 6); “How much less in them who dwell in houses of clay” (*ibid.* iv. 19); “Behold, the nations are as a drop of the bucket” (Isa. xl. 15). There are many other passages in the books of the prophets expressing the same idea. It is of great advantage that man should know his station, and not erroneously imagine that the whole universe exists only for him. We hold that the universe exists because the Creator wills it so; that mankind is low in rank as compared with the uppermost portion of the universe, viz., with the spheres and the stars: but, as regards the angels, there cannot be any real comparison between man and angels, although man is the highest of all beings on earth; i.e., of all beings formed of the four elements. Man’s existence is nevertheless a great boon to him, and his distinction and perfection is a divine gift. The numerous evils to which individual persons are exposed are due to the defects existing in the persons themselves. We complain and seek relief from our own faults: we suffer from the evils which we, by our own free will, inflict on ourselves and ascribe them to God, who is far from being connected with them! Comp. “Is destruction his [work]? No. Ye [who call yourselves] wrongly his sons, you who are a perverse and crooked generation” (Deut. xxxii. 5). This is explained by Solomon, who says, “The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord” (Prov. xix. 3).



I explain this theory in the following manner. The evils that befall an are of three kinds:—

- (1) **The first kind of evil is that which is caused to man by the circumstance that he is subject to genesis and destruction, or that he possesses a body.** It is on account of the body that some persons happen to have great deformities or paralysis of some of the organs. This evil may be part of the natural constitution of these persons, or may have developed subsequently in consequence of changes in the elements, e.g., through bad air, or thunderstorms or landslips. We have already shown that, in accordance with the divine wisdom, genesis can only take place through destruction, and without the destruction of the individual members of the species the species themselves would not exist permanently. Thus the true kindness, and beneficence, and goodness of God is clear. He who thinks that he can have flesh and bones without being subject to any external influence, or any of the accidents of matter, unconsciously wishes to reconcile two opposites, viz., to be at the same time subject and not subject to change. If man were never subject to change there could be no generation: there would be one single being, but no individuals forming a species. Galen, in the third section of his book, *The Use of the Limbs*, says correctly that it would be in vain to expect to see

living beings formed of the blood of menstrual women and the semen virile, who will not die, will never feel pain, or will move perpetually, or will shine like the sun. This dictum of Galen is part of the following more general proposition:—Whatever is formed of any matter receives the most perfect form possible in that species of matter: in each individual case the defects are in accordance with the defects of that individual matter. The best and most perfect being that can be formed of the blood and the semen is the species of man, for as far as man's nature is known, he is living, reasonable, and mortal. It is therefore impossible that man should be free from this species of evil. You will, nevertheless, find that the evils of the above kind which befall man are very few and rare: for you find countries that have not been flooded or burned for thousands of years: there are thousands of men in perfect health, deformed individuals are a strange and exceptional occurrence, or say few in number if you object to the term exceptional,—they are not one-hundredth, not even one-thousandth part of those that are perfectly normal.

- (2) **The second class of evils comprises such evils as people cause to each other**, when, e.g., some of



them use their strength against others. These evils are more numerous than those of the first kind: their causes are numerous and known; they likewise originate in ourselves, though the sufferer himself cannot avert them. This kind of evil is nevertheless not widespread in any country of the whole world. It is of rare occurrence that a man plans to kill his neighbour or to rob him of his property by night. Many persons are, however, afflicted with this kind of evil in great wars: but these are not frequent, if the whole inhabited part of the earth is taken into consideration.

- (3) **The third class of evils comprises those which every one causes to himself by his own action.** This is the largest class, and is far more numerous than the second class. It is especially of these evils that all men complain, only few men are found that do not sin against themselves by this kind of evil. Those that are afflicted with it are therefore justly blamed in the words of the prophet, "This hath been by your means" (Mal. i. 9); the same is expressed in the following passage, "He that doeth it destroyeth his own soul" (Prov. vi. 32). In reference to this kind of evil, Solomon says, "The foolishness of man perverteth his way" (*ibid.* xix. 3). In the following passage he explains also that this kind of evil is man's own work, "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright, but they have thought out many inventions" (Eccles. vii. 29), and these inventions bring the evils upon him. The same subject is referred to in Job (v. 6), "For affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground." These words are immediately followed by the explanation that man himself is the author of this class of evils, "But man is born unto trouble." This class of evils originates in man's vices, such as excessive desire for eating, drinking, and love; indulgence in these things in undue measure, or in improper manner, or partaking of bad food. This course brings diseases and afflictions upon body and soul alike.

Exercises

Take some time to watch an animation from Jewish artist Hanan Harchol. Especially relevant might be his discussion of Apology:

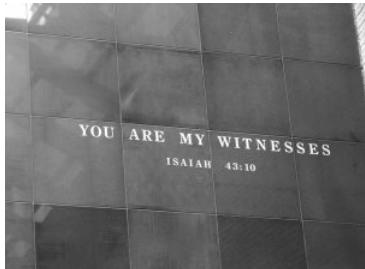
[Repair](#)

The sufferings of the body in consequence of these evils are well known; those of the soul are twofold:—



First, such evils of the soul as are the necessary consequence of changes in the body, in so far as the soul is a force residing in the body; it has therefore been said that the properties of the soul depend on the condition of the body. Secondly, the soul, when accustomed to superfluous things, acquires a strong habit of desiring things which are neither necessary for the preservation of the individual nor for that of the species. This desire is without a limit, whilst things which are necessary are few in number and restricted within certain limits; but what is superfluous is without end—e.g., you desire to have your vessels of silver, but golden vessels are still better: others have even vessels of sapphire, or perhaps they can be made of emerald or rubies, or any other substance that could be suggested.

Those who are ignorant and perverse in their thought are constantly in trouble and pain, because they cannot get as much of superfluous things as a certain other person possesses. They as a rule expose themselves to great dangers, e.g., by sea-voyage, or service of kings, and all this for the purpose of obtaining that which is superfluous and not necessary. When they thus meet with the consequences of the course which they adopt, they complain of the decrees and judgments of God; they begin to blame the time, and wonder at the want of justice in its changes; that it has not enabled them to acquire great riches, with which they could buy large quantities of wine for the purpose of making themselves drunk, and numerous concubines adorned with various kind of ornaments of gold, embroidery, and jewels, for the purpose of driving themselves to voluptuousness beyond their capacities, as if the whole Universe existed exclusively for the purpose of giving pleasure to these low people.



The error of the ignorant goes so far as to say that God's power is insufficient, because He has given to this Universe the properties which they imagine cause these great evils, and which do not help all evil-disposed persons to obtain the evil which they seek, and to bring their evil souls to the aim of their desires, though these, as we have shown, are really without limit. The virtuous and wise, however, see and comprehend the wisdom of God displayed in the Universe. Thus David says, "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies" (Ps. xxv. 10). For those who observe the nature of the Universe and the commandments of the Law, and know their purpose, see clearly God's mercy and truth in everything; they seek, therefore, that which the Creator intended to be the aim of man, viz., comprehension. Forced by the claims of the body, they seek also that which is necessary for the preservation of the body, "bread to eat and garment to clothe," and this is very little; but they seek nothing superfluous: with very slight exertion man can obtain it, so long as he is contented with that which is indispensable.

All the difficulties and troubles we meet in this respect are due to the desire for superfluous things: when we seek unnecessary things, we have difficulty even in finding that which is indispensable. For the more we desire to have that which is superfluous, the more we meet with difficulties; our strength and possessions are spent in unnecessary things, and are wanting when required for that which is necessary. Observe how Nature proves the correctness of this assertion.



The more necessary a thing is for living beings, the more easily it is found and the cheaper it is; the less necessary it is, the rarer and clearer it is. E.g., air, water, and food are indispensable to man: air is most necessary, for if man is without air a short time he dies; whilst he can be without water a day or two. Air is also undoubtedly found more easily and cheaper [than water]. Water is more necessary than food; for some people can be four or five days without food, provided they have water; water also exists in every country in larger quantities than food, and is also cheaper. The same proportion can be noticed in the different kinds of food; that which is more necessary in a certain place exists there in larger quantities and is cheaper than that which is less necessary.

No intelligent person, I think, considers musk, amber, rubies, and emerald as very necessary for man



except as medicines: and they, as well as other like substances, can be replaced for this purpose by herbs and minerals. This shows the kindness of God to His creatures, even to us weak beings. His righteousness and justice as regards all animals are well known; for in the transient world there is among the various kinds of animals no individual being distinguished from the rest of the same species by a peculiar property or an additional limb. On the contrary, all physical, psychical, and vital forces and organs that are possessed by one individual are found also in the other individuals. If any one is somehow different it is by accident, in consequence of some exception, and not by a natural property; it is also a rare occurrence.

There is no difference between individuals of a species in the due course of Nature; the difference originates in the various dispositions of their substances. This is the necessary consequence of the nature of the substance of that species: the nature of the species is not more favourable to one individual than to the other. It is no wrong or injustice that one has many bags of finest myrrh and garments embroidered with gold, while another has not those things, which are not necessary for our maintenance; he who has them has not thereby obtained control over anything that could be an essential addition to his nature, but has only obtained something illusory or deceptive. The other, who does not possess that which is not wanted for his maintenance, does not miss anything indispensable: "He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack: they gathered every man according to his eating" (Exod. xvi. 18).

This is the rule at all times and in all places; no notice should be taken of exceptional cases, as we have explained. In these two ways you will see the mercy of God toward His creatures, how He has provided that which is required, in proper proportions, and treated all individual beings of the same species with perfect equality. In accordance with this correct reflection the chief of the wise men says, "All his ways are judgment" (Deut. xxxii. 4); David likewise says: "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth" (Ps. xxv. 10); he also says expressly "The Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works" (*ibid.* cxlv. 9); for it is an act of great and perfect goodness that He gave us existence: and the creation of the controlling faculty in animals is a proof of His mercy towards them, as has been shown by us.



Guide for the Perplexed, by Moses Maimonides, Friedländer tr. [1904], at sacred-texts.com

THE GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED
 BY
 MOSES MAIMONIDES
 TRANSLATED FROM
 THE ORIGINAL ARABIC TEXT
 BY
 M. FRIEDLANDER, PHD
 SECOND EDITION

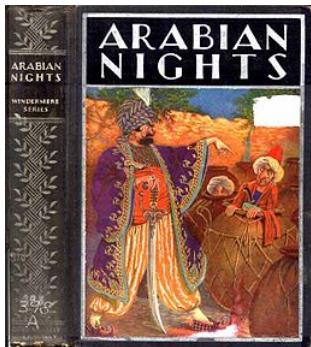


REVISED THROUGHOUT
London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.
[1904]

Originally Scanned and OCRed by Andrew Meit and David Reed. Additional proofing and formatting by Richard Hartzman. Extensive additional proofing and formatting by John Bruno Hare at sacredtexts.com. This text is in the public domain in the United States because it was published prior to January 1st, 1923. Abridged and Reformatted by Seth Goldstein.



3.4: 1001 Nights



THE BOOK OF THE
THOUSAND NIGHTS AND A NIGHT
A Plain and Literal Translation
of the Arabian Nights Entertainment

Translated and Annotated by
Richard F. Burton

VOLUME 3

The collection of folktales called ***One Thousand and One Nights*** comes out of the Arabic nations during the Islamic Golden Age. It is known in English as **Arabian Nights**, from the first English-language edition (1706 AD).

The work was collected over many centuries by various authors, translators, and scholars, and the tales themselves trace their roots back to ancient and medieval middle eastern folklore and literature. Some even have elements of folklore from India.

What is common throughout all the editions of the Nights is the story framing all the internal tales that starts with the ruler Shahryār and his wife Scheherazade. The stories proceed from this original tale; some are framed within other tales, while others begin and end of their own accord. Some editions contain only a few hundred nights, while others include 1,001 or more. Some are very long, and some are shorter, and much like other folklore, make a point.

You might enjoy this version from storyteller Jane Ogburn Dorfman^[1] at Montgomery College.

[Arabian Nights](#)



[TALE OF THE MOUSE AND THE ICHNEUMON \[2\]](#)

A mouse and an ichneumon once dwelt in the house of a peasant who was very poor; and when one of his friends sickened, the doctor prescribed him husked sesame. So the hind sought of one of his comrades sesame to be husked by way of healing the sick man; and, when a measure thereof was given to him, he carried it home to his wife and bade her dress it. So she steeped it and husked it and spread it out to dry.

Now when the ichneumon saw the grain, she went up to it and fell to carrying it away to her hole, and she toiled all day, till she had borne off the most of it. Presently, in came the peasant's wife and, seeing much of the grain gone, stood awhile wondering; after which she sat down to watch and find out who might be the intruder and make him account for her loss. After

a while, out crept the ichneumon to carry off the grain as was her wont, but spying the woman seated there, knew that she was on the watch for her and said in her mind, "Verily, this affair is like to end blameably; and sore I fear me this woman is on the look-out for me, and Fortune is no friend to who attend not to issue and end: so there is no help for it but that I do a fair deed, whereby I may manifest my innocence and wash out all the ill-doings I have done."

So saying, she began to take the sesame out of her hole and carry it forth and lay it back upon the rest. The woman stood by and, seeing the ichneumon do thus, said to herself, "Verily this is not the cause of our loss, for she bringeth it back from the hole of him who stole it and returneth it to its place; and of a truth she hath done us a kindness in restoring us the sesame, and the reward of those who do us good is that we do them the like good. It is clear that it is not she who stole the grain; but I will not cease my watching till he fall into my hands and I find out who is the thief." The ichneumon guess what was in her mind, so she went to the mouse and said to her, "O my sister, there is no good in one who observeth not the claims



of neighborship and who showeth no constancy in friendship." The mouse replied, "Even so, O my friend, and I delight in thee and in they neighborhood; but what be the motive of this speech?" Quoth the ichneumon, "The house- master hath brought home sesame and hath eaten his fill of it, he and his family, and hath left much; every living being hath eaten of it and, if thou take of it in they turn, thou art worthier thereof than any other."

This pleased the mouse and she squeaked for joy and danced and frisked her ears and tail, and greed for the grain deluded her; so she rose at once and issuing forth of her home, saw the sesame husked and dry, shining with whiteness, and the woman sitting at watch and ward. The mouse, taking no thought to the issue of the affair (for the woman had armed herself with a cudgel), and unable to contain herself, ran up to the sesame and began turning it over and eating of it; whereupon the woman smote her with that club and cleft her head: so the cause of her destruction were her greed and heedlessness of consequences.

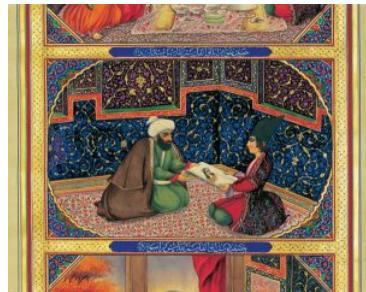
Then said the Sultan, "O Shahrazad, by Allah! this be a goodly parable!



THE SPARROW AND THE EAGLE

I have heard that a sparrow was once flitting over a sheep-fold, when he looked at it carefully and behold, he saw a great eagle swoop down upon a newly weaned lamb and carry it off in his claws and fly away. Thereupon the sparrow clapped his wings and said, "I will do even as this one did;" and he waxed proud in his own conceit and mimicked a greater than he. So he flew down forthright and lighted on the back of a fat ram with a thick fleece that was become matted by his lying in his dung and stale till it was like woollen felt. As soon as the sparrow pounced upon the sheep's back he flapped his wings to fly away, but his feet became tangled in the wool and, however hard he tried, he could not set himself free. While all this was doing the shepherd was looking on, having seen what happened first with the eagle and afterwards with the sparrow; so he came up to the wee birdie in a rage and seized him. Then he plucked out his wing- feathers and, tying his feet with a twine, carried him to his children and threw him to them. "What is this?" asked one of them; and he answered, "This is he that aped a greater than himself and came to grief."





THE THIEF AND HIS MONKEY

A certain man had a monkey and that man was a thief, who never entered any of the street-markets of the city wherein he dwelt, but he made off with great profit. Now it came to pass one day that he saw a man offering for sale worn clothes, and he went calling them in the market, but none bid for them and all to whom he showed them refused to buy of him. Presently the thief who had the monkey saw the man with the ragged clothes set them in a wrapper and sit down to rest for weariness; so he made the ape sport before him to catch his eye and, whilst he was busy gazing at it, stole the parcel from him. Then he took the ape and made off to a lonely place, where he opened the wrapper and, taking out the old clothes, folded them in a piece of costly stuff. This he carried to another bazar and exposed for sale together with what was therein, making it a condition that it should not be opened, and tempting the folk with the lowness of the price he set on it. A certain man saw the wrapper and its beauty pleased him; so he bought the parcel on these terms and carried it home, doubting not that he had done well. When his wife saw it she asked, "What is this?" and he answered, "It is costly stuff, which I have bought at lowest price, meaning to sell it again and take the profit." Rejoined she, "O dupe, would this stuff be sold under its value, unless it had been stolen? Dost thou not know that whoso buyeth aught without examining it, falleth into error and becometh like unto the weaver?"

Quoth he, "And what is the story of the weaver?"; and quoth she:—I have heard this tale of



The Foolish Weaver

There was once in a certain village a weaver who worked hard but could not earn his living save by overwork. Now it chanced that one of the richards of the neighbourhood made a marriage feast and invited the folk thereto: the weaver also was present and found the guests, who wore rich gear, served with delicate viands and made much of by the house-master for what he saw of their fine clothes. So he said in his mind, "If I change this my craft for another craft easier to compass and better considered and more highly paid, I shall amass great store of money and I shall buy splendid attire, so I may rise in rank and be exalted in men's eyes and become even with these." Presently, he beheld one of the mountebanks, who was present at the feast, climbing up to the top of a high and towering wall and throwing himself down to the ground and alighting on his feet. Whereupon the waver said to himself, "Needs must I do as this one hath done, for surely I shall not fail of it." So he arose and swarmed upon the wall and casting himself down, broke his neck against the ground and died forthright. "Now I tell thee this that thou sayst get thy living by what way thou knowest and thoroughly understandest, lest peradventure greed enter into thee and thou lust after what is not of thy condition." Quoth the woman's husband, "Not every wise man is saved by his wisdom, nor is every fool lost by his folly. I have seen it happen to a skillful charmer, well versed in the ways of serpents, to be struck by the fangs of a snake and killed, and others prevail over serpents who had no skill in them and no knowledge of their ways." And he went contrary to his wife and persisted in buying stolen goods below their value till he fell under suspicion and perished therefor.



Title: The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night, Volume 3

Author: Richard F. Burton

Release Date: September, 2002 [Etext #3444]

[Yes, we are more than one year ahead of schedule]

[This file was first posted on December 30, 2001]

Last updated: April 25, 2012

Edition: 10

Language: English

1. Montgomery College Television Presents Arabian Nights: A Storytelling By Jane Ogburn Dorfman, Storyteller

Introduction: The stories of The Arabian Nights were stories collected over several centuries from a variety of sources in India, Persia, and Arabia. They range from adventure fantasies, amorous encounters, animal fables, and pointed Sufi tales, and provided daily entertainment in the medieval Islamic world. Over centuries of telling and retelling, the stories were modified to reflect the general life and customs of the Arab society that adapted them—a distinctive synthesis that marks the cultural and artistic history of Islam. ↪

2. (a kind of wasp) ↪



3.5: From the Hindu Bhagavad Gita



“When doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and I see not one ray of hope on the horizon, I turn to Bhagavad-Gita and find a verse to comfort me; and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. Those who meditate on the Gita will derive fresh joy and new meanings from it every day.” *Mahatma Gandhi*

You might find it helpful to listen to (or read, there is a transcript) this broadcast from OnBeing, a radio program that looks at spirituality, wisdom and faith traditions.

[The Heart’s Reason: Hinduism and Science](#) with Varadaraja V. Raman^[1] in order to have some context for this ancient and much loved, in Hindu tradition, piece of writing.

Excerpts from The Song Celestial. or Bhagavad-Gita (From the Mahabharata)

Being a Discourse Between Arjuna,
Prince of India, and the Supreme Being
Under the Form of Krishna

Arjuna, a Prince, is preparing for the battle at Kurukshetra (in today's northern India). Krishna (in Hindu belief an incarnation of the divine) becomes Arjuna's charioteer.

As the war begins ,Arjuna realizes that it will be friends and relatives opposing him. Krishna obeys Arjuna and drives the chariot in between the two forces. At this point, Arjuna cannot go on. With his mind reeling, he foresees the death of people who are dear to him—some are teachers, or relatives and even his friends. Arjuna decides he will not participate in this battle. He will not fight if the battle requires him to fight against people he loves.

All of those events occur, however, before Arjuna realizes the true nature of his charioteer.

Once Krishna has shown Arjuna his four-armed and universal forms, Arjuna is stunned. Far more than just a man of some reasonable knowledge and wisdom, Krishna is all-powerful. He is the Supreme Being whom Arjuna should worship. All of this fundamentally changes Arjuna's perspective—he wants to know what to do, and Krishna proceeds to tell him. Krishna presents three main concepts — renunciation, selfless service, and meditation.

Initially, Arjuna thought it would be sinful to battle his friends, teachers and relatives. After conversing with Krishna, Arjuna realizes that Krishna would not encourage him to fight if engaging in this battle would result in sinful actions. It is his duty to fight, and he is reminded that service to the divine will result in good karma, in progress towards union with the divine.

[CHAPTER I](#) [CC-BY-SA 3.0], via Wikimedia Commons

Dhritirashtra:

Ranged thus for battle on the sacred plain—
On Kurukshetra—say, Sanjaya! say
What wrought my people, and the Pandavas?

Sanjaya:

When he beheld the host of Pandavas,
Raja Duryodhana to Drona drew,

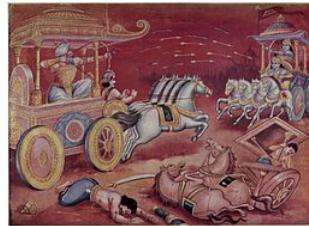
And spake these words: "Ah, Guru! see this line,
How vast it is of Pandu fighting-men,
Embattled by the son of Drupada,
Thy scholar in the war! Therein stand ranked
Chiefs like Arjuna, like to Bhima chiefs,
Benders of bows; Virata, Yuyudhan,
Drupada, eminent upon his car,
Dhrishtaket, Chekitan, Kasi's stout lord,
Purujit, Kuntibhoj, and Saivya,
With Yudhamanyu, and Uttamauj
Subhadra's child; and Drupadi's;-all famed!
All mounted on their shining chariots!
On our side, too,—thou best of Brahmans! see
Excellent chiefs, commanders of my line,
Whose names I joy to count: thyself the first,
Then Bhishma, Karna, Kripa fierce in fight,
Vikarna, Aswatthaman; next to these
Strong Saumadatti, with full many more
Valiant and tried, ready this day to die
For me their king, each with his weapon grasped,
Each skilful in the field. Weakest-meseems—
Our battle shows where Bhishma holds command,
And Bhima, fronting him, something too strong!
Have care our captains nigh to Bhishma's ranks
Prepare what help they may! Now, blow my shell!"

Then, at the signal of the aged king,
With blare to wake the blood, rolling around
Like to a lion's roar, the trumpeter
Blew the great Conch; and, at the noise of it,
Trumpets and drums, cymbals and gongs and horns
Burst into sudden clamour; as the blasts
Of loosened tempest, such the tumult seemed!
Then might be seen, upon their car of gold
Yoked with white steeds, blowing their battle-shells,
Krishna the God, Arjuna at his side:
Krishna, with knotted locks, blew his great conch
Carved of the "Giant's bone;" Arjuna blew
Indra's loud gift; Bhima the terrible—
Wolf-bellied Bhimablew a long reed-conch;
And Yudhisthira, Kunti's blameless son,
Winded a mighty shell, "Victory's Voice;"
And Nakula blew shrill upon his conch
Named the "Sweet-sounding," Sahadev on his
Called"Gem-bedecked," and Kasi's Prince on his.
Sikhandi on his car, Dhrishtadyumn,
Virata, Satyaki the Unsubdued,
Drupada, with his sons, (O Lord of Earth!)
Long-armed Subhadra's children, all blew loud,
So that the clangour shook their foemen's hearts,
With quaking earth and thundering heav'n.

Then 'twas—
Beholding Dhritirashtra's battle set,

Weapons unsheathing, bows drawn forth, the war
 Instant to break-Arjun, whose ensign-badge
 Was Hanuman the monkey, spake this thing
 To Krishna the Divine, his charioteer:
 “Drive, Dauntless One! to yonder open ground
 Betwixt the armies; I would see more nigh
 These who will fight with us, those we must slay
 To-day, in war’s arbitrament; for, sure,
 On bloodshed all are bent who throng this plain,
 Obeying Dhritirashtra’s sinful son.”

Thus, by Arjuna prayed, (O Bharata!)
 Between the hosts that heavenly Charioteer
 Drove the bright car, reining its milk-white steeds
 Where Bhishma led, and Drona, and their Lords.
 “See!” spake he to Arjuna, “where they stand,
 Thy kindred of the Kurus:” and the Prince
 Marked on each hand the kinsmen of his house,
 Grandsires and sires, uncles and brothers and sons,
 Cousins and sons-in-law and nephews, mixed
 With friends and honoured elders; some this side,
 Some that side ranged: and, seeing those opposed,
 Such kith grown enemies-Arjuna’s heart
 Melted with pity, while he uttered this:



Arjuna:

Krishna! as I behold, come here to shed
 Their common blood, yon concourse of our kin,
 My members fail, my tongue dries in my mouth,
 A shudder thrills my body, and my hair
 Bristles with horror; from my weak hand slips
 Gandiv, the goodly bow; a fever burns
 My skin to parching; hardly may I stand;
 The life within me seems to swim and faint;
 Nothing do I foresee save woe and wail!
 It is not good, O Keshav! nought of good
 Can spring from mutual slaughter! Lo, I hate
 Triumph and domination, wealth and ease,
 Thus sadly won! Aho! what victory
 Can bring delight, Govinda! what rich spoils
 Could profit; what rule recompense; what span
 Of life itself seem sweet, bought with such blood?
 Seeing that these stand here, ready to die,
 For whose sake life was fair, and pleasure pleased,
 And power grew precious:-grandsires, sires, and sons,
 Brothers, and fathers-in-law, and sons-in-law,
 Elders and friends! Shall I deal death on these

Even though they seek to slay us? Not one blow,
O Madhusudan! will I strike to gain

The rule of all Three Worlds; then, how much less
To seize an earthly kingdom! Killing these
Must breed but anguish, Krishna! If they be
Guilty, we shall grow guilty by their deaths;
Their sins will light on us, if we shall slay
Those sons of Dhritirashtra, and our kin;
What peace could come of that, O Madhava?
For if indeed, blinded by lust and wrath,
These cannot see, or will not see, the sin
Of kingly lines o'erthrown and kinsmen slain,
How should not we, who see, shun such a crime—
We who perceive the guilt and feel the shame—
O thou Delight of Men, Janardana?
By overthrow of houses perisheth
Their sweet continuous household piety,
And-rites neglected, piety extinct—
Enters impiety upon that home;
Its women grow unwomaned, whence there spring
Mad passions, and the mingling-up of castes,
Sending a Hell-ward road that family,
And whoso wrought its doom by wicked wrath.
Nay, and the souls of honoured ancestors
Fall from their place of peace, being bereft
Of funeral-cakes and the wan death-water.
So teach our holy hymns. Thus, if we slay
Kinsfolk and friends for love of earthly power,
Ahovat! what an evil fault it were!
Better I deem it, if my kinsmen strike,
To face them weaponless, and bare my breast
To shaft and spear, than answer blow with blow.

So speaking, in the face of those two hosts,
Arjuna sank upon his chariot-seat,
And let fall bow and arrows, sick at heart.

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER I. OF THE BHAGAVAD-GITA,
Entitled “Arjun-Vishad,”
Or “The Book of the Distress of Arjuna.”



CHAPTER XV

Krishna:

Men call the Aswattha,—the Banyan-tree,—
Which hath its boughs beneath, its roots above,—
The ever-holy tree. Yea! for its leaves

Are green and waving hymns which whisper Truth!
Who knows the Aswattha, knows Veds, and all.

Its branches shoot to heaven and sink to earth,
Even as the deeds of men, which take their birth
From qualities: its silver sprays and blooms,
And all the eager verdure of its girth,
Leap to quick life at kiss of sun and air,
As men's lives quicken to the temptings fair
Of wooing sense: its hanging rootlets seek
The soil beneath, helping to hold it there,

As actions wrought amid this world of men
Bind them by ever-tightening bonds again.
If ye knew well the teaching of the Tree,
What its shape saith; and whence it springs; and, then

How it must end, and all the ills of it,
The axe of sharp Detachment ye would whet,
And cleave the clinging snaky roots, and lay
This Aswattha of sense-life low,—to set

New growths upspringing to that happier sky,—
Which they who reach shall have no day to die,
Nor fade away, nor fall—to Him, I mean,
FATHER and FIRST, Who made the mystery

Of old Creation; for to Him come they
From passion and from dreams who break away;
Who part the bonds constraining them to flesh,
And,—Him, the Highest, worshipping alway—

No longer grow at mercy of what breeze
Of summer pleasure stirs the sleeping trees,
What blast of tempest tears them, bough and stem
To the eternal world pass such as these!

Another Sun gleams there! another Moon!
Another Light,—not Dusk, nor Dawn, nor Noon—
Which they who once behold return no more;
They have attained My rest, life's Utmost boon!

When, in this world of manifested life,
The undying Spirit, setting forth from Me,
Taketh on form, it draweth to itself
From Being's storehouse,—which containeth all,—
Senses and intellect. The Sovereign Soul
Thus entering the flesh, or quitting it,
Gathers these up, as the wind gathers scents,
Blowing above the flower-beds. Ear and Eye,
And Touch and Taste, and Smelling, these it takes,—
Yea, and a sentient mind;—linking itself
To sense-things so.

The unenlightened ones
Mark not that Spirit when he goes or comes,
Nor when he takes his pleasure in the form,
Conjoined with qualities; but those see plain

Who have the eyes to see. Holy souls see
Which strive thereto. Enlightened, they perceive
That Spirit in themselves; but foolish ones,
Even though they strive, discern not, having hearts
Unkindled, ill-informed!

Know, too, from Me
Shineth the gathered glory of the suns
Which lighten all the world: from Me the moons
Draw silvery beams, and fire fierce loveliness.
I penetrate the clay, and lend all shapes
Their living force; I glide into the plant—
Root, leaf, and bloom—to make the woodlands green
With springing sap. Becoming vital warmth,
I glow in glad, respiring frames, and pass,
With outward and with inward breath, to feed
The body by all meats.

For in this world
Being is twofold: the Divided, one;
The Undivided, one. All things that live
Are “the Divided.” That which sits apart,
“The Undivided.”

Higher still is He,
The Highest, holding all, whose Name is LORD,
The Eternal, Sovereign, First! Who fills all worlds,
Sustaining them. And-dwelling thus beyond
Divided Being and Undivided—I
Am called of men and Vedas, Life Supreme,
The PURUSHOTTAMA.

Who knows Me thus,
With mind unclouded, knoweth all, dear Prince!
And with his whole soul ever worshippeth Me.

Now is the sacred, secret Mystery
Declared to thee! Who comprehendeth this
Hath wisdom! He is quit of works in bliss!

HERE ENDS CHAPTER XV. OF THE BHAGAVAD-GITA
Entitled “Purushottamapraptiyog,”
Or “The Book of Religion by attaining the Supreme.”



CHAPTER XVIII

Arjuna:

Fain would I better know, Thou Glorious One!
The very truth—Heart's Lord!—of Sannyas,
Abstention; and enunciation, Lord!
Tyaga; and what separates these twain!

Krishna:

The poets rightly teach that Sannyas
Is the foregoing of all acts which spring
Out of desire; and their wisest say
Tyaga is renouncing fruit of acts.

There be among the saints some who have held
All action sinful, and to be renounced;
And some who answer, “Nay! the goodly acts—
As worship, penance, alms—must be performed!”
Hear now My sentence, Best of Bharatas!

‘Tis well set forth, O Chaser of thy Foes!
Renunciation is of threefold form,
And Worship, Penance, Alms, not to be stayed;
Nay, to be gladly done; for all those three
Are purifying waters for true souls!

Yet must be practised even those high works
In yielding up attachment, and all fruit
Produced by works. This is My judgment, Prince!
This My insuperable and fixed decree!

Abstaining from a work by right prescribed
Never is meet! So to abstain doth spring
From “Darkness,” and Delusion teacheth it.
Abstaining from a work grievous to flesh,
When one saith “‘Tis unpleasing!” this is null!

Such an one acts from “passion;” nought of gain
Wins his Renunciation! But, Arjun!
Abstaining from attachment to the work,
Abstaining from rewardment in the work,
While yet one doeth it full faithfully,
Saying, “Tis right to do!” that is “true” act
And abstinence! Who doeth duties so,
Unvexed if his work fail, if it succeed
Unflattered, in his own heart justified,
Quit of debates and doubts, his is “true” act:
For, being in the body, none may stand
Wholly aloof from act; yet, who abstains
From profit of his acts is abstinent.

The fruit of labours, in the lives to come,
Is threefold for all men,—Desirable,
And Undesirable, and mixed of both;
But no fruit is at all where no work was.

Hear from me, Long-armed Lord! the makings five
Which go to every act, in Sankhya taught
As necessary. First the force; and then
The agent; next, the various instruments;
Fourth, the especial effort; fifth, the God.
What work soever any mortal doth
Of body, mind, or speech, evil or good,
By these five doth he that. Which being thus,
Whoso, for lack of knowledge, seeth himself
As the sole actor, knoweth nought at all
And seeth nought. Therefore, I say, if one—
Holding aloof from self—with unstained mind
Should slay all yonder host, being bid to slay,
He doth not slay; he is not bound thereby!

Knowledge, the thing known, and the mind which knows,
These make the threefold starting-ground of act.
The act, the actor, and the instrument,
These make the threefold total of the deed.
But knowledge, agent, act, are differenced
By three dividing qualities. Hear now
Which be the qualities dividing them.

There is “true” Knowledge. Learn thou it is this:
To see one changeless Life in all the Lives,
And in the Separate, One Inseparable.
There is imperfect Knowledge: that which sees
The separate existences apart,
And, being separated, holds them real.
There is false Knowledge: that which blindly clings
To one as if 'twere all, seeking no Cause,
Deprived of light, narrow, and dull, and “dark.”
There is “right” Action: that which being enjoined—
Is wrought without attachment, passionlessly,
For duty, not for love, nor hate, nor gain.

There is “vain” Action: that which men pursue
Aching to satisfy desires, impelled
By sense of self, with all-absorbing stress:
This is of Rajas—passionate and vain.

There is “dark” Action: when one doth a thing
Heedless of issues, heedless of the hurt
Or wrong for others, heedless if he harm
His own soul—’tis of Tamas, black and bad!

There is the “rightful”doer. He who acts
Free from self-seeking, humble, resolute,
Steadfast, in good or evil hap the same,
Content to do aright—he “truly” acts.

There is th’ “impassioned” doer. He that works
From impulse, seeking profit, rude and bold
To overcome, unchastened; slave by turns
Of sorrow and of joy: of Rajas he!
And there be evil doers; loose of heart,
Low-minded, stubborn, fraudulent, remiss,
Dull, slow, despondent—children of the “dark.”

Hear, too, of Intellect and Steadfastness
The threefold separation, Conqueror-Prince!
How these are set apart by Qualities.

Good is the Intellect which comprehends
The coming forth and going back of life,
What must be done, and what must not be done,
What should be feared, and what should not be feared,
What binds and what emancipates the soul:

That is of Sattwan, Prince! of “soothfastness.”
Marred is the Intellect which, knowing right
And knowing wrong, and what is well to do
And what must not be done, yet understands
Nought with firm mind, nor as the calm truth is:
This is of Rajas, Prince! and “passionate!”
Evil is Intellect which, wrapped in gloom,
Looks upon wrong as right, and sees all things
Contrariwise of Truth. O Pritha’s Son!
That is of Tamas, “dark” and desperate!

Good is the steadfastness whereby a man
Masters his beats of heart, his very breath
Of life, the action of his senses; fixed
In never-shaken faith and piety:
That is of Sattwan, Prince! “soothfast” and fair!
Stained is the steadfastness whereby a man
Holds to his duty, purpose, effort, end,
For life’s sake, and the love of goods to gain,
Arjuna! ’tis of Rajas, passion-stamped!
Sad is the steadfastness wherewith the fool
Cleaves to his sloth, his sorrow, and his fears,
His folly and despair. This—Pritha’s Son!—
Is born of Tamas, “dark” and miserable!

Hear further, Chief of Bharatas! from Me
The threefold kinds of Pleasure which there be.

Good Pleasure is the pleasure that endures,
Banishing pain for aye; bitter at first
As poison to the soul, but afterward
Sweet as the taste of Amrit. Drink of that!
It springeth in the Spirit's deep content.
And painful Pleasure springeth from the bond
Between the senses and the sense-world. Sweet
As Amrit is its first taste, but its last
Bitter as poison. 'Tis of Rajas, Prince!
And foul and "dark" the Pleasure is which springs
From sloth and sin and foolishness; at first
And at the last, and all the way of life
The soul bewildering. 'Tis of Tamas, Prince!

For nothing lives on earth, nor 'midst the gods
In utmost heaven, but hath its being bound
With these three Qualities, by Nature framed.

The work of Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas,
And Sudras, O thou Slayer of thy Foes!
Is fixed by reason of the Qualities
Planted in each:

A Brahman's virtues, Prince!
Born of his nature, are serenity,
Self-mastery, religion, purity,
Patience, uprightness, learning, and to know
The truth of things which be. A Kshatriya's pride,
Born of his nature, lives in valour, fire,
Constancy, skilfulness, spirit in fight,
And open-handedness and noble mien,
As of a lord of men. A Vaisya's task,
Born with his nature, is to till the ground,
Tend cattle, venture trade. A Sudra's state,
Suiting his nature, is to minister.

Whoso performeth-diligent, content—
The work allotted him, whate'er it be,
Lays hold of perfectness! Hear how a man
Findeth perfection, being so content:
He findeth it through worship-wrought by work—
Of Him that is the Source of all which lives,
Of HIM by Whom the universe was stretched.

Better thine own work is, though done with fault,
Than doing others' work, ev'n excellently.
He shall not fall in sin who fronts the task
Set him by Nature's hand! Let no man leave
His natural duty, Prince! though it bear blame!
For every work hath blame, as every flame
Is wrapped in smoke! Only that man attains
Perfect surcease of work whose work was wrought

With mind unfettered, soul wholly subdued,
Desires for ever dead, results renounced.

Learn from me, Son of Kunti! also this,
How one, attaining perfect peace, attains
BRAHM, the supreme, the highest height of all!

Devoted—with a heart grown pure, restrained
In lordly self-control, forgoing wiles
Of song and senses, freed from love and hate,
Dwelling 'mid solitudes, in diet spare,
With body, speech, and will tamed to obey,
Ever to holy meditation vowed,
From passions liberate, quit of the Self,
Of arrogance, impatience, anger, pride;
Freed from surroundings, quiet, lacking nought—
Such an one grows to oneness with the BRAHM;
Such an one, growing one with BRAHM, serene,
Sorrows no more, desires no more; his soul,
Equally loving all that lives, loves well
Me, Who have made them, and attains to Me.
By this same love and worship doth he know
Me as I am, how high and wonderful,
And knowing, straightway enters into Me.
And whatsoever deeds he doeth—fixed
In Me, as in his refuge—he hath won
For ever and for ever by My grace
Th' Eternal Rest! So win thou! In thy thoughts
Do all thou dost for Me! Renounce for Me!
Sacrifice heart and mind and will to Me!
Live in the faith of Me! In faith of Me
All dangers thou shalt vanquish, by My grace;
But, trusting to thyself and heeding not,
Thou can't but perish! If this day thou say'st,
Relying on thyself, "I will not fight!"
Vain will the purpose prove! thy qualities
Would spur thee to the war. What thou dost shun,
Misled by fair illusions, thou wouldst seek
Against thy will, when the task comes to thee
Waking the promptings in thy nature set.
There lives a Master in the hearts of men
Maketh their deeds, by subtle pulling—strings,
Dance to what tune HE will. With all thy soul
Trust Him, and take Him for thy succour, Prince!
So—only so, Arjuna!—shalt thou gain—
By grace of Him—the uttermost repose,
The Eternal Place!

Thus hath been opened thee
This Truth of Truths, the Mystery more hid
Than any secret mystery. Meditate!
And—as thou wilt—then act!

Nay! but once more
Take My last word, My utmost meaning have!

Precious thou art to Me; right well-beloved!
Listen! I tell thee for thy comfort this.
Give Me thy heart! adore Me! serve Me! cling
In faith and love and reverence to Me!
So shalt thou come to Me! I promise true,
For thou art sweet to Me!

And let go those—
Rites and writ duties! Fly to Me alone!
Make Me thy single refuge! I will free
Thy soul from all its sins! Be of good cheer!

[Hide, the holy Krishna saith,

This from him that hath no faith,
Him that worships not, nor seeks
Wisdom's teaching when she speaks:

Hide it from all men who mock;

But, wherever, 'mid the flock

Of My lovers, one shall teach

This divinest, wisest, speech—

Teaching in the faith to bring

Truth to them, and offering

Of all honour unto Me—

Unto Brahma cometh he!

Nay, and nowhere shall ye find

Any man of all mankind

Doing dearer deed for Me;

Nor shall any dearer be

In My earth. Yea, furthermore,

Whoso reads this converse o'er,

Held by Us upon the plain,

Pondering piously and fain,

He hath paid Me sacrifice!

(Krishna speaketh in this wise!)

Yea, and whoso, full of faith,

Heareth wisely what it saith,

Heareth meekly,—when he dies,

Surely shall his spirit rise

To those regions where the Blest,

Free of flesh, in joyance rest.]

Hath this been heard by thee, O Indian Prince!

With mind intent? hath all the ignorance—

Which bred thy trouble—vanished, My Arjun?

Arjuna:

Trouble and ignorance are gone! the Light

Hath come unto me, by Thy favour, Lord!

Now am I fixed! my doubt is fled away!

According to Thy word, so will I do!

Sanjaya:

Thus gathered I the gracious speech of Krishna, O my King!

Thus have I told, with heart a-thrill, this wise and wondrous thing
By great Vyasa's learning writ, how Krishna's self made known
The Yoga, being Yoga's Lord. So is the high truth shown!
And aye, when I remember, O Lord my King, again
Arjuna and the God in talk, and all this holy strain,
Great is my gladness: when I muse that splendour, passing speech,
Of Hari, visible and plain, there is no tongue to reach
My marvel and my love and bliss. O Archer-Prince! all hail!
O Krishna, Lord of Yoga! surely there shall not fail
Blessing, and victory, and power, for Thy most mighty sake,
Where this song comes of Arjun, and how with God he spake.



Translated from the Sanskrit Text
by
Sir Edwin Arnold,
M.A., K.C.I.E., C.S.I.

New York
Truslove, Hanson & Comba, Ltd.
67 Fifth Avenue
1900

The Project Gutenberg EBook of The Bhagavad-Gita, by Anonymous

Title: The Bhagavad-Gita

Author: Anonymous

Translator: Sir Edwin Arnold

-
1. emeritus professor of Physics and Humanities at the Rochester Institute of Technology. He's written many books including Variety in Religion and Science: Daily Reflections. ↪

Contributions and Attributions

This page is licensed under a [CC BY-NC-SA](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Jody Ondich. Page content has been edited and updated to conform to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform; a detailed versioning history of the edits to source content is available upon request.

3.6: Teachings from Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha

Teachings from Buddhism



“A few years ago, journalist Pankaj Mishra pursued the social relevance of the Buddha’s thought across India and Europe, Afghanistan and America. He emerged with a startling critique of Western political economy that is even more resonant today as he pursued the social relevance of the Buddha’s core questions: Do desiring and acquiring make us happy? Does large-scale political change really address human suffering?”

These are the questions addressed in this interview with Pankaj Mishra^[1] in

[The Buddha in the World](#)



Quote from the Pali Canon



Four Noble Truths

1. Life is suffering
2. The cause of suffering is attachment and craving
3. The end of suffering is possible
4. The path to the end of suffering is to follow the Eightfold Path

In order to eliminate suffering from one’s life, and to achieve nirvana, one should use the teachings of the Eightfold Path. If one walks through these steps, one will cease craving, cease attachment, and find oneself able to move toward bliss. Following are the eight things that one must work through in order to move in that direction.

A simple introduction to this is found in:

[The Eightfold Path](#) from Princeton University.



The Noble Eightfold Path

1. Right Understanding
2. Right Resolve
3. Right Speech
4. Right Conduct
5. Right Livelihood
6. Right Effort
7. Right Mindfulness
8. Right Concentration



-
1. Indian journalist and author of several books, including *An End to Suffering: The Buddha in the World*. He is also a regular contributor to the New York Times and the British newspaper The Guardian. ↵

3.7: Lao Tzu--Daoism

The Daodejing



One of the values of Daoism is the concept of **Wu Wei**. A simple translation of this might be “go with the flow”, but this is not quite enough to really describe wu wei. The literal meaning of wu wei is “without action”, “without effort”, or “without control”, and is often included in the paradox wei wu wei: “action without action” or “effortless doing”.

[To Live Our Lives Like Water](#) from Parker Palmer^[1] talks about Daoism and how people can find this concept of Wu Wei in their living.

Chapter 1.

A dao that may be spoken is not the enduring Dao. A name that may be named is not an enduring name.

No names – this is the beginning of heaven and earth. Having names – this is the mother of the things of the world.

Make freedom from desire your constant norm; thereby you will see what is subtle. Make having desires your constant norm; thereby you will see what is manifest.

These two arise from the same source but have different names. Together they may be termed ‘the mysterious’.

Mystery and more mystery: the gate of all that is subtle.

Chapter 2.

All in the world deem the beautiful to be beautiful; it is ugly. All deem the good to be good; it is bad.

What is and what is not give birth to one another,
What is difficult and what is easy complete one another,
Long and short complement one another,
High and low incline towards one another,
Note and noise harmonize with one another,
Before and after follow one another.

Therefore the sage dwells in the midst of non-action (*wuwei*) and practices the wordless teaching.

Herein arise the things of the world, it does not turn from them; what it gives birth to it does not possess; what it does it does not retain. The achievements complete, it makes no claim to them. Because it makes no claim to them, they never leave it.

Chapter 11.

Thirty spokes share a single hub; grasp the nothingness at its center to get the use of the wheel.

Clay is fashioned to make a vessel; grasp the nothingness at the center to get

the use of the vessel.
Bore windows and doors to create a room; grasp the nothingness of the interior to get the use of the room.
That which is constitutes what is valuable, but that which is not constitutes what is of use.

Chapter 24.

One on tiptoe cannot stand; one whose legs are spread cannot walk.
One who shows himself cannot be bright; one who asserts himself cannot shone; one who praises himself can be meritorious; one who boasts of himself cannot endure.
For the Dao, these are called “excess store and superfluous acts.” Things detest them; therefore, the man of the Dao does not abide in them.

Chapter 51.

The Dao gives birth to them, virtue (*de*) rears them, things give them form, circumstances complete them.
Thus all things in the world revere Dao and honor virtue. That the Dao is revered and virtue honored is ordained by no one; it is ever so of itself.
Thus the Dao gives birth to them and virtue rears them – fosters them, nurtures them, settles them, completes them, nourishes them, covers them.
To live but not possess, to act but depend on nothing, to lead without directing, this is called mysterious virtue.

Chapter 71.

To know you do not know is best; not to know that one does not know is to be flawed.
One who sees his flaws as flaws is therefore not flawed.
The sage is flawless. He sees his flaws as flaws, therefore he is flawless.

Chapter 78.

Nothing in the world is more weak and soft than water, yet nothing surpasses it in conquering the hard and strong – there is nothing that can compare.
All know that the weak conquers the strong and the soft conquers the hard.
But none are able to act on this.
Thus the sage says that he who receives the derision of the state is the lord of the state altars; he who receives the misfortune of the state is the king of the world.
Straight words seem to reverse themselves.



Access to the entire Dao de jing also includes Dr. Eno's comments on this work. Dao de jing

© 2010, 2016 Robert Eno

This online translation is made freely available for use in not-for-profit educational settings and for personal use. For other purposes, apart from fair use, copyright is not waived.



1. PARKER J. PALMER is a columnist for On Being. His column appears every Wednesday. He is a Quaker elder, educator, activist, and founder of the Center for Courage & Renewal. His books include A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life, and Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation. His book On the Brink of Everything: Grace, Gravity, and Getting Old will be published in June. [←](#)



3.8: North American Tribal Tales



Wisdom tales from Three North American Tribes: The Inuit, the Anishinaabe and the Hopi



From the Inuit of Greenland: THE SUN AND THE MOON

The heavenly bodies were once ordinary Eskimos, living upon the earth, who, for one reason or another, have been translated to the skies. The sun was a fair woman, and the moon her brother, and they lived in the same house. She was visited every night by a man, but could not tell who it was. In order to find out, she blackened her hands with lamp-soot, and rubbed them upon his back. When the morning came, it turned out to be her brother, for his white reindeer-skin was all smudged; and hence come the spots on the moon. The sun seized a crooked knife, cut off one of her breasts, and threw it to him, crying: 'Since my whole body tastes so good to you, eat this.' Then she lighted a piece of lamp-moss and rushed out; the moon did likewise and ran after her, but his moss went out, and that is why he looks like a live cinder. He chased her up into the sky, and there they still are. The moon's dwelling lies close to the road by which souls have to pass to the over-world; and in it is a room for his sister the sun.

[Inuit Wisdom](#) is a National Geographic video about the traditions and wisdom of the Inuit people



From the Anishinaabe: THE FIRE-LEGGINGS

There had been a sudden change in the weather. A cold rain was falling, and the night comes early when the clouds hang low. The children loved a bright fire, and to-night War Eagle's lodge was light as day. Away off on the plains a wolf was howling, and the rain pattered upon the lodge as though it never intended to quit. It was a splendid night for story-telling, and War Eagle filled and lighted the great stone pipe, while the children made themselves comfortable about the fire.

A spark sprang from the burning sticks, and fell upon Fine Bow's bare leg. They all laughed heartily at the boy's antics to rid himself of the burning coal; and as soon as the laughing ceased War Eagle laid aside the pipe. An Indian's pipe is large to look at, but holds little tobacco.

"See your shadows on the lodge wall?" asked the old warrior. The children said they saw them, and he continued:

"Some day I will tell you a story about them, and how they drew the arrows of our enemies, but to-night I am going to tell you of the great fire-leggings.

"It was long before there were men and women on the world, but my grandfather told me what I shall now tell you.

"The gray light that hides the night-stars was creeping through the forests, and the wind the Sun sends to warn the people of his coming was among the fir tops. Flowers, on slender stems, bent their heads out of respect for the herald-wind's Master, and from the dead top of a pine-tree the Yellowhammer beat upon his drum and called 'the Sun is awake—all hail the Sun!'

"Then the bush-birds began to sing the song of the morning, and from alders the Robins joined, until all live things were awakened by the great music. Where the tall ferns grew, the Doe waked her Fawns, and taught them to do homage to the Great Light. In the creeks, where the water was still and clear, and where throughout the day, like a delicate damaskeen, the shadows of leaves that overhang would lie, the Speckled Trout broke the surface of the pool in his gladness of the coming day. Pine-squirrels chattered gayly, and loudly proclaimed what the wind had told; and all the shadows were preparing for a great journey to the Sand Hills, where the ghost-people dwell.

"Under a great spruce-tree—where the ground was soft and dry, OLD-man slept. The joy that thrilled creation disturbed him not, although the Sun was near. The bird-people looked at the sleeper in wonder, but the Pine squirrel climbed the great spruce-tree with a pine-cone in his mouth. Quickly he ran out on the limb that spread over OLD-man, and dropped the cone on the sleeper's face. Then he scolded OLD-man, saying: 'Get up—get up—lazy one—lazy one—get up—get up.'

"Rubbing his eyes in anger, OLD-man sat up and saw the Sun coming—his hunting leggings slipping through the thickets—setting them afire, till all the Deer and Elk ran out and sought new places to hide.

"'Ho, Sun!' called OLD-man, 'those are mighty leggings you wear. No wonder you are a great hunter. Your leggings set fire to all the thickets, and by the light you can easily see the Deer and Elk; they cannot hide. Ho! Give them to me and I shall then be the great hunter and never be hungry.'

"'Good,' said the Sun, 'take them, and let me see you wear my leggings.'

"OLD-man was glad in his heart, for he was lazy, and now he thought he could kill the game without much work, and that he could be a great hunter—as great as the Sun. He put on the leggings and at once began to hunt the thickets, for he was hungry. Very soon the leggings began to burn his legs. The faster he travelled the hotter they grew, until in pain he cried out to the Sun to come and take back his leggings; but the Sun would not hear him. On and on OLD-man ran. Faster and faster he flew through the country, setting fire to the brush and grass as he passed. Finally he came to a great river, and jumped in. Sizzzzzzz—the water said, when OLD-man's legs touched it. It cried out, as it does when it is sprinkled upon hot stones in the sweat-lodge, for the leggings were very hot. But standing in the cool water OLD-man took off the leggings and threw them out upon the shore, where the Sun found them later in the day.

"The Sun's clothes were too big for OLD-man, and his work too great.

"We should never ask to do the things which Manitou did not intend us to do. If we keep this always in mind we shall never get into trouble.

"Be yourselves always. That is what Manitou intended. Never blame the Wolf for what he does. He was made to do such things.

From Wisconsin Public Television, a little history of the Anishinaabe and their oral traditions. Settlers called these people Ojibwe or Chippewa. The tribe calls themselves Anishinaabe.

[Ojibwe History](#)





From the Hopi: The Beginning

“The two gods of the universe,” said O-dig-i-ni-ni'-a, the relator of the mythic law of the Havasupais, “are Tochopa and Hokomata. Tochopa he heap good. Hokomata heap han-a-to-op'-o-gi—heap bad. Him Hokomata make big row with Tochopa, and he say he drown the world.

“Tochopa was full of sadness at the news. He had one daughter whom he devotedly loved, and from her he had hoped would descend the whole human race for whom the world had been made. If Hokomata persisted in his wicked determination she must be saved at all hazard. So, working day and night, he speedily prepared the trunk of a pinion tree by hollowing it out from one end. In this hollow tree he placed food and other necessities, and also made a lookout window. Then he brought his daughter, and telling her she must go into this tree and there be sealed up, he took a sad farewell of her, closed up the end of the tree,[210] and then sat down to await the destruction of the world. It was not long before the floods began to descend. Not rain, but cataracts, rivers, deluges came, making more noise than a thousand Hack-a-tai-as (Colorado River) and covering all the earth with water. The pinion log floated, and in safety lay Pu-keh-eh, while the waters surged higher and higher and covered the tops of Hue-han-a-patch-a (the San Franciscos), Hue-ga-wōōl-a (Williams Mountain), and all the other mountains of the world.

“But the waters of heaven could not always be pouring down, and soon after they ceased, the flood upon the earth found a way to rush into the sea. And as it dashed down it cut through the rocks of the plateaus and made the deep Chic-a-mi-mi (canyon) of the Colorado River (Hack-a-tai-a). Soon all the water was gone.

“Then Pu-keh-eh found her log no longer floating, and she peeped out of the window Tochopa had placed in her boat, and, though it was misty and almost dark, she could see in the dim distance the great mountains of the San Francisco range. And near by was the canyon of the Little Colorado, and to the north was Hack-a-tai-a, and to the west was the canyon of the Havasu.

“The flood had lasted so long that she had grown to be a woman, and, seeing the water gone, she came out and began to make pottery and baskets as her father long ago had taught her. But she was a woman. And what is a woman without a child in her arms or nursing at her breasts? How she longed to be a mother! But where was a father for her child? Alas! there was no man in the whole universe!

“Day after day longings for maternity filled her heart, until, one morning,—glorious happy morning for Pu-keh-eh and the Havasu race,—the darkness began to disappear, and in the far-away east soft and new brightness appeared. It was the triumphant Sun coming to conquer the long night and bring light into the world. Nearer and nearer he came, and at last, as he peeped over the far-away mesa summits, Pu-keh-eh arose and thanked Tochopa, for here, at last, was a father for her child. She conceived, and in the fulness of time bore a son, whom she delighted in and called In-ya'-a—the son of the Sun.

“But as the days rolled on she again felt the longings for maternity. By this time she had wandered far to the west and had entered the beautiful canyon of the Havasu, where deep down between the rocks were several grand and glorious waterfalls, and one of these, Wa-ha-hath-peek-ha-ha, she determined should be the father of her second child.

“When it was born it was a girl, and to this day all the girls of the Havasupai are ‘daughters of the water.’ ”

A little history and background on the Hopi people [Hopi Indian Tribe](#)



The Project Gutenberg EBook of The Indians of the Painted Desert Region, by George Wharton James

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org

Title: The Indians of the Painted Desert Region Hopis, Navahoes, Wallapais, Havasupais

Author: George Wharton James

Release Date: January 8, 2014 [EBook #44627]

Language: English

The Project Gutenberg EBook of Indian Why Stories, by Frank Bird Linderman

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.net

Title: Indian Why Stories

Author: Frank Bird Linderman

Posting Date: August 3, 2008 [EBook #606]

Release Date: July, 1996

Language: English

The Project Gutenberg EBook of Eskimo Life, by Fridtjof Nansen

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this ebook.

Title: Eskimo Life Author: Fridtjof Nansen

Translator: William Archer

Release Date: September 26, 2014 [EBook #46972]

Language: English



3.9: African tales



African folktales, like in many other places, are from a long oral tradition. These tales are for teaching, for passing on cultural values, and for making points about life. The Anike Foundation is a strong advocate for education in Africa, and has links here to various other tribal stories that may be of interest.

African Folktales

THE TIGER, THE RAM, AND THE JACKAL

 [CC BY-SA 2.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0)], via Wikimedia Commons

Tiger was returning home from hunting on one occasion, when he lighted on the kraal of Ram. Now, Tiger had never seen Ram before, and accordingly, approaching submissively, he said, "Good day, friend! What may your name be?"

The other in his gruff voice, and striking his breast with his forefoot, said, "I am Ram. Who are you?"

"Tiger," answered the other, more dead than alive, and then, taking leave of Ram, he ran home as fast as he could.

Jackal lived at the same place as Tiger did, and the latter going to him, said, "Friend Jackal, I am quite out of breath, and am half dead with fright, for I have just seen a terrible looking fellow, with a large and thick head, and on my asking him what his name was, he answered, 'I am Ram.'"

"What a foolish fellow you are," cried Jackal, "to let such a nice piece of flesh stand! Why did you do so? But we shall go to-morrow and eat it together."

Next day the two set off for the kraal of Ram, and as they appeared over a hill, Ram, who had turned out to look about him, and was calculating where he should that day crop a tender salad, saw them, and he immediately went to his wife and said, "I fear this is our last day, for Jackal and Tiger are both coming against us. What shall we do?"

"Don't be afraid," said the wife, "but take up the child in your arms, go out with it, and pinch it to make it cry as if it were hungry." Ram did so as the confederates came on.

No sooner did Tiger cast his eyes on Ram than fear again took possession of him, and he wished to turn back. Jackal had provided against this, and made Tiger fast to himself with a leather thong, and said, "Come on," when Ram cried in a loud voice, and pinching his child at the same time, "You have done well, Friend Jackal, to have brought us Tiger to eat, for you hear how my child is crying for food."

On these dreadful words Tiger, notwithstanding the entreaties of Jackal to let him go, to let him loose, set off in the greatest alarm, dragged Jackal after him over hill and valley, through bushes and over rocks, and never stopped to look behind him till he brought back himself and half-dead Jackal to his place again. And so Ram escaped.



THE ORIGIN OF DEATH

The Moon, on one occasion, sent the Hare to the earth to inform Men that as she (the Moon) died away and rose again, so mankind should die and rise again. Instead, however, of delivering this message as given, the Hare, either out of

forgetfulness or malice, told mankind that as the Moon rose and died away, so Man should die and rise no more. The Hare, having returned to the Moon, was questioned as to the message delivered, and the Moon, having heard the true state of the case, became so enraged with him that she took up a hatchet to split his head; falling short, however, of that, the hatchet fell upon the upper lip of the Hare, and cut it severely. Hence it is that we see the "Hare-lip." The Hare, being duly incensed at having received such treatment, raised his claws, and scratched the Moon's face; and the dark spots which we now see on the surface of the Moon are the scars which she received on that occasion.



THE DANCE FOR WATER OR RABBIT'S TRIUMPH

There was a frightful drought. The rivers after a while dried up and even the springs gave no water.

The animals wandered around seeking drink, but to no avail. Nowhere was water to be found.

A great gathering of animals was held: Lion, Tiger, Wolf, Jackal, Elephant, all of them came together. What was to be done? That was the question. One had this plan, and another had that; but no plan seemed of value.

Finally one of them suggested: "Come, let all of us go to the dry river bed and dance; in that way we can tread out the water."

Good! Everyone was satisfied and ready to begin instantly, excepting Rabbit, who said, "I will not go and dance. All of you are mad to attempt to get water from the ground by dancing."

The other animals danced and danced, and ultimately danced the water to the surface. How glad they were. Everyone drank as much as he could, but Rabbit did not dance with them. So it was decided that Rabbit should have no water.

He laughed at them: "I will nevertheless drink some of your water."

That evening he proceeded leisurely to the river bed where the dance had been, and drank as much as he wanted. The following morning the animals saw the footprints of Rabbit in the ground, and Rabbit shouted to them: "Aha! I did have some of the water, and it was most refreshing and tasted fine."

Quickly all the animals were called together. What were they to do? How were they to get Rabbit in their hands? All had some means to propose; the one suggested this, and the other that.



Finally old Tortoise moved slowly forward, foot by foot: "I will catch Rabbit."

"You? How? What do you think of yourself?" shouted the others in unison.

"Rub my shell with pitch, and I will go to the edge of the water and lie down. I will then resemble a stone, so that when Rabbit steps on me his feet will stick fast."

"Yes! Yes! That's good."

And in a one, two, three, Tortoise's shell was covered with pitch, and foot by foot he moved away to the river. At the edge, close to the water, he lay down and drew his head into his shell.

Rabbit during the evening came to get a drink. "Ha!" he chuckled sarcastically, "they are, after all, quite decent. Here they have placed a stone, so now I need not unnecessarily wet my feet."

Rabbit trod with his left foot on the stone, and there it stuck. Tortoise then put his head out. "Ha! old Tortoise! And it's you, is it, that's holding me. But here I still have another foot. I'll give you a good clout." Rabbit gave Tortoise what he

said he would with his right fore foot, hard and straight; and there his foot remained.

"I have yet a hind foot, and with it I'll kick you." Rabbit drove his hind foot down. This also rested on Tortoise where it struck.

"But still another foot remains, and now I'll tread you." He stamped his foot down, but it stuck like the others.

He used his head to hammer Tortoise, and his tail as a whip, but both met the same fate as his feet, so there he was tight and fast down to the pitch.

Tortoise now slowly turned himself round and foot by foot started for the other animals, with Rabbit on his back.

"Ha! ha! ha! Rabbit! How does it look now? Insolence does not pay after all," shouted the animals.

Now advice was sought. What should they do with Rabbit? He certainly must die. But how? One said, "Behead him"; another, "Some severe penalty."

"Rabbit, how are we to kill you?"

"It does not affect me," Rabbit said. "Only a shameful death please do not pronounce."

"And what is that?" they all shouted.

"To take me by my tail and dash my head against a stone; that I pray and beseech you don't do."

"No, but just so you'll die. That is decided."

It was decided Rabbit should die by taking him by his tail and dashing his head to pieces against some stone. But who is to do it?

Lion, because he is the most powerful one.

Good! Lion should do it. He stood up, walked to the front, and poor Rabbit was brought to him. Rabbit pleaded and beseeched that he couldn't die such a miserable death.

Lion took Rabbit firmly by the tail and swung him around. The white skin slipped off from Rabbit, and there Lion stood with the white bit of skin and hair in his paw. Rabbit was free.



Produced by Michael Hale, Suzanne Shell and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net>
Produced from images generously made available by The Internet Archive/American Libraries.The Project Gutenberg
EBook of South-African Folk-Tales, by James A. Honey

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.net

Title: South-African Folk-Tales

Author: James A. Honey

Release Date: December 19, 2011 [EBook #38339]

Language: English



3.10: Baal Shem Tov



The **Baal Shem Tov** or **Besht**, was a Jewish mystical rabbi considered the founder of Chassidic Judaism. “Besht” is the acronym for Baal Shem Tov, meaning “Master of the Good Name” or “one with a good reputation.” This movement came about in a time of serious persecution of Jews, but also during a time when scholarly Judaism was very focused on minute analysis of scriptures, and was not as focused on the real lives of the poorer Jews who could not send their children to years and years of religious education. The Baal Shem Tov changed this for many people.

If you would like a little information on this 18th century CE movement, check out [The Birth of Chassidism](#)



[Lost in the Mail for 16 years](#)

By Shaul Wertheimer^[1] [Original Website](#)

Some 300 years ago, there lived an affluent man named Avigdor. He once brought a large sum of money to Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov, the founder of the chassidic movement, to be distributed to the poor on his behalf.

Accepting the contribution graciously, the Baal Shem Tov (literally, “Master of a Good Name”) inquired if perhaps Avigdor would like a blessing in return. After all, the Baal Shem Tov was renowned not only as a great Torah scholar, but also as a righteous individual who had the power to give blessings.

“No thanks!” replied Avigdor arrogantly. “I am very wealthy; I own many properties, and I have servants, plenty of delicacies and everything else I want. I have more than I need!”

“You are very fortunate,” replied the Baal Shem Tov. “Perhaps you would like a blessing for your family?”

“I have a large and healthy family of which I am very proud; they are a credit to me. I don’t need—or want—anything.”

“Well, then perhaps you can help me. May I request one thing of you?” inquired Rabbi Israel. “Can you please deliver a letter to the head of the charity committee in Brody?”

“Certainly,” responded Avigdor. “I live in Brody and would be happy to assist you in this matter.”

The Baal Shem Tov took out a pen and paper, wrote a letter, sealed it in an envelope and gave it to Avigdor. Avigdor took the letter, placed it in his jacket pocket and returned home. But he had so many projects on his mind that by the time he arrived in Brody he had completely forgotten about the entire encounter with Rabbi Israel.

Sixteen years passed, and the wheel of fortune suddenly turned. All of Avigdor's assets and properties were lost or destroyed. Floods ruined his fields of crops; fires destroyed his forests. Calamity after calamity. He was left penniless.

Creditors took his house and everything he owned. He was forced to sell even his clothing to feed his children. One day, while cleaning out the pockets of an old jacket he planned to sell, he found a letter—the letter that he had received from the Baal Shem Tov 16 years earlier! In a flash, he recalled his visit and his haughtiness when he thought he had everything. With tears in his eyes, he rushed to finally fulfill his mission and deliver the letter. The envelope was addressed to a Mr. Tzaddok, chairman of the charity committee of Brody.

He ran into the street and encountered one of his friends. Grabbing his arm, he said, "Where can I find Mr. Tzaddok?"

"Mr. Tzaddok? You mean Mr. Tzaddok, the chairman of the charity committee?"

"Yes, I must see him immediately!" replied Avigdor.

"He is in the synagogue," said Avigdor's friend. "I was there only a few minutes ago. Mr. Tzaddok is indeed a lucky man. Just this morning he was elected chairman of the charity committee."

"Tell me more about Mr. Tzaddok," insisted Avigdor.



Willing to oblige, Avigdor's friend continued, "Mr. Tzaddok was born and raised here in Brody. A tailor by profession, he was always down on his luck, never able to make a decent living. He was hardly able to support his family, and they always lived in abject poverty. He sat in the back of the synagogue, and no one ever took notice of him. Despite working many hours, he never earned much; it was hard for him to scrape together enough money for even a loaf of bread for his family."

"Recently, however, the tide changed. Mr. Tzaddok was introduced to a local nobleman, and he made uniforms for all his servants. The nobleman was very satisfied with Mr. Tzaddok's craftsmanship, and his business started to pick up. He even received an order for 5,000 uniforms for the army. He became a rich man and gained respect in the eyes of the community. He did not forget his former poverty, and gave generously to many, taking an active role in communal affairs. Just this morning, he was unanimously elected chairman of the charity committee."

Hearing this story, Avigdor hurried to the synagogue and found Mr. Tzaddok busy perusing the many requests for financial assistance. He handed Mr. Tzaddok the letter. Together they read the words of the Baal Shem Tov, penned 16 years earlier:

Dear Mr. Tzaddok,

The man who brought this letter is named Avigdor. He was once very wealthy, but is now very poor. He has paid for his haughtiness. Since just this morning you were elected chairman of the charity committee, I request that you do all you can to assist him, as he has a large family to support. He will once again become successful, and this time he will be more suited to success. In case you doubt my words, I give you the following sign: Your wife is expecting a baby, and today she will give birth to a boy.

They had hardly concluded reading the letter when someone burst into the synagogue and exclaimed, "Mazel tov, Mr. Tzaddok! Your wife just had a baby boy!"

Thanks to the Baal Shem Tov's foresight, Avigdor once again became very affluent. This time, he remained humble and was admired by all.

 Once Upon a Donkey

By Yanki Tauber^[2] Original Website

He was strong of bone, thick of hide and obstinate of mind, and as all donkeys before him from the dawn of donkey history, he was born into the service of a human master.

His master placed heavy loads on his back — goods and produce to take to the marketplace. But the donkey just stood there, munching grass.



A man walked by and said to the donkey's master: "What a stubborn beast! Beat him with your whip." But the donkey just dug his heels deeper into the earth and refused to budge.

Another man walked by and said to the donkey's master: "Your beast needs to be taught his purpose. His burden is too light — so he thinks that all that's required of him is to munch his grass." So they brought more pots and pans and cabbages and books to increase the donkey's load. The load grew and grew until the donkey collapsed.

A third man arrived and said: "Who needs that silly animal, anyway? You're much better off without him. All that stuff on his back is quite useless, too, for men of the spirit. Forsake your beast and its load and follow me, and I'll show you the gateway to heaven."

Still the donkey's owner hesitated. He liked his donkey. He also liked his pots and his pans, his cabbages and his books. Perhaps he could carry them himself? But he knew he couldn't do it on his own.

A fourth teacher arrived on the scene. "Don't beat your beast," he said to the donkey's master. "Don't overload him and don't abandon him. Help him."

"Help him?" asked the man.

"Help him carry his load. Show him that your burden is a shared burden — that it's not just him doing the shlepping and you reaping the profits, but a joint venture in which you both toil and both benefit. When you regard him as a partner rather than a slave, your beast will be transformed. His obstinacy will become endurance, his strength will turn from a resisting force into a carrying force."

The man put his shoulder to his donkey's burden. The beast rose from the ground and tensed its brawn; the man, too, heaved and strained. Together they transported their merchandise to the market.



The content in this page is produced by Chabad.org, and is copyrighted by the author and/or Chabad.org. If you enjoyed this article, we encourage you to distribute it further, provided that you do not revise any part of it, and you include this note, credit the author, and link to www.chabad.org. If you wish to republish this article in a periodical, book, or website, please email permissions@chabad.org. "Copyright and reprinted with permission of Chabad.org", April 15, 2018.

1. Shaul Wertheimer is the director of Chabad of Queens College. He has a degree in philosophy from Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., and graduated from the Rabbinical College of America in Morristown, N.J. He lives in Queens with his wife and children. ↵
2. Yanki Tauber served as editor of Chabad.org ↵

3.11: Bluebeard



The Story of Blue Beard
from Perrault illustrated
with pictures and ornaments by Joseph
E. Southall.
London - Lawrence
and Bullen,
Chicago, New
& Kabell
1893.

Bluebeard is a scary story. It is the one that makes people wonder about telling children Fairy Tales, and what, exactly, constitutes a fairy tale, anyhow! Twentieth-century psychologists, including Freud, Carl Jung, and Bettelheim, have tried to interpret various elements of the fairy tale as manifestations of universal fears and desires. But stories have a powerful impact on children, and even throughout life on adults. They can be shocking, they can be delightful, they can be wistful, and they can be full of warning and hope at the same time. We can know a story is a fairy tale when it has an element of fantasy, like the bleeding key here, and sets itself in an unknown land and an unknown time. And the characters are generally good or evil, and the reader soon figures this out.

So do we have a tale of a serial killer? Of a warning against marrying a wealthy man, or a man with a past? Is the gift of the key with a warning a test of fidelity? This kind of story can bring up a wealth of questions, which is one of the best things about a fairy tale!

"There was once a man who had fine houses, both in town and country, a deal of silver and gold plate, embroidered furniture, and coaches gilded all over with gold. But this man was so unlucky as to have a blue beard, which made him so frightfully ugly that all the women and girls ran away from him.

One of his neighbors, a lady of quality, had two daughters who were perfect beauties. He desired of her one of them in marriage, leaving to her choice which of the two she would bestow on him. Neither of them would have him, and they sent him backwards and forwards from one to the other, not being able to bear the thoughts of marrying a man who had a blue beard. Adding to their disgust and aversion was the fact that he already had been married to several wives, and nobody knew what had become of them.

Bluebeard, to engage their affection, took them, with their mother and three or four ladies of their acquaintance, with other young people of the neighborhood, to one of his country houses, where they stayed a whole week.



The time was filled with parties, hunting, fishing, dancing, mirth, and feasting. Nobody went to bed, but all passed the night in rallying and joking with each other. In short, everything succeeded so well that the youngest daughter began to think that the man's beard was not so very blue after all, and that he was a mighty civil gentleman.

As soon as they returned home, the marriage was concluded. About a month afterwards, Bluebeard told his wife that he was obliged to take a country journey for six weeks at least, about affairs of very great consequence. He desired her to

divert herself in his absence, to send for her friends and acquaintances, to take them into the country, if she pleased, and to make good cheer wherever she was.

"Here," said he, "are the keys to the two great wardrobes, wherein I have my best furniture. These are to my silver and gold plate, which is not everyday in use. These open my strongboxes, which hold my money, both gold and silver; these my caskets of jewels. And this is the master key to all my apartments. But as for this little one here, it is the key to the closet at the end of the great hall on the ground floor. Open them all; go into each and every one of them, except that little closet, which I forbid you, and forbid it in such a manner that, if you happen to open it, you may expect my just anger and resentment."



She promised to observe, very exactly, whatever he had ordered. Then he, after having embraced her, got into his coach and proceeded on his journey.

Her neighbors and good friends did not wait to be sent for by the newly married lady. They were impatient to see all the rich furniture of her house, and had not dared to come while her husband was there, because of his blue beard, which frightened them. They ran through all the rooms, closets, and wardrobes, which were all so fine and rich that they seemed to surpass one another.

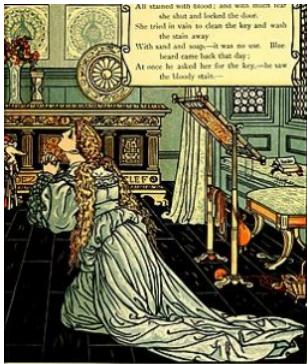
After that, they went up into the two great rooms, which contained the best and richest furniture. They could not sufficiently admire the number and beauty of the tapestry, beds, couches, cabinets, stands, tables, and looking glasses, in which you might see yourself from head to foot; some of them were framed with glass, others with silver, plain and gilded,



the finest and most magnificent that they had ever seen.

They ceased not to extol and envy the happiness of their friend, who in the meantime in no way diverted herself in looking upon all these rich things, because of the impatience she had to go and open the closet on the ground floor. She was so much pressed by her curiosity that, without considering that it was very uncivil for her to leave her company, she went down a little back staircase, and with such excessive haste that she nearly fell and broke her neck.

Having come to the closet door, she made a stop for some time, thinking about her husband's orders, and considering what unhappiness might attend her if she was disobedient; but the temptation was so strong that she could not overcome it. She then took the little key, and opened it, trembling. At first she could not see anything plainly, because the windows were shut. After some moments she began to perceive that the floor was all covered over with clotted blood, on which lay the bodies of several dead women, ranged against the walls. (These were all the wives whom Bluebeard had married and murdered, one after another.) She thought she should have died for fear, and the key, which she, pulled out of the lock, fell out of her hand.



After having somewhat recovered her surprise, she picked up the key, locked the door, and went upstairs into her chamber to recover; but she could not, so much was she frightened. Having observed that the key to the closet was stained with blood, she tried two or three times to wipe it off; but the blood would not come out; in vain did she wash it, and even rub it with soap and sand. The blood still remained, for the key was magical and she could never make it quite clean; when the blood was gone off from one side, it came again on the other.

Bluebeard returned from his journey the same evening, saying that he had received letters upon the road, informing him that the affair he went about had concluded to his advantage. His wife did all she could to convince him that she was extremely happy about his speedy return.

The next morning he asked her for the keys, which she gave him, but with such a trembling hand that he easily guessed what had happened.

“What!” said he, “is not the key of my closet among the rest?”

“I must,” said she, “have left it upstairs upon the table.”

“Fail not,” said Bluebeard, “to bring it to me at once.”

After several goings backwards and forwards, she was forced to bring him the key. Bluebeard, having very attentively considered it, said to his wife, “Why is there blood on the key?”

“I do not know,” cried the poor woman, paler than death.

“You do not know!” replied Bluebeard. “I very well know. You went into the closet, did you not? Very well, madam; you shall go back, and take your place among the ladies you saw there.”

Upon this she threw herself at her husband’s feet, and begged his pardon with all the signs of a true repentance, vowing that she would never more be disobedient. She would have melted a rock, so beautiful and sorrowful was she; but Bluebeard had a heart harder than any rock!

“You must die, madam,” said he, “at once.”

“Since I must die,” answered she (looking upon him with her eyes all bathed in tears), “give me some little time to say my prayers.”

“I give you,” replied Bluebeard, “half a quarter of an hour, but not one moment more.”

When she was alone she called out to her sister, and said to her, “Sister Anne” (for that was her name), “go up, I beg you, to the top of the tower, and look if my brothers are not coming. They promised me that they would come today, and if you see them, give them a sign to make haste.”

Her sister Anne went up to the top of the tower, and the poor afflicted wife cried out from time to time, “Anne, sister Anne, do you see anyone coming?”

And sister Anne said, “I see nothing but a cloud of dust in the sun, and the green grass.”

In the meanwhile Bluebeard, holding a great saber in his hand, cried out as loud as he could bawl to his wife, “Come down instantly, or I shall come up to you.”

“One moment longer, if you please,” said his wife; and then she cried out very softly, “Anne, sister Anne, do you see anybody coming?”

And sister Anne answered, "I see nothing but a cloud of dust in the sun, and the green grass."

"Come down quickly," cried Bluebeard, "or I will come up to you."

"I am coming," answered his wife; and then she cried, "Anne, sister Anne, do you not see anyone coming?"

"I see," replied sister Anne, "a great cloud of dust approaching us."

"Are they my brothers?"

"Alas, no my dear sister, I see a flock of sheep."

"Will you not come down?" cried Bluebeard.

"One moment longer," said his wife, and then she cried out, "Anne, sister Anne, do you see nobody coming?"

"I see," said she, "two horsemen, but they are still a great way off."

"God be praised," replied the poor wife joyfully. "They are my brothers. I will make them a sign, as well as I can for them to make haste."

Then Bluebeard bawled out so loud that he made the whole house tremble. The distressed wife came down, and threw herself at his feet, all in tears, with her hair about her shoulders.

"This means nothing," said Bluebeard. "You must die!" Then, taking hold of her hair with one hand, and lifting up the sword with the other, he prepared to strike off her head. The poor lady, turning about to him, and looking at him with dying eyes, desired him to afford her one little moment to recollect herself.

"No, no," said he, "commend yourself to God," and was just ready to strike.



At this very instant there was such a loud knocking at the gate that Bluebeard made a sudden stop. The gate was opened, and two horsemen entered. Drawing their swords, they ran directly to Bluebeard. He knew them to be his wife's brothers, one a dragoon, the other a musketeer; so that he ran away immediately to save himself; but the two brothers pursued and overtook him before he could get to the steps of the porch. Then they ran their swords through his body and left him dead. The poor wife was almost as dead as her husband, and had not strength enough to rise and welcome her brothers.

Bluebeard had no heirs, and so his wife became mistress of all his estate. She made use of one part of it to marry her sister Anne to a young gentleman who had loved her a long while; another part to buy captains' commissions for her brothers, and the rest to marry herself to a very worthy gentleman, who made her forget the ill time she had passed with Bluebeard."



The Project Gutenberg EBook of The Story of Blue-Beard, by Charles Perrault

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org

Title: The Story of Blue-Beard

Author: Charles Perrault

Illustrator: Joseph E. Southall

Release Date: November 26, 2013 [EBook #44288]

Language: English



3.12: From Judaism



The basic beliefs that come into our culture from Judaism include the concept of monotheism—the belief in one, single divine being—and these basic commandments for living. The impact on the Western cultures of these two simple things is hard to measure. The law and ethics of many modern civilizations in the developed world hold fast to some version of these 10 commandments. And, of course, the belief in a single deity is common in many places, and lead to the development of both Christianity and Islam. Here are these two central statements from the Torah, which is the teaching section of the Hebrew Bible.

Judaism really focuses on living now, for this day, and having a good relationship with family, community and God. The afterlife is not really the consideration—it is all about the ethical living now. And all of this happens, of course, in the context of ritual, tradition and family.

This Ted Talk illustrates the Jewish emphasis on community, on ethical living. From their site: “It’s a fateful moment in history. We’ve seen divisive elections, divided societies and the growth of extremism — all fueled by anxiety and uncertainty. “Is there something we can do, each of us, to be able to face the future without fear?” asks Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks^[1]. In this electrifying talk, the spiritual leader gives us three specific ways we can move from the politics of “me” to the politics of “all of us, together.”

[How we can face the future together?](#)



Deuteronomy 6:4-9 *Sh'ma Yisrael*

⁴ Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:

⁵ And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

⁶ And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

⁷ And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

⁸ And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

⁹ And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.



The 10 Commandments

Exodus 20:1-17

- [1] And God spake all these words, saying,
- [2] I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
- [3] Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
- [4] Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:
- [5] Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;
- [6] And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
- [7] Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
- [8] Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
- [9] Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:



- [10] But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:
- [11] For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.
- [12] Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.
- [13] Thou shalt not kill.
- [14] Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- [15] Thou shalt not steal.
- [16] Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.
- [17] Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.



King James Version of the Bible

1. Rabbi Lord Sacks is one of Judaism's spiritual leaders, and he exercises a primary influence on the thought and philosophy of Jews and people of all faiths worldwide. Since stepping down as Chief Rabbi of the UK and Commonwealth in 2013, Rabbi Lord Sacks has become an increasingly well-known speaker, respected moral voice and writer. He has authored more than 30 books, the latest, *Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence*, was published in 2015. Granted a seat in the British House of Lords in 2009 and the winner of the 2016 Templeton Prize, Rabbi Lord Sacks is a key Jewish voice for universalism and an embrace of tolerance between religions and cultures. He rejects the "politics of anger" brought about by the way "we have acted as if markets can function without morals, international corporations without social responsibility and economic systems without regard to their effect on the people left stranded by the shifting tide." He also sees, as a key idea for faith in our times, that unity in heaven creates diversity on earth. ↪

Contributions and Attributions

This page is licensed under a [CC BY-NC-SA](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Jody Ondich](#). Page content has been edited and updated to conform to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform; a detailed versioning history of the edits to source content is available upon request.

3.13: Kong Fu Tzu

This page was auto-generated because a user created a sub-page to this page.

3.13.1: Kong Fu Tzu/ Confucius



Selections from the Analects

A little background on the mysterious man that most of us think of as the goofy source of all those pithy statements like, “Confucius says...very first doctor of dermatology had to start from scratch”. But in fact Buddhism, Daoism and Confucian teachings have been the Big Three in China and Eastern Asia. There are writings attributed to the followers of Confucius called the **Analects**, which are said to be his teachings. Key in Confucian teaching are the **The Five Constant Relationships**, which outline how one should act in society, emphasizing the relationships between parent and child, husband and wife, elder sibling and junior sibling, elder friend and junior friend, and ruler and subject.

An excellent Ted Ed lesson, if you would like a little more context for Confucius, his life and his teachings, can be found at:

[Who was Confucius?](#)

Here you can watch a short video, read a bit more scholarship regarding Confucius, and find additional links to other resources.

The definitions of terms at the end of this chapter are especially useful—these are key terms found in Confucius’ teaching. Check them out!

Book I

1.6 The Master said: A young man should be filial within his home and respectful of elders when outside, should be careful and trustworthy, broadly caring of people at large, and should cleave to those who are *ren*. If he has energy left over, he may study the refinements of culture (*wen*).

1.7 Zixia said: If a person treats worthy people as worthy and so alters his expression, exerts all his effort when serving his parents, exhausts himself when serving his lord, and is trustworthy in keeping his word when in the company of friends, though others may say he is not yet learned, I would call him learned.

1.8 The Master said: If a *junzi* is not serious he will not be held in awe. If you study you will not be crude. Take loyalty and trustworthiness as the pivot and have no friends who are not like yourself in this. If you err, do not be afraid to correct yourself.

1.16 The Master said: Do not be concerned that no one recognizes your merits. Be concerned that you may not recognize others’.



Book II

2.1 The Master said: When one rules by means of virtue it is like the North Star – it dwells in its place and the other stars pay reverence to it.

2.3 The Master said: Guide them with policies and align them with punishments and the people will evade them and have no shame. Guide them with virtue and align them with *li* and the people will have a sense of shame and fulfill their roles.

2.4 The Master said: When I was fifteen I set my heart on learning. At thirty I took my stand. At forty I was without confusion. At

fifty I knew the command of Tian. At sixty I heard it with a compliant ear. At seventy I follow the desires of my heart and do not overstep the bounds.

2.15 The Master said: If you study but don't reflect you'll be lost. If you reflect but don't study you'll get into trouble.

2.19 Duke Ai asked, "What should I do so that the people will obey?" Confucius replied, "Raise up the straight and set them above the crooked and the people will obey. Raise up the crooked and set them above the straight and the people will not obey."

2.20 Ji Kangzi asked, "How would it be to use persuasion to make the people respectful and loyal?" The Master said, "If you approach them with solemnity they will be respectful; if you are filial and caring they will be loyal; if you raise up the good and instruct those who lack ability they will be persuaded."



Book V

5.12 Zigong said, "What I do not wish others to do to me, I do not wish to do to others." The Master said, "Si, this is a level you have not yet reached."

5.14 When Zilu heard something new and had not yet learned to practice it, his only fear was that he would hear something else new.

5.27 The Master said, Enough! I have yet to see anyone who can recognize his own errors and bring charges against himself within.

Book VI

6.18 When plain substance prevails over patterned refinement, you have a bumpkin. When patterned refinement prevails over substance, you have a clerk. When substance and pattern are in balance, only then do you have a *junzi*.

6.19 Men stay alive through straightforward conduct. When the crooked stay alive it is simply a matter of escaping through luck.

6.20 The Master said, Knowing it is not so good as loving it; loving it is not so good as taking joy in it.

Book XX [Public domain or Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

20.2 Zizhang asked Confucius, "What must a man be like before he may participate in governance?" Confucius said, "If he honors the five beautiful things and casts out the four evils, then he may participate in governance." Zizhang said, "What are the five beautiful things?" The Master said, "The *junzi* is generous but not wasteful, a taskmaster of whom none complain, desirous but not greedy, dignified but not arrogant, awe-inspiring but not fearsome." Zizhang said, "What do you mean by generous but not wasteful?" The Master said, "To reward people with that which benefits them, is that not to be generous but not wasteful? To pick a task that people can fulfill and set them to it, is that not to be a taskmaster of whom none complain? If one desires *ren* and obtains it, wherein is he greedy? If he never dares to be unmannerly, regardless of whether with many or a few, with the great or the small, is that not to be dignified but not arrogant? When the *junzi* sets his cap and robes right, and makes his gaze reverent, such that people stare up at him in awe, is this not, indeed, to be awe-inspiring and not fearsome?"



Zizhang said, “What are the four evils?” The Master said, “To execute people without having given them instruction is called cruelty; to inspect their work without warning is called oppressiveness; to demand timely completion while having been slow in giving orders is called thievery; to dole out stingily what must be given is called clerkishness.”

20.3 The Master said, If you do not know your destiny, you cannot be a *junzi*. If you don’t know *li*, you cannot take your stand. If you don’t interpret people’s words, you cannot interpret people

Vocabulary

Junzi 俊子 (True Prince)

This is a compound word composed of two written characters which separately means “ruler’s son.” The ancient character for “ruler” (jun) showed a hand grasping a writing brush with a mouth placed by the side, illustrating the modes by which a ruler issued orders (the word zi basically meant “child/son,” the written character being simply a picture of a child; it also served as an honorific suffix meaning “master” in names like Kongzi, that is, Confucius, or Master Kong). In pre-philosophical writings, the word junzi was used to refer to someone who was heir to a ruling position by virtue of his birth. Under the changing social conditions of the Warring States period, the concept of birthright was replaced by the notion of an “aristocracy of merit,” and in the Confucian school, the term junzi came to denote an “ethical aristocrat” rather than a future king. Because in this sense of the term, there is an underlying sense that “real” princeliness lies in moral accomplishments rather than the chance circumstances of family position, the term might be translated not as “prince,” but as True Prince. For Confucians, the hallmark of the junzi was his complete internalization of the virtue of ren and associated qualities, such as righteousness (yi) and full socialization through ritual skills. A parallel normative term, shi 士 (gentleman), is frequent in Confucian texts as a type of prefiguration of the junzi ideal in a man of aspiration. Originally probably denoting a man of good birth, in the Warring States era the term shi comes to denote a man whose character exemplifies the social accomplishments once associated with birth – a change of meaning paralleling the evolution of the term junzi.

Li 禮 (Ritual)

Commitment to ritual was the distinguishing characteristic of the Confucian School. By “ritual,” or li, the Confucians meant not only ceremonies of grand religious or social occasions, but also the institutions of Zhou Dynasty political culture and the norms of proper everyday conduct. Although accordance with ritual was, in some senses, a matter of knowing the codes of aristocratic behavior (and knowing them better than the debased aristocrats of the later Zhou era), it was more importantly a manner of attaining full mastery of the style or pattern (wen) of civilized behavior. Confucians viewed these patterns as the essence of civilization itself. The great sages of the past had labored era after era to transform China from brutishness to refinement through the elaboration of these artistic forms of social interaction, and in the Confucian view, the epitome of human virtue was expressed only through these forms. Mastery of the outer forms was the path to inner sagehood. The ancient character for li shows a ceremonial vessel filled with sacrificial goods on the right, with an altar stand on the left.

Ren 仁 (Humanity; Goodness)

No term is more important in Confucianism than ren. Prior to the time of Confucius, the term Humanity does not seem to have been much used. In those pre-philosophical days, the word seems to have meant “manly,” an adjective of high praise in a warrior society. Confucius, however, changed the meaning of the term and gave it great ethical weight. He identified “manliness” (or, in non-sexist terms, the qualities associated with constructive social leadership) with the firm disposition to place the needs and feelings of others and of the community before one’s own. The written graph of this term is a simple one; it combines the form for “person” on the left with the number “two” on the right; a person of Humanity, or ren, is someone who is thoroughly relational in their thoughts, feelings, and actions. (The happily illustrative graphic etymology is, unfortunately, undercut by recently unearthed manuscript texts of the late fourth century BCE, which consistently render the term with the graph for “body” placed over the graph for “heart/mind”; this may, however, have been a local scribal tradition confined to the southerly region of Chu.) Confucians often pair this term with Righteousness, and it is very common for the two terms together to be used as a general expression for “morality.” Other schools also use the term ren, but they usually employ it either to criticize Confucians, or in a much reduced sense, pointing simply to people who are well-meaning. The term is closely linked in Confucian discourse with the ideal of the junzi (Analects 4.5: If one takes ren away from a junzi, wherein is he worthy of the name?).



Tian ☰ (Heaven)

Tian was the name of a deity of the Zhou people which stood at the top of a supernatural hierarchy of spirits (ghosts, nature spirits, powerful ancestral leaders, Tian). Tian also means “the sky,” and for that reason, it is well translated as “Heaven.” The early graph is an anthropomorphic image (a picture of a deity in terms of human attributes) that shows a human form with an enlarged head. Heaven was an important concept for the early Zhou people; Heaven was viewed as an all-powerful and all-good deity, who took a special interest in protecting the welfare of China. When the Zhou founders overthrew the Shang Dynasty in 1045, they defended their actions by claiming that they were merely receiving the “mandate” of Heaven, who had wished to replace debased Shang rule with a new era of virtue in China. All early philosophers use this term and seem to accept that there existed some high deity that influenced human events. The Mohist school was particularly strident on the importance of believing that Tian was powerfully concerned with human activity. They claimed that the Confucians did not believe Tian existed, although Confucian texts do speak of Tian reverently and with regularity. In fact, Confucian texts also seem to move towards identifying Tian less with a conscious deity and more with the unmotivated regularities of Nature. When Daoist texts speak of Heaven, it is often unclear whether they are referring to a deity, to Nature as a whole, or to their image of the Great Dao.

Wen ☰ (pattern, style, culture)

The word wen denoted the opposite of brutishness in appearance and behavior. A person of “pattern” was a person who had adopted the many cultivated forms that characterized Chinese culture at its best, in contrast to the “barbaric” nomadic peoples who surrounded China. Confucians believed that the patterns of Chinese civilization had been initially inspired by the patterns of the Heavens and the seasons, and that they represented a Heaven-destined order that human beings needed to fabricate within the sphere of their own activity, so that they could join with Heaven and earth in the process of creation and order. The original character appears to have pictured a costumed dancer, and music, sound, and dance were essential emblems of the Confucian portrait of the civilized society. Such patterns were the basis of ritual li. For Daoists, pattern symbolized the fall of the human species from its origins in the natural Dao. The Dao de jing attacks pattern and culture through its two most striking metaphors for the Dao: the uncarved block of wood and the undyed piece of cloth.



© 2003, 2012, 2015 Robert Eno

This online translation is made freely available for use in not for profit educational settings and for personal use. For other purposes, apart from fair use, copyright is not waived

Open access to this translation is provided, without charge, at [Analects of Confucius](#)

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: EARLY MODERN WISDOM 1500-1750

4.1: RENE DESCARTES

4.2: THOMAS HOBBES

4.3: BLAISE PASCAL

4.4: DAVID HUME

4.1: Rene Descartes

Part I The Principles of Human Knowledge

TRANSLATED BY JOHN VEITCH, LL. D. LATE PROFESSOR OF LOGIC AND RHETORIC IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW



René Descartes, 1596 –1650 CE, was a French philosopher, mathematician, and scientist. Sometimes called the father of modern western philosophy, much of Western philosophy is a response, at least in part, to Descartes' writings. His best known philosophical statement is “*Cogito ergo sum*” (*I think, therefore I am*) His idea was that thought cannot be separated from a person, therefore, the person exists. Descartes constructs a system of knowledge, eliminating sense perception as unreliable and allowing only deduction as an acceptable method of obtaining knowledge. The concept of the dualism of mind and body is Descartes' signature doctrine. Known as Cartesian dualism, his theory on the separation between the mind and the body went on to influence subsequent Western philosophies. Descartes attempted to demonstrate the difference between the human soul and the human body. Humans are a union of mind and body, thus Descartes' dualism embraced the idea that mind and body are distinct but closely joined.

Have some fun with [Cartesian Skepticism – Neo, Meet Rene!](#)

I. THAT in order to seek truth, it is necessary once in the course of our life, to doubt, as far as possible, of all things.

As we were at one time children, and as we formed various judgments regarding the objects presented to our senses, when as yet we had not the entire use of our reason, numerous prejudices stand in the way of our arriving at the knowledge of truth; and of these it seems impossible for us to rid ourselves, unless we undertake, once in our lifetime, to doubt of all those things in which we may discover even the smallest suspicion of uncertainty.

II. That we ought also to consider as false all that is doubtful.

Moreover, it will be useful likewise to esteem as false the things of which we shall be able to doubt, that we may with greater clearness discover what possesses most certainty and is the easiest to know.

III. That we ought not meanwhile to make use of doubt in the conduct of life.

In the meantime, it is to be observed that we are to avail ourselves of this general doubt only while engaged in the contemplation of truth. For, as far as concerns the conduct of life, we are very frequently obliged to follow opinions merely probable, or even sometimes, though of two courses of action we may not perceive more probability in the one than in the other, to choose one or other, seeing the opportunity of acting would not unfrequently pass away before we could free ourselves from our doubts.



IV. Why we may doubt of sensible things.

Accordingly, since we now only design to apply ourselves to the investigation of truth, we will doubt, first, whether of all the things that have ever fallen under our senses, or which we have ever imagined, any one really exist; in the first place, because we know by experience that the senses sometimes err, and it would be imprudent to trust too much to what has even once deceived us; secondly, because in dreams we perpetually seem to perceive or imagine innumerable objects which have no existence. And to one who has thus resolved upon a general doubt, there appear no marks by which he can with certainty distinguish sleep from the waking state.

V. Why we may also doubt of mathematical demonstrations.

We will also doubt of the other things we have before held as most certain, even of the demonstrations of mathematics, and of their principles which we have hitherto deemed self-evident; in the first place, because we have sometimes seen men fall into error in such matters, and admit as absolutely certain and self evident what to us appeared false, but chiefly because we have learnt that God who created us is all-powerful; for we do not yet know whether perhaps it was his will to create us so that we are always deceived, even in the things we think we know best: since this does not appear more impossible than our being occasionally deceived, which, however, as observation teaches us, is the case. And if we suppose that an all-powerful God is not the author of our being, and that we exist of ourselves or by some other means, still, the less powerful we suppose our author to be, the greater reason will we have for believing that we are not so perfect as that we may not be continually deceived.

VI. That we possess a free-will, by which we can withhold our assent from what is doubtful, and thus avoid error.

But meanwhile, whoever in the end may be the author of our being, and however powerful and deceitful he may be, we are nevertheless conscious of a freedom, by which we can refrain from admitting to a place in our belief aught that is not manifestly certain and undoubted, and thus guard against ever being deceived.

VII. That we cannot doubt of our existence while we doubt, and that this is the first knowledge we acquire when we philosophize in order.

While we thus reject all of which we can entertain the smallest doubt, and even imagine that it is false, we easily indeed suppose that there is neither God, nor sky, nor bodies, and that we ourselves even have neither hands nor feet, nor, finally, a body; but we cannot in the same way suppose that we are not while we doubt of the truth of these things; for there is a repugnance in conceiving that what thinks does not exist at the very time when it thinks. Accordingly, the knowledge, *I THINK, THEREFORE I AM*, is the first and most certain that occurs to one who philosophizes orderly.

Key Takeaways

Accordingly, the knowledge, *I THINK, THEREFORE I AM*, is the first and most certain that occurs to one who philosophizes orderly.

VIII. That we hence discover the distinction between the mind and the body, or between a thinking and corporeal thing.

And this is the best mode of discovering the nature of the mind, and its distinctness from the body: for examining what we are, while supposing, as we now do, that there is nothing really existing apart from our thought, we clearly perceive that neither extension, nor figure, nor local motion,[Footnote: Instead of “local motion,” the French has “existence in any place.”] nor anything similar that can be attributed to body, pertains to our nature, and nothing save thought alone; and, consequently, that the notion we have of our mind precedes that of any corporeal thing, and is more certain, seeing we still doubt whether there is any body in existence, while we already perceive that we think.

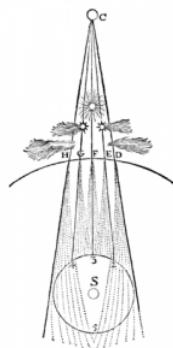
IX. What thought (COGITATIO) is.

By the word thought, I understand all that which so takes place in us that we of ourselves are immediately conscious of it; and, accordingly, not only to understand (INTELLIGERE, ENTENDRE), to will (VELLE), to imagine (IMAGINARI), but even to perceive (SENTIRE, SENTIR), are here the same as to think (COGITARE, PENSER). For if I say, I see, or, I walk, therefore I am; and if I understand by vision or walking the act of my eyes or of my limbs, which is the work of the body, the conclusion is not absolutely certain, because, as is often the case in dreams, I may think that I see or walk, although I do not open my eyes or move from my place, and even, perhaps, although I have no body: but, if I mean the sensation itself, or consciousness of seeing or walking, the knowledge is manifestly certain, because it is then



referred to the mind, which alone perceives or is conscious that it sees or walks. [Footnote: In the French, “which alone has the power of perceiving, or of being conscious in any other way whatever.”]

X. That the notions which are simplest and self-evident, are obscured by logical definitions; and that such



are not to be reckoned among the cognitions acquired by study, [but as born with us].

I do not here explain several other terms which I have used, or design to use in the sequel, because their meaning seems to me sufficiently self-evident. And I frequently remarked that philosophers erred in attempting to explain, by logical definitions, such truths as are most simple and self-evident; for they thus only rendered them more obscure. And when I said that the proposition, *I THINK, THEREFORE I AM*, is of all others the first and most certain which occurs to one philosophizing orderly, I did not therefore deny that it was necessary to know what thought, existence, and certitude are, and the truth that, in order to think it is necessary to be, and the like; but, because these are the most simple notions, and such as of themselves afford the knowledge of nothing existing, I did not judge it proper there to enumerate them.

XI. How we can know our mind more clearly than our body.

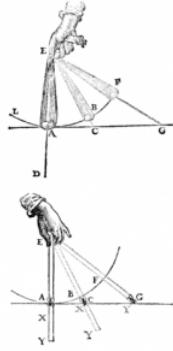
But now that it may be discerned how the knowledge we have of the mind not only precedes, and has greater certainty, but is even clearer, than that we have of the body, it must be remarked, as a matter that is highly manifest by the natural light, that to nothing no affections or qualities belong; and, accordingly, that where we observe certain affections, there a thing or substance to which these pertain, is necessarily found. The same light also shows us that we know a thing or substance more clearly in proportion as we discover in it a greater number of qualities. Now, it is manifest that we remark a greater number of qualities in our mind than in any other thing; for there is no occasion on which we know anything whatever when we are not at the same time led with much greater certainty to the knowledge of our own mind. For example, if I judge that there is an earth because I touch or see it, on the same ground, and with still greater reason, I must be persuaded that my mind exists; for it may be, perhaps, that I think I touch the earth while there is one in existence; but it is not possible that I should so judge, and my mind which thus judges not exist; and the same holds good of whatever object is presented to our mind.

XII. How it happens that every one does not come equally to know this.

Those who have not philosophized in order have had other opinions on this subject, because they never distinguished with sufficient care the mind from the body. For, although they had no difficulty in believing that they themselves existed, and that they had a higher assurance of this than of any other thing, nevertheless, as they did not observe that by THEMSELVES, they ought here to understand their MINDS alone [when the question related to metaphysical certainty]; and since, on the contrary, they rather meant their bodies which they saw with their eyes, touched with their hands, and to which they erroneously attributed the faculty of perception, they were prevented from distinctly apprehending the nature of the mind.

XIII. In what sense the knowledge of other things depends upon the knowledge of God.





But when the mind, which thus knows itself but is still in doubt as to all other things, looks around on all sides, with a view to the farther extension of its knowledge, it first of all discovers within itself the ideas of many things; and while it simply contemplates them, and neither affirms nor denies that there is anything beyond itself corresponding to them, it is in no danger of erring. The mind also discovers certain common notions out of which it frames various demonstrations that carry conviction to such a degree as to render doubt of their truth impossible, so long as we give attention to them. For example, the mind has within itself ideas of numbers and figures, and it has likewise among its common notions the principle THAT IF EQUALS BE ADDED TO EQUALS THE WHOLE WILL BE EQUAL and the like; from which it is easy to demonstrate that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, etc. Now, so long as we attend to the premises from which this conclusion and others similar to it were deduced, we feel assured of their truth; but, as the mind cannot always think of these with attention, when it has the remembrance of a conclusion without recollecting the order of its deduction, and is uncertain whether the author of its being has created it of a nature that is liable to be deceived, even in what appears most evident, it perceives that there is just ground to distrust the truth of such conclusions, and that it cannot possess any certain knowledge until it has discovered its author.

XIV. That we may validly infer the existence of God from necessary existence being comprised in the concept we have of him.

When the mind afterwards reviews the different ideas that are in it, it discovers what is by far the chief among them—that of a Being omniscient, all-powerful, and absolutely perfect; and it observes that in this idea there is contained not only possible and contingent existence, as in the ideas of all other things which it clearly perceives, but existence absolutely necessary and eternal. And just as because, for example, the equality of its three angles to two right angles is necessarily comprised in the idea of a triangle, the mind is firmly persuaded that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles; so, from its perceiving necessary and eternal existence to be comprised in the idea which it has of an all-perfect Being, it ought manifestly to conclude that this all-perfect Being exists.



Project Gutenberg's *The Principles of Philosophy*, by Rene Descartes #2 in the series by Rene Descartes

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org

Title: The Principles of Philosophy

Author: Rene Descartes

Release Date: August, 2003 [Etext# 4391]

[This file was first posted on January 22, 2002]

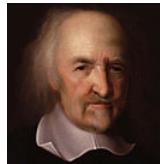
Edition: 10

Language: English



4.2: Thomas Hobbes

LEVIATHAN OR THE MATTER,
FORME, & POWER OF A COMMON-WEALTH
ECCLESIASTICAL AND CIVILL



Printed for Andrew Crooke,
at the Green Dragon
in St. Paul's Churchyard,
1651.

Thomas Hobbes, 1588 – 1679 CE, was an English philosopher who is considered one of the founders of modern political philosophy. Hobbes is best known for the book *Leviathan*, which established the social contract theory that has served as the foundation for most of Western political philosophy. Social contract theory states that individuals have consented to give up some of their freedoms and submit to the authority of the head of state, or to the decision of a majority, in exchange for safety, and on the condition that the state might hold other people to their agreements, such as in a contract. Hobbes also developed some views that are still commonly held today in Western philosophy. He emphasized the social and political rights of each individual, the natural-born equality of all people, the view that all legitimate political power must be representative and based on the consent of the people, and an interpretation of law that leaves people free to do whatever the law does not explicitly forbid.

He holds fast to these four realities:

1. That all humans are equal and have equal needs (food, water, shelter, etc)
2. That resources are limited. People compete for them.
3. That no one person is more powerful than the rest. A group can always bring down a tyrant.
4. That humans are only altruistic in limited ways. Self is central to human interest.

You might find this a simple and somewhat amusing way to start approaching the work of Thomas Hobbes:

[Hobbes and Contractarianism](#)

CHAPTER XIII. OF THE NATURALL CONDITION OF MANKIND,
AS CONCERNING THEIR FELICITY, AND MISERY

Nature hath made men so equall, in the faculties of body, and mind; as that though there bee found one man sometimes manifestly stronger in body, or of quicker mind than another; yet when all is reckoned together, the difference between man, and man, is not so considerable, as that one man can thereupon claim to himselfe any benefit, to which another may not pretend, as well as he. For as to the strength of body, the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination, or by confederacy with others, that are in the same danger with himselfe.

And as to the faculties of the mind, (setting aside the arts grounded upon words, and especially that skill of proceeding upon generall, and infallible rules, called Science; which very few have, and but in few things; as being not a native faculty, born with us; nor attained, (as Prudence,) while we look after somewhat els,) I find yet a greater equality amongst men, than that of strength. For Prudence, is but Experience; which equall time, equally bestowes on all men, in those things they equally apply themselves unto. That which may perhaps make such equality incredible, is but a vain conceit of ones owne wisdome, which almost all men think they have in a greater degree, than 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 be many so wise as themselves: For they see their own wit at hand, and other mens at a distance. But this proveth rather that men are in that point equall, than unequall. For there is not ordinarily a greater signe of the equall distribution of any thing, than that every man is contented with his share.



[From Equality Proceeds Diffidence](#)

From this equality of ability, ariseth equality of hope in the attaining of our Ends. And therefore if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies; and in the way to their End, (which is principally their owne conservation, and sometimes their delectation only,) endeavour to destroy, or subdue one an other. And from hence it comes to passe, that where an Invader hath no more to feare, than an other mans single power; if one plant, sow, build, or possesse a convenient Seat, others may probably be expected to come prepared with forces united, to dispossesse, and deprive him, not only of the fruit of his labour, but also of his life, or liberty. And the Invader again is in the like danger of another.

From Diffidence Warre

And from this diffidence of one another, there is no way for any man to secure himself, so reasonable, as Anticipation; that is, by force, or wiles, to master the persons of all men he can, so long, till he see no other power great enough to endanger him: And this is no more than his own conservation requireth, and is generally allowed. Also because there be 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 defence, to subsist. And by consequence, such augmentation of dominion over men, being necessary to a mans conservation, it ought to be allowed him.

Againe, men have no pleasure, (but on the contrary a great deale of grieve) in keeping company, where there is no power able to over-awe them all. For every man looketh that his companion should value him, at the same rate he sets upon himselfe: And upon all signes of contempt, or undervaluing, naturally endeavours, 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 contemners, by dommage; and from others, by the example.

So that in the nature of man, we find three principall causes of quarrel. First, Competition; Secondly, Diffidence; Thirdly, Glory.

The first, maketh men invade for Gain; the second, for Safety; and the third, for Reputation. The first use Violence, to make themselves Masters of other mens persons, wives, children, and cattell; the second, to defend them; the third, for trifles, as a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other signe of undervalue, either direct in their Persons, or by reflexion in their Kindred, their Friends, their Nation, their Profession, or their Name.

Out Of Civil States,

There Is Always Warre Of Every One Against Every One Hereby it is manifest, that during the time men live



without a common Power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, as is of every man, against every man. For WARRE, consisteth not in Battell onely, or the act of fighting; but in a tract of time, wherein the Will to contend by Battell is sufficiently known: and therefore the notion of Time, is to be considered in the nature of Warre; as it is in the nature of Weather. For as the nature of Foule weather, lyeth not in a shoure or two of rain; but in an inclination thereto of many dayes together: So the nature of War, consisteth not in actuall fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is PEACE.

The Incommodes Of Such A War

Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of Warre, where every man is Enemy to every man; the same is consequent to the time, wherein men live without other security, than what their own strength, and their own invention shall furnish them withall. In such 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, continuall feare, and danger of violent death; **And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short.**

Key Takeaway

Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of Warre, where every man is Enemy to every man; ... And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short.

It may seem strange to some man, that has not well weighed these things; that Nature should thus dissociate, and render 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 himselfe, when taking a journey, he armes himselfe, and seeks to go well accompanied; when going to sleep, he locks his dores; when even in his house he locks his chests; and this when he knows there bee Lawes, and publike Officers, armed, to revenge all injuries shall bee done him; what opinion he has of his fellow subjects, when he rides armed; of his fellow Citizens, when he locks his dores; 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 mans nature in it. The Desires, and other Passions of man, are in themselves no Sin. No more are the Actions, that proceed from those Passions, till they know a Law that forbids them; which till Lawes be made they cannot know: nor can any Law be made, till they have agreed upon the Person that shall make it.

It may peradventure be thought, there was never such a time, nor condition of warre as this; and I believe it was never generally so, over all the world: but there are many places, where they live so now. For the savage people in many places of America, except the government of small Families, the concord whereof dependeth on naturall lust, have no government at all; and live at this day in that brutish manner, as I said before. Howsoever, it may be perceived what manner of life there would be, where there were no common Power to feare; by the manner of life, which men that have formerly lived under a peacefull government, use to degenerate into, in a civill Warre.

But though there had never been any time, wherein particular men were in a condition of warre one against another; yet in all times, Kings, and persons of Soveraigne authority, because of their Independency, are in continuall 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 Kingdomes; and continuall Spyes upon their neighbours; which 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.

Norman battle in 1066 which led to the Norman Conquest. In Such A Warre, Nothing Is Unjust

To this warre 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 there no place. Where there is no common Power, there is no Law: where no Law, no Injustice. Force, and Fraud, are in warre the two Cardinall vertues. Justice, and Injustice are none of the Faculties neither of the Body, nor Mind. If they were, they might be in a man that were 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 be no Propriety, no Dominion, no Mine and Thine distinct; but onely that to be every mans that he can get; and for so long, as he can keep it. And thus much for the ill condition, which man by meer Nature is actually placed in; though with a possibility to come out of it, consisting partly in the Passions, partly in his Reason.

The Passions That Incline Men To Peace

The Passions that encline men to Peace, are Feare of Death; Desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living; and a Hope by their Industry to obtain them. And Reason suggesteth convenient Articles of Peace, upon which men may be drawn to agreement. These Articles, are they, which otherwise are called the Lawes of Nature: whereof I shall speak more particularly, in the two following Chapters.



CHAPTER XIV. OF THE FIRST AND SECOND NATURALL LAWES, AND OF CONTRACTS

Right Of Nature What

The RIGHT OF NATURE, which Writers commonly call Jus Naturale, is the Liberty each man hath, to use his own power, as he will himselfe, for the preservation of his own Nature; that is to say, of his own Life; and consequently, of doing any thing, which in his own Judgement, and Reason, hee shall conceive to be the aptest means thereunto.



[Liberty What](#)

By LIBERTY, is understood, according to the proper signification of the word, the absence of external Impediments: which Impediments, may oft take away part of a mans power to do what hee would; but cannot hinder him from using the power left him, according as his judgement, and reason shall dictate to him.

A Law Of Nature What

A LAW OF NATURE, (Lex Naturalis,) is a Precept, or generall Rule, found out by Reason, by which a man is forbidden to do, that, which is destructive of his life, or taketh away the means of preserving the same; and to omit, that, by which he thinketh it may be best preserved. For though they that speak of this subject, use to confound Jus, and Lex, Right and Law; yet they ought to be distinguished; because RIGHT, consisteth in liberty to do, or to forbear; Whereas LAW, determineth, and bindeth 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.

Naturally Every Man Has Right To Everything

And because the condition of Man, (as hath been declared in the precedent Chapter) is a condition of Warre of every one against every one; in which case every one 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 enemyes; It followeth, that in such a condition, every man has a Right to every thing; even to one anothers body. And therefore, as long as this naturall Right of every man to every thing endureth, there can be no security to any man, (how strong or wise soever he be,) of living out the time, which Nature ordinarily alloweth men to live.



[The Fundamental Law Of Nature](#)

And consequently it is a precept, or generall rule of Reason, "That every man, ought to endeavour Peace, as farre as he has hope of obtaining it; and when he cannot obtain it, that he may seek, and use, all helps, and advantages of Warre." The first branch, of which Rule, containeth the first, and Fundamentall Law of Nature; which is, "To seek Peace, and follow it." The Second, the summe of the Right of Nature; which is, "By all means we can, to defend our selves."

The Second Law Of Nature

From this Fundamentall Law of Nature, by which men are commanded to endeavour Peace, is derived this second Law; "That a man be willing, when others are so too, as farre-forth, as for Peace, and defence of himselfe he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himselfe." For as long as every man holdeth this Right, of doing any thing he liketh; so long are all men in the condition of Warre. But if other men will not lay down their Right, as well as he; then there is no Reason for any one, to devest himselfe of his: For that were to expose himselfe to Prey, (which no man is bound to) rather than to dispose himselfe to Peace. This is that Law of the Gospell; "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."

What it is to lay down a Right

To Lay Downe a mans Right to any thing, is to Devest himselfe of the Liberty, of hindring another of the benefit of his own Right to the same. For he that renounceth, or passeth away his Right, giveth not to any other man a Right which he had not before; because there is nothing to which every man had not Right by Nature: but onely standeth out of his way, that he may enjoy his own originall Right, without hindrance from him; not without hindrance from another. So that the effect which redoundeth to one man, by another mans defect of Right, is but so much diminution of impediments to the use of his own Right originall.



Renouncing (or) Transferring Right What; Obligation Duty Justice

Right is layd aside, either by simply Renouncing it; or by Transferring it to another. By Simply RENOUNCING; when he cares not to whom the benefit thereof redoundeth. By TRANSFERRING; when he intendeth the benefit thereof to some certain person, or persons. And when a man hath in either manner abandoned, or granted away his Right; then is he 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 voyd that voluntary act of his own: and that such hindrance is INJUSTICE, and INJURY, as being Sine Jure; the Right being before renounced, or transferred. So that Injury, or Injustice, in the controversies of the world, is somewhat like to that, which in the disputations of Scholers 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 Renounceth, or Transferreth his Right, is a Declaration, or Signification, by some voluntary and sufficient signe, or signes, that he doth so Renounce, or Transferre; or hath so Renounced, or Transferred the same, to him that accepteth it. And these Signes are either Words onely, or Actions onely; or (as it happeneth 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 then a mans word,) but from Feare of some evill consequence upon the rupture.

Not All Rights Are Alienable

Whensoever a man Transferreth his Right, or Renounceth it; it is either in consideration of some Right reciprocally transferred to himselfe; or for some other good he hopeth for thereby. For it is a voluntary act: and of the voluntary acts of every man, the object is some Good To Himselfe. And therefore there be some Rights, which no man can be understood by any words, or other signes, to have abandoned, or transferred. As first a man cannot lay down the right of resisting them, that assault him by force, to take away his life; because he cannot be understood to ayme thereby, at any Good to himselfe. The same may be sayd of Wounds, and Chayns, and Imprisonment; both because there is no benefit consequent to such patience; as there is to the patience of suffering another to be wounded, or imprisoned: as also because a man cannot tell, when he seeth 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 else but the security of a mans person, in his life, and in the means of so preserving life, as not to be weary of it. And therefore if a man by words, or other signes, seem to despoyle himselfe of the End, for which those signes were intended; he is not to be understood as if he meant it, or that it was his will; but that he was ignorant of how such words and actions were to be interpreted.



The Project Gutenberg EBook of ***Leviathan***, by Thomas Hobbes

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org

Title: Leviathan

Author: Thomas Hobbes

Release Date: October 11, 2009 [EBook #3207]

Last Updated: January 25, 2013

Language: English

Contributions and Attributions

This page is licensed under a [CC BY-NC-SA](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Jody Ondich. Page content has been edited and updated to conform to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform; a detailed versioning history of the edits to source content is available upon request.

4.3: Blaise Pascal

The WAGER from PASCAL'S PENSÉES



Pascal's Wager is an argument in philosophy presented by the seventeenth century philosopher mathematician and physicist **Blaise Pascal** (1623–1662 CE). It states that all people bet with their lives that God exists. Pascal says that a rational person actually *should* live as though God exists. If God does not actually exist, any person will have only a little loss in how they live their lives (some pleasures and luxury that might be given up to satisfy the directive of faith), whereas they stand to receive everything (as represented by Heaven) and avoid infinite losses (eternity in Hell).

Take a little time to get a feel for Pascal—Indiana Jones and Pascal's Wager

Key point

"The end of this discourse.—Now, what harm will befall you in taking this side? You will be faithful, honest, humble, grateful, generous, a sincere friend, truthful. Certainly you will not have those poisonous pleasures, glory and luxury; but will you not have others?"

Blaise Pascal

The Wager

Unity joined to infinity adds nothing to it, no more than one foot to an infinite measure. The finite is annihilated in the presence of the infinite, and becomes a pure nothing. So our spirit before God, so our justice before divine justice. There is not so great a disproportion between our justice and that of God, as between unity and infinity.

The justice of God must be vast like His compassion. Now justice to the outcast is less vast, and ought less to offend our feelings than mercy towards the elect.

We know that there is an infinite, and are ignorant of its nature. As we know it to be false that numbers are finite, it is therefore true that there is an infinity in number. But we do not know what it is. It is false that it is even, it is false that it is odd; for the addition of a unit can make no change in its nature. Yet it is a number, and every number is odd or even (this is certainly true of every finite number). So we may well know that there is a God without knowing what He is. Is there not one substantial truth, seeing there are so many things which are not the truth itself?

We know then the existence and nature of the finite, because we also are finite and have extension. We know the existence of the infinite, and are ignorant of its nature, because it has extension like us, but not limits like us. But we know neither the existence nor the nature of God, because He has neither extension nor limits.

But by faith we know His existence; in glory we shall know His nature. Now, I have already shown that we may well know the existence of a thing, without knowing its nature.

Let us now speak according to natural lights.

If there is a God, He is infinitely incomprehensible, since, having neither parts nor limits, He has no affinity to us. We are then incapable of knowing either what He is or if He is. This being so, who will dare to undertake the decision of the question? Not we, who have no affinity to Him.

Who then will blame Christians for not being able to give a reason for their belief, since they profess a religion for which they cannot give a reason? They declare, in expounding it to the world, that it is a foolishness, *stultitiam*; and then you complain that they do not prove it! If they proved it, they would not keep their word; it is in lacking proofs, that they are not lacking in sense. “Yes, but although this excuses those who offer it as such, and takes away from them the blame of putting it forward without reason, it does not excuse those who receive it.” Let us then examine this point, and say, “God is, or He is not.” But to which side shall we incline? **Reason can decide nothing here.** There is an infinite chaos which separated us. A game is being played at the extremity of this infinite distance where heads or tails will turn up. What will you wager? According to reason, you can do neither the one thing nor the other; according to reason, you can defend neither of the propositions.

Do not then reprove for error those who have made a choice; for you know nothing about it. “No, but I blame them for having made, not this choice, but a choice; for again both he who chooses heads and he who chooses tails are equally at fault, they are both in the wrong. The true course is not to wager at all.”

Yes; but you must wager. It is not optional. You are embarked. Which will you choose then? Let us see. Since you must choose, let us see which interests you least. You have two things to lose, the true and the good; and two things to stake, your reason and your will, your knowledge and your happiness; and your nature has two things to shun, error and misery. Your reason is no more shocked in choosing one rather than the other, since you must of necessity choose. This is one point settled. But your happiness? Let us weigh the gain and the loss in wagering that God is. Let us estimate these two chances. If you gain, you gain all; if you lose, you lose nothing. Wager, then, without hesitation that He is.—”That is very fine. Yes, I must wager; but I may perhaps wager too much.”—Let us see.

Since there is an equal risk of gain and of loss, if you had only to gain two lives, instead of one, you might still wager. But if there were three lives to gain, you would have to play (since you are under the necessity of playing), and you would be imprudent, when you are forced to play, not to chance your life to gain three at a game where there is an equal risk of loss and gain. But there is an eternity of life and happiness. And this being so, if there were an infinity of chances, of which one only would be for you, you would still be right in wagering one to win two, and you would act stupidly, being obliged to play, by refusing to stake one life against three at a game in which out of an infinity of chances there is one for you, if there were an infinity of an infinitely happy life to gain. But there is here an infinity of an infinitely happy life to gain, a chance of gain against a finite number of chances of loss, and what you stake is finite. It is all divided; wherever the infinite is and there is not an infinity of chances of loss against that of gain, there is no time to hesitate, you must give all. And thus, when one is forced to play, he must renounce reason to preserve his life, rather than risk it for infinite gain, as likely to happen as the loss of nothingness.



For it is no use to say it is uncertain if we will gain, and it is certain that we risk, and that the infinite distance between the *certainty* of what is staked and the *uncertainty* of what will be gained, equals the finite good which is certainly staked against the uncertain infinite. It is not so, as every player stakes a certainty to gain an uncertainty, and yet he stakes a finite certainty to gain a finite uncertainty, without transgressing against reason. There is not an infinite distance between the certainty staked and the uncertainty of the gain; that is untrue. In truth, there is an infinity between the certainty of gain and the certainty of loss. But the uncertainty of the gain is proportioned to the certainty of the stake according to the[Pg 68] proportion of the chances of gain and loss. Hence it comes that, if there are as many risks on one side as on the other, the course is to play even; and then the certainty of the stake is equal to the uncertainty of the gain, so far is it from fact that there is an infinite distance between them. And so our proposition is of infinite force, when there is the finite to stake in a game where there are equal risks of gain and of loss, and the infinite to gain. This is demonstrable; and if men are capable of any truths, this is one.

“I confess it, I admit it. But, still, is there no means of seeing the faces of the cards?”—Yes, Scripture and the rest, etc. “Yes, but I have my hands tied and my mouth closed; I am forced to wager, and am not free. I am not released, and am so made that I cannot believe. What, then, would you have me do?”



True. But at least learn your inability to believe, since reason brings you to this, and yet you cannot believe. Endeavor then to convince yourself, not by increase of proofs of God, but by the abatement of your passions. You would like to attain faith, and do not know the way; you would like to cure yourself of unbelief, and ask the remedy for it. Learn of those who have been bound like you, and who now stake all their possessions. These are people who know the way which you would follow, and who are cured of an ill of which you would be cured. Follow the way by which they began; by acting as if they believed, taking the holy water, having masses said, etc. Even this will naturally make you believe, and deaden your acuteness. —"But this is what I am afraid of."—And why? What have you to lose?

But to show you that this leads you there, it is this which will lessen the passions, which are your stumbling-blocks.

The end of this discourse.—Now, what harm will befall you in taking this side? You will be faithful, honest, humble, grateful, generous, a sincere friend, truthful. Certainly you will not have those poisonous pleasures, glory and luxury; but will you not have others? I will tell you that you will thereby gain in this life, and that, at each step you take on this road, you will see so great certainty of gain, so much nothingness in what you risk, that you will at last recognize that you have wagered for something certain and infinite, for which you have given nothing.



The Project Gutenberg EBook of Pascal's Pensées, by Blaise Pascal

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org

Title: Pascal's Pensées

Author: Blaise Pascal

Release Date: April 27, 2006 [EBook #18269]

Language: English



4.4: David Hume

AN ENQUIRY CONCERNING THE PRINCIPLES OF MORALS.



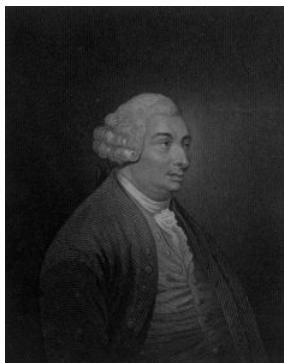
LONDON: Printed for A. Millar, over-against Catherine-street in the Strand. 1777.

David Hume, 1711- 1776 CE, was a sentimentalist who held that ethical behavior is and should be based on emotion or sentiment rather than abstract moral principle, and in fact stated that “Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions”. He believed that a statement of fact alone can never give rise to a normative conclusion of what *ought* to be done. What *Is* does not tell one what *Ought* to be. Hume also denied that humans have an actual conception of the self, positing that we experience only a bundle of sensations, and so there is no real self, just the accumulation of sensory impressions.

You could start with this short lecture on a person's identity-

[Arguments Against Identity](#)

SECTION I.

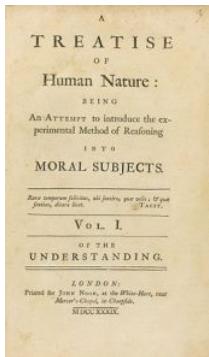


Of the General Principles of Morals.

There has been a controversy started of late, much better worth examination, concerning the general foundation of MORALS; whether they be derived from REASON, or from SENTIMENT; whether we attain the knowledge of them by a chain of argument and induction, or by an immediate feeling and finer internal sense; whether, like all sound judgment of truth and falsehood, they should be the same to every rational intelligent being; or whether, like the perception of beauty and deformity, they be founded entirely on the particular fabric and constitution of the human species.

The ancient philosophers, though they often affirm, that virtue is nothing but conformity to reason, yet, in general, seem to consider morals as deriving their existence from taste and sentiment. On the other hand, our modern enquirers, though they also talk much of the beauty of virtue, and deformity of vice, yet have commonly endeavoured to account for these distinctions by metaphysical reasonings, and by deductions from the most abstract principles of the understanding. Such confusion reigned in these subjects, that an opposition of the greatest consequence could prevail between one system and another, and even in the parts of almost each individual system; and yet no body, till very lately, was ever sensible of it. The elegant Lord Shaftesbury, who first gave occasion to remark this distinction, and who, in general, adhered to the principles of the ancients, is not, himself, entirely free from the same confusion.

It must be acknowledged, that both sides of the question are susceptible of specious arguments. Moral distinctions, it may be said, are discernible by pure *reason*: Else, whence the many disputes that reign in common life, as well as in philosophy, with regard to this subject: The long chain of proofs often produced on both sides; the examples cited, the authorities appealed to, the analogies employed, the fallacies detected, the inferences drawn, and the several conclusions adjusted to their proper principles. Truth is disputable; not taste: What exists in the nature of things is the standard of our judgment; what each man feels within himself is the standard of sentiment. Propositions in geometry may be proved, systems in physics may be controverted; but the harmony of verse, the tenderness of passion, the brilliancy of wit, must give immediate pleasure. No man reasons concerning another's beauty; but frequently concerning the justice or injustice of his actions. In every criminal trial the first object of the prisoner is to disprove the facts alleged, and deny the actions imputed to him: The second to prove, that, even if these actions were real, they might be justified, as innocent and lawful. It is confessedly by deductions of the understanding, that the first point is ascertained: How can we suppose that a different faculty of the mind is employed in fixing the other?



On the other hand, those who would resolve all moral determinations into *sentiment*, may endeavour to show, that it is impossible for reason ever to draw conclusions of this nature. To virtue, say they, it belongs to be *amiable*, and vice *odious*. This forms their very nature or essence. But can reason or argumentation distribute these different epithets to any subjects, and pronounce before-hand, that this must produce love, and that hatred? Or what other reason can we ever assign for these affections, but the original fabric and formation of the human mind, which is naturally adapted to receive them?

The end of all moral speculations is to teach us our duty; and, by proper representations of the deformity of vice and beauty of virtue, beget correspondent habits, and engage us to avoid the one, and embrace the other. But is this ever to be expected from inferences and conclusions of the understanding, which of themselves have no hold of the affections, or set in motion the active powers of men? They discover truths: But where the truths which they discover are indifferent, and beget no desire or aversion, they can have no influence on conduct and behaviour. What is honourable, what is fair, what is becoming, what is noble, what is generous, takes possession of the heart, and animates us to embrace and maintain it. What is intelligible, what is evident, what is probable, what is true, procures only the cool assent of the understanding; and gratifying a speculative curiosity, puts an end to our researches.

Extinguish all the warm feelings and prepossessions in favour of virtue, and all disgust or aversion to vice: Render men totally indifferent towards these distinctions; and morality is no longer a practical study, nor has any tendency to regulate our lives and actions.

These arguments on each side (and many more might be produced) are so plausible, that I am apt to suspect, they may, the one as well as the other, be solid and satisfactory, and that *reason* and *sentiment* concur in almost all moral determinations and conclusions. The final sentence, it is probable, which pronounces characters and actions amiable or odious, praise-worthy or blameable; that which stamps on them the mark of honour or infamy, approbation or censure; that which renders morality an active principle, and constitutes virtue our happiness, and vice our misery: It is probable, I say, that this final sentence depends on some internal sense or feeling, which nature has made universal in the whole species. For what else can have an influence of this nature? But in order to pave the way for such a sentiment, and give a proper discernment of its object, it is often necessary, we find, that much reasoning should precede, that nice distinctions be made, just conclusions drawn, distant comparisons formed, complicated relations examined, and general facts fixed and ascertained. Some species of beauty, especially the natural kinds, on their first appearance, command our affection and approbation; and where they fail of this effect, it is impossible for any reasoning to redress their influence, or adapt them

better to our taste and sentiment. But in many orders of beauty, particularly those of the finer arts, it is requisite to employ much reasoning, in order to feel the proper sentiment; and a false relish may frequently be corrected by argument and reflection. There are just grounds to conclude, that moral beauty partakes much of this latter species, and demands the assistance of our intellectual faculties, in order to give it a suitable influence on the human mind.

But though this question, concerning the general principles of morals, be curious and important, it is needless for us,



at present, to employ farther care in our researches concerning it. For if we can be so happy, in the course of this enquiry, as to discover the true origin of morals, it will then easily appear how far either sentiment or reason enters into all determinations of this nature⁰¹. In order to attain this purpose, we shall endeavour to follow a very simple method: We shall analyze that complication of mental qualities, which form what, in common life, we call Personal Merit: We shall consider every attribute of the mind, which renders a man an object either of esteem and affection, or of hatred and contempt; every habit or sentiment or faculty, which, if ascribed to any person, implies either praise or blame, and may enter into any panegyric or satire of his character and manners.

The quick sensibility, which, on this head, is so universal among mankind, gives a philosopher sufficient assurance, that he can never be considerably mistaken in framing the catalogue, or incur any danger of misplacing the objects of his contemplation: He needs only enter into his own breast for a moment, and consider whether or not he should desire to have this or that quality ascribed to him, and whether such or such an imputation would proceed from a friend or an enemy. The very nature of language guides us almost infallibly in forming a judgment of this nature; and as every tongue possesses one set of words which are taken in a good sense, and another in the opposite, the least acquaintance with the idiom suffices, without any reasoning, to direct us in collecting and arranging the estimable or blameable qualities of men. The only object of reasoning is to discover the circumstances on both sides, which are common to these qualities; to observe that particular in which the estimable qualities agree on the one hand, and the blameable on the other; and thence to reach the foundation of ethics, and find those universal principles, from which all censure or approbation is ultimately derived. As this is a question of fact, not of abstract science, we can only expect success, by following the experimental method, and deducing general maxims from a comparison of particular instances. The other scientifical method, where a general abstract principle is first established, and is afterwards branched out into a variety of inferences and conclusions, may be more perfect in itself, but suits less the imperfection of human nature, and is a common source of illusion and mistake in this as well as in other subjects. Men are now cured of their passion for hypotheses and systems in natural philosophy, and will hearken to no arguments but those which are derived from experience. It is full time they should attempt a like reformation in all moral disquisitions; and reject every system of ethics, however subtle or ingenious, which is not founded on fact and observation.

We shall begin our enquiry on this head by the consideration of the social virtues, benevolence and justice. The explication of them will probably give us an opening by which the others may be accounted for.

Permissions

All texts copyright © 2000-2012 Peter Millican and Amyas Merivale. Copied March 3, 2018.

Permission is given to copy any portion of these texts for personal use, and to reproduce them — for educational purposes only — in any format, printed or electronic, provided that (i) they are not sold for commercial gain (this does not include charging students for the cost of printing), and (ii) they include a reference to www.davidhume.org as the source of the text, and the date on which they were copied. We ask, however, that you first consider whether your purposes would be served equally well by simply directing students to this site.



Hume's manuscript of the *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* is the property of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.



CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: MODERN WISDOM

5.1: NATIVE AMERICAN VOICES

5.2: JL MACKIE

5.3: SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR

5.4: ELIZABETH ANSCOMBE

5.5: GANDHI

5.6: DALAI LAMA

5.7: NELSON MANDELA

5.8: MARTIN LUTHER KING JR

5.9: PHILIPPA FOOT

5.10: PATRICK STOKES

5.1: Native American Voices



In consultation with a friend from the Fond du Lac Band of Anishinaabe, several important voices are included here to represent the diversity of ideas and activities from within the Native communities in the United States. We have centuries of very difficult and, frankly, mostly terrible behavior from the immigrant settlers towards the Native people already living in North America. Over time, after centuries of broken promises, theft and death, voices arose to talk about this history, the rights of the Native people and a way to move forward in much more appropriate and respectful ways.

So we need to hear from a number of people.



Vernon Bellecourt, 1931–2007, was a long-time leader in the American Indian Movement, which his younger brother, **Clyde Bellecourt**, born 1936, helped found in 1968. They co-founded the AIM chapter in Denver, and Vernon was its first Executive Director. It worked to ensure civil rights for Native Americans, as well as educate people about their cultural and spiritual heritage. Both Bellecourts took part in the 1972 Trail of Broken Treaties caravan to Washington, DC. Vernon Bellecourt served as a negotiator during AIM's occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs headquarters building at the Department of Interior. Vernon Bellecourt was present briefly during the 1973 Wounded Knee occupation at Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. He acted as an AIM spokesman and fundraiser during the 71-day standoff with federal agents. After the occupation of Wounded Knee ended, Clyde Bellecourt hosted seminars and other public appearances.

The Bellecourts—Vernon and Clyde. [What is AIM?](#)

PBS movie clip—[What was the American Indian Movement?](#)



Oren R. Lyons, Jr. is a Native American Faithkeeper of the Turtle Clan of the Seneca Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy. Once a college lacrosse player, Lyons is now a recognized advocate of indigenous rights. Here he addresses the Spotlight of Indigenous Peoples plenary at the 2015 Parliament of the World's Religions in Salt Lake City, Utah on October 19th.

[Keynote Address at the 2015 Parliament of the World's Religions](#)

Winona LaDuke, born in 1959 of an Ojibwe father and Jewish mother, is an American environmentalist and writer, known for her work on tribal land claims and preservation, as well as sustainable development. In 1996 and 2000, she ran for Vice President as the nominee of the Green Party of the United States, on a ticket headed by Ralph Nader. She is the executive director of Honor the Earth, a Native environmental advocacy organization.

[Winona LaDuke Thinking Beyond Empire](#)



Chief Wilma Mankiller, 1945 – 2010, was a community organizer and the first woman to serve as chief of the Cherokee Nation. She served as chief for ten years from 1985 to 1995. She was the author of the bestselling autobiography, *Mankiller: A Chief and Her People* and co-authored *Every Day Is a Good Day: Reflections by Contemporary Indigenous Women*. Mankiller's administration founded the Cherokee Nation Community Development Department.

Host Marcia Alvar speaks with Wilma Mankiller, Principle Chief of the Cherokee Nation from 1983-1995. Ms. Mankiller discusses her experiences as related in her book, “Mankiller: A Chief and Her People.” She describes her early political activism as well as her eventual return to her home.

[A Modern Pioneer in the Cherokee Nation](#)

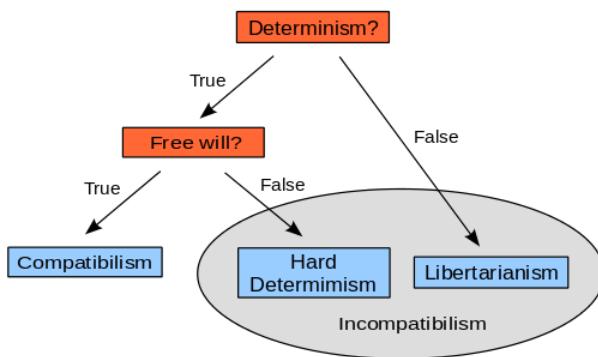
5.2: JL Mackie



John Leslie Mackie, 1917 – 1981 CE, usually writing as **J. L. Mackie**, was an Australian philosopher. He made significant contributions to the philosophy of religion, metaphysics, and the philosophy of language, and is perhaps best known for his views on meta-ethics, especially his defense of moral scepticism.

He authored six books. His most widely known, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (1977), opens with the well known statement that “There are no objective values.” It goes on to argue that because of this ethics must be invented, rather than discovered. **Moral skepticism** basically (this is far too simply stated) that no one has any **moral** knowledge. Many **moral skeptics** also make the claim that **moral** knowledge is impossible. All morality is simply a matter of preference or custom. Or so might Mackie say.

You might want to start with this short Crash Course description of [Meta-ethics](#) “In it Hank explains three forms of moral realism – moral absolutism, and cultural relativism, including the difference between descriptive and normative cultural relativism – and moral subjectivism, which is a form of moral antirealism. Subjectivism is Mackie’s primary focus over a lifetime of writing.”^[1]



If you would like a simple description of this image and more information about Mackie, please check [JL Mackie](#)

There are no objective values....

“Since it is with moral values that I am primarily concerned, the view I am adopting may be called moral skepticism. But this name is likely to be misunderstood: ‘moral skepticism’ might also be used as a name for either of two first order views; or perhaps for an incoherent mixture of the two.

A moral skeptic might be the sort of person who says ‘All this talk of morality is tripe,’ who rejects morality and will take no notice of it. Such a person may be literally rejecting all moral judgments; he is more likely to be making moral judgments of his own, expressing a positive moral condemnation of all that conventionally passes for morality; or he may be confusing these two logically incompatible views, and saying that he rejects all morality, while he is in fact rejecting only a particular morality that is current in the society in which he has grown up. But I am not at present concerned with the merits or faults of such a position. These are first order moral views, positive or negative: the person who adopts either of them is taking a certain practical, normative, stand. By contrast, what I am discussing is a second order view, a view about the status of moral values and the nature of moral valuing, about where and how they fit into the world. These first and second order views are not merely distinct but completely independent: one could be a second order moral skeptic without being a first order one, or again the other way round. A man could hold strong moral views, and indeed ones

whose content was thoroughly conventional, while believing that they were simply attitudes and policies with regard to conduct that he and other people held. Conversely, a man could reject all established morality while believing it to be an objective truth that it was evil or corrupt."

JL Mackie from *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*,

Further materials from Professor Mackie can be found in a bibliography of his work.

- *Truth, Probability, and Paradox* (1973), Oxford University Press, ISBN 0-19-824402-9.
- *The Cement of the Universe: A Study of Causation* (1980 [1974]), Oxford University Press, ISBN 0-19-824642-0.
- *Problems from Locke* (1976), Oxford University Press, ISBN 0-19-824555-6.
- *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (1977), Viking Press, ISBN 0-14-013558-8.
- *Hume's Moral Theory* (1980), Routledge Keegan & Paul, ISBN 0-7100-0525-3.
- *The Miracle of Theism: Arguments for and against the Existence of God* (1982), Oxford University Press, ISBN 0-19-824682-X.
- *Logic and Knowledge: Selected Papers, Volume I* (1985), Oxford University Press, ISBN 0-19-824679-X.
- *Persons and Values: Selected Papers, Volume II* (1985), Oxford University Press, ISBN 0-19-824678-1.

1. description from the YouTube page ↵



5.3: Simone de Beauvoir



Simone Lucie Ernestine Marie Bertrand de Beauvoir, 1908 – 1986 CE, was a French writer, existentialist, political activist, and feminist. Though she did not consider herself a philosopher, she had a significant influence on both feminist existentialism and feminist theory.



De Beauvoir wrote novels, essays, biographies, autobiography and monographs on philosophy, politics and social issues. She was known for her 1949 treatise *The Second Sex*, a detailed analysis of women's oppression and a foundational tract of contemporary feminism.

From 1929, de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre were partners for fifty-one years until his death in 1980. De Beauvoir did not marry nor set up a joint household with Sartre, and she never had children. She had numerous lovers of both genders over these same years, and was suspended from teaching in 1943 due to an accusation of abuse of a young female student. Her license to teach was permanently revoked in France.

“One is not born but becomes a woman.” With this famous phrase, Beauvoir first articulated the sex-gender distinction, that is, the distinction between biological sex and the social/historical creation of gender. Beauvoir explains, in her book *The Second Sex* that woman is usually referred as “the other.”

Key Takeaway

“What is a woman?”...The fact that I ask it is in itself significant. A man would never get the notion of writing a book on the peculiar situation of the human male. But if I wish to define myself, I must first of all say: ‘I am a woman’; on this truth must be based all further discussion. A man never begins by presenting himself as an individual of a certain sex; it goes without saying that he is a man. [...] It would be out of the question to reply: ‘And you think the contrary because you are a man,’ for it is understood that the fact of being a man is no peculiarity.” Simone de Beauvoir

[Interview with Simone de Beauvoir](#)

5.4: Elizabeth Anscombe



Gertrude Elizabeth Margaret Anscombe, 1919 – 2001 CE, usually cited as **G. E. M. Anscombe** or **Elizabeth Anscombe**, was a British philosopher. She wrote on the philosophy of mind, action, logic, language, and ethics. Anscombe's 1958 article "Modern Moral Philosophy" introduced the term *consequentialism* into the language of analytic philosophy, and had a strong influence on contemporary virtue ethics. Her work called *Intention* is generally recognized as her most influential work.

Anscombe argues that the concept of intention is central to our understanding of ourselves as rational agents. The intentions with which we act are identified by the reasons we choose to act the way we do. Various kinds of movements occur in the world, but only some are counted as the behavior of intent. So only some of this behavior is counted as action. An example might be inadvertent actions that happen when we sneeze, or sleep. We cannot explain why we twitch or jerk. But with most actions that people take it is justified in asking them, "Why did you do that?" Intent behind the action is crucial. We tend to think of unintentional actions with less judgment than intentional actions. We may accidentally trip someone because we move out of the way of our cat, who is weaving around our legs. But intentionally sticking out one's foot and making sure the person trips? That is action with intent in the very action. And we cannot be wrong in our intent. We can be wrong in execution, but our we know what we intend to do, even if it does not happen.

Example

It will be useful to look at this article discussing some of Anscombe's ideas in simpler format. Her dismay with granting Harry Truman an honorary degree is described here in simple ways that clarify her ideas about intent.

Tale of Murder

"If we want to understand other people's behavior, then, not only can we not look at the causes of their behavior (since, for one thing, we cannot see inside their brains) but trying to do so would be a mistake. We need to know what they take themselves to be doing, how they understand their actions. And this knowledge does not come from observation of their own behavior. We know without looking what it is that we take ourselves to be doing, what we are trying to achieve"

description of Anscombe's ideas from the [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Elizabeth Anscombe](#)

Key Takeaway

"The distinction between an expression of intention and a prediction is generally appealed to as something intuitively clear. 'I am going to be sick' is usually a prediction; 'I am going to take a walk' usually an expression of intention. The distinction intended is intuitively clear, in the following sense: if I say 'I am going to fail in this exam.' and someone says 'Surely you aren't as bad at the subject as that', I may make my meaning clear by explaining that I was expressing an intention, not giving an estimate of my chances." **Elizabeth Anscombe, Intention**

Key Takeaway

"Now it can easily seem that in general the question what a man's intentions are is only authoritatively settled by him. One reason for this is that in general we are interested, not just in a man's intention of doing what he does, but in his intention in doing it, and this can very often not be seen from seeing what he does. Another is that in general the question whether he intends to do what he does just does not arise (because the answer is obvious); while if it does arise, it is rather often settled by asking him. And, finally, a man can form an intention which he then does nothing to carry out, either because he is prevented or because he changes his mind: but the intention itself can be complete, although it remains a purely interior thing."

All this conspires to make us think that if we want to know a man's intentions it is into the contents of his mind, and only into these, that we must enquire; and hence, that if we wish to understand what intention is, we must be investigating something whose existence is purely in the sphere of the mind; and that although intention issues in actions, and the way this happens also presents interesting questions, still what physically takes place, i.e. what a man actually does, is the very last thing we need consider in our enquiry." **Elizabeth Anscombe, *Intention***

Contributions and Attributions

This page is licensed under a [CC BY-NC-SA](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Jody Ondich](#). Page content has been edited and updated to conform to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform; a detailed versioning history of the edits to source content is available upon request.

5.5: Gandhi



Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, 1869 – 1948 CE, was an Indian activist who was the leader of the Indian independence movement. Employing non-violent but active civil disobedience, Gandhi led India to independence and inspired various movements for civil rights across the world.

The honorific **Mahātmā** (Sanskrit: “high-souled”, “venerable”)—applied to him first in 1914 in South Africa—is now used worldwide. **Gandhi** is unofficially known as the *Father of the Nation*.

Born and raised in India, and trained in law at the Inner Temple, London, Gandhi first employed nonviolent civil disobedience as a young expatriate lawyer in South Africa, as South Africa’s Indian population struggled for civil rights. After Gandhi returned to India in 1915, he organized working class and farm-based workers to protest against excessive land-taxes and class discrimination. By 1921, Gandhi was leading nationwide campaigns in India for various social causes and to achieve self-rule, separate from the British colonial rule.

On March 12, 1930, Gandhi began a march to the sea through India in protest of the British monopoly on salt, his biggest and most visible act of civil disobedience against British rule. Britain’s Salt Acts prohibited Indians from collecting or selling salt, a necessity in any diet. People were forced to buy salt from the British, who, in addition to having a monopoly also imposed a heavy tax on salt. This was a hardship on the poor, in particular. Gandhi declared resistance to British salt policies, and led a march to the sea, where people could collect sea salt for themselves. It took years, the non-violent protests were met with police and governmental violence, but Indian independence was declared in 1947, and Gandhi was at the head of the movement to achieve this freedom.

Gandhi was assassinated 6 months after India’s independence was achieved.

From “On Civil Disobedience,” by Mohandas Gandhi July 27, 1916

“There are two ways of countering injustice. One way is to smash the head of the man who perpetrates injustice and to get your own head smashed in the process. All strong people in the world adopt this course. Everywhere wars are fought and millions of people are killed. The consequence is not the progress of a nation but its decline. Soldiers returning from the front have become so bereft of reason that they indulge in various anti-social activities. One does not have to go far for examples. Pride makes a victorious nation bad-tempered. It falls into luxurious ways of living. Then for a time, it may be conceded, peace prevails. But after a short while, it comes more and more to be realized that the seeds of war have not been destroyed but have become a thousand times more nourished and mighty. No country has ever become, or will ever become, happy through victory in war. A nation does not rise that way, it only falls further. In fact, what comes to it is defeat, not victory. And if, perchance, either our act or our purpose was ill-conceived, it brings disaster to both belligerents. But through the other method of combating injustice, we alone suffer the consequences of our mistakes, and the other side is wholly spared.



This other method is **satyagraha**. One who resorts to it does not have to break another's head; he may merely have his own head broken. He has to be prepared to die himself suffering all the pain. In opposing the atrocious laws of the Government of South Africa, it was this method that we adopted. We made it clear to the said Government that we would never bow to its outrageous laws. No clapping is possible without two hands to do it, and no quarrel without two persons to make it. Similarly, no State is possible without two entities (the rulers and the ruled). You are our sovereign, our Government, only so long as we consider ourselves your subjects. When we are not subjects, you are not the sovereign either. So long as it is your endeavor to control us with justice and love, we will let you do so. But if you wish to strike at us from behind, we cannot permit it. Whatever you do in other matters, you will have to ask our opinion about the laws that concern us. If you make laws to keep us suppressed in a wrongful manner and without taking us into confidence, these laws will merely adorn the statute-books. We will never obey them. Award us for it what punishment you like, we will put up with it. Send us to prison and we will live there as in a paradise. Ask us to mount the scaffold and we will do so laughing. Shower what sufferings you like upon us, we will calmly endure all and not hurt a hair of your body. We will gladly die and will not so much as touch you. But so long as there is yet life in these our bones, we will never comply with your arbitrary laws. ”

5.6: Dalai Lama



“The Dalai Lamas are believed by Tibetan Buddhists to be manifestations of Avalokiteshvara or Chenrezig, the Bodhisattva of Compassion and the patron saint of Tibet. Bodhisattvas are realized beings, inspired by the wish to attain complete enlightenment, who have vowed to be reborn in the world to help all living beings.”

from The Brief Biography of the 14th Dalai Lama

From the 14th Dalai Lama: “Because of the great differences in our ways of thinking, it is inevitable that we have different religions and faiths. Each has its own beauty. And it is much better that we live together on the basis of mutual respect and mutual admiration.” Twitter, February 26, 2018



Meeting His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, India, HH Dagchen Sakya, 1993

From the 14th Dalai Lama: “Insofar as the destructive effects of anger and hateful thoughts are concerned, one cannot get protection from wealth nor education. The only factor that can give protection from the destructive effects of anger and hatred is the practice of tolerance and patience.” Twitter, February 26, 2018



The [redacted] Dalai Lama has spent his entire lifetime working with people across the globe, promoting peace, care of the environment, collaboration, and tolerance. This shows up in one of his most famous lectures, given on the day of the award of his Nobel Peace Prize in 1989. Reading through his words gives one a chance to reflect on the character of human beings, and the ways that we function in society.

Nobel Acceptance Lecture, December 11, 1989

Contributions and Attributions

This page is licensed under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Jody Ondich. Page content has been edited and updated to conform to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform; a detailed versioning history of the edits to source content is available upon request.

5.7: Nelson Mandela



Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, 1918 – 2013 CE, was a major South African anti-apartheid revolutionary and political leader who served as President of South Africa from 1994 to 1999. He was the country's first black head of state and the first elected in a fully representative democratic election within South Africa. He and his party focused on dismantling apartheid by tackling institutionalized racism and fostering racial reconciliation. He served as President of the African National Congress (ANC) party from 1991 to 1997.



A short biography: [Nelson Mandela by the Biography Chanel](#)

We see his impact on the world in his own words, given in response to the Nobel Peace Prize: [Nobel lecture, 1993](#)



And we see product of his work: [Statement by Nelson Mandela on receiving Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report](#)

5.8: Martin Luther King Jr



Martin Luther King Jr. 1929 – 1968 CE, was an American Baptist minister and activist who became the most visible spokesperson and leader in the civil rights movement from 1954 until his death in 1968.

On October 14, 1964, King won the Nobel Peace Prize for combating racial inequality through nonviolent resistance.

In 1968, King was planning a national occupation of Washington, D.C., to be called the Poor People's Campaign, when he was assassinated by James Earl Ray on April 4 in Memphis, Tennessee. Following this event, riots followed in many U.S. cities. King was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal. Martin Luther King Jr. Day was established as a holiday in numerous cities and states beginning in 1971, and finally as a U.S. federal holiday in 1986. The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., was dedicated in 2011.

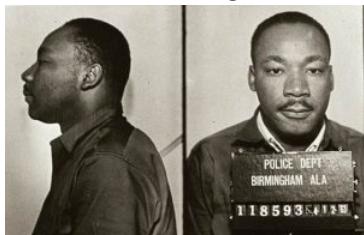
Quote

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.

Martin Luther King Jr

About Dr. Martin Luther King Jr from the King Center in Atlanta. “During the less than 13 years of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s leadership of the modern American Civil Rights Movement, from December, 1955 until April 4, 1968, African Americans achieved more genuine progress toward racial equality in America than the previous 350 years had produced. Dr. King is widely regarded as America’s pre-eminent advocate of nonviolence and one of the greatest nonviolent leaders in world history.” *The King Center*^[1]

Letter from a Birmingham Jail One of King’s most useful set of writings is his Letter from a Birmingham Jail. He offers ideas,



motivations, hope and promise here, and they function as a useful set of materials in examining his philosophy and the circumstances within the civil rights movement. The letter defends nonviolent resistance to institutionalized and social racism. He says that people have a moral responsibility to break unjust laws and to take direct action rather than waiting for justice to come through the courts, and perhaps not for too long a time. King writes in this, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere”.

King’s most famous speech is the one called “I have a Dream”, given on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 28, 1963, in which he calls for an end to racism in the United States and called for civil and economic rights for all people of color. Delivered to over 250,000 civil rights supporters, the speech was a defining moment of the civil rights movement.

Excerpt from [I Have a Dream](#)

[PBS Robert Kennedy's moving remembrance of Martin Luther King Jr.](#)

[Eulogy for Martin Luther King Jr](#)



-
1. this is located in Atlanta [«](#)

Contributions and Attributions

This page is licensed under a [CC BY-NC-SA](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Jody Ondich](#). Page content has been edited and updated to conform to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform; a detailed versioning history of the edits to source content is available upon request.

5.9: Philippa Foot

Trolley Dilemma



About Philippa Foot [Her Life](#)

“Suppose you are the driver of a trolley. The trolley rounds a bend, and there come into view ahead five track workmen, who have been repairing the track. The track goes through a bit of a valley at that point, and the sides are steep, so you must stop the trolley if you are to avoid running the five men down. You step on the brakes, but alas they don’t work. Now you suddenly see a spur of track leading off to the right. You can turn the trolley onto it, and thus save the five men on the straight track ahead. Unfortunately,...there is one track workman on that spur of track. He can no more get off the track in time than the five can, so you will kill him if you turn the trolley onto him”

“There is a runaway trolley headed toward five people again. Only, this time, you are not in the train yard next to a lever. You are on a bridge, watching the events from above the tracks. There is a very large man next to you. You realize that, if you push him off the bridge and down onto the tracks below, the trolley will hit and kill him, but his body is so large that it will stop the trolley before it reaches the five endangered people. You have two options: (1) Do nothing, and the trolley kills the five people. (2) Push the large man off the bridge, so that he dies, but the five others are saved.”

5.10: Patrick Stokes

No, You're Not Entitled To Your Own Opinion



From **Patrick Stokes'** bio on his page within **The Conversation**: “I’m a philosopher at Deakin University, and have previously held research fellowships in the UK (I’m an honorary Research Fellow at the University of Hertfordshire), Denmark and the US.

My areas of research include personal identity, philosophy of death and remembrance, 19th and 20th century European philosophy (especially the work of Søren Kierkegaard) and moral psychology.

As well as **The Conversation**, I’m a regular contributor to New Philosopher and pop up from time to time on The Drum, 774 Melbourne, 3RRR, Radio National, The Age, and other places.

Column from *The Conversation*:

“Every year, I try to do at least two things with my students at least once. First, I make a point of addressing them as “philosophers” – a bit cheesy, but hopefully it encourages active learning.

Secondly, I say something like this: “I’m sure you’ve heard the expression ‘everyone is entitled to their opinion.’ Perhaps you’ve even said it yourself, maybe to head off an argument or bring one to a close. Well, as soon as you walk into this room, it’s no longer true. You are not entitled to your opinion. You are only entitled to what you can argue for.”

A bit harsh? Perhaps, but philosophy teachers owe it to our students to teach them how to construct and defend an argument – and to recognize when a belief has become indefensible.

The problem with “I’m entitled to my opinion” is that, all too often, it’s used to shelter beliefs that should have been abandoned. It becomes shorthand for “I can say or think whatever I like” – and by extension, continuing to argue is somehow disrespectful. And this attitude feeds, I suggest, into the false equivalence between experts and non-experts that is an increasingly pernicious feature of our public discourse.

Firstly, what's an opinion?

Plato distinguished between opinion or common belief (doxa) and certain knowledge, and that’s still a workable distinction today: unlike “ $1+1=2$ ” or “there are no square circles,” an opinion has a degree of subjectivity and uncertainty to it. But “opinion” ranges from tastes or preferences, through views about questions that concern most people such as prudence or politics, to views grounded in technical expertise, such as legal or scientific opinions.

You can’t really argue about the first kind of opinion. I’d be silly to insist that you’re wrong to think strawberry ice cream is better than chocolate. The problem is that sometimes we implicitly seem to take opinions of the second and even the third sort to be unarguable in the way questions of taste are. Perhaps that’s one reason (no doubt there are others) why enthusiastic amateurs think they’re entitled to disagree with climate scientists and immunologists and have their views “respected.”

Meryl Dorey is the leader of the Australian Vaccination Network, which despite the name is vehemently anti-vaccine. Ms. Dorey has no medical qualifications, but [argues](#) that if Bob Brown is allowed to comment on nuclear power despite not being a scientist, she should be allowed to comment on vaccines. But no-one assumes Dr. Brown is an authority on the physics of nuclear fission; his job is to comment on the policy responses to the science, not the science itself.



So what does it mean to be “entitled” to an opinion?

If “Everyone’s entitled to their opinion” just means no-one has the right to stop people thinking and saying whatever they want, then the statement is true, but fairly trivial. No one can stop you saying that vaccines cause autism, no matter how many times that claim has been disproven.

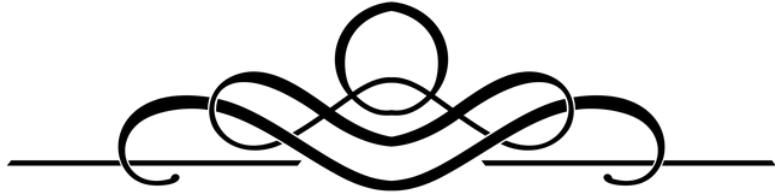
But if ‘entitled to an opinion’ means ‘entitled to have your views treated as serious candidates for the truth’ then it’s pretty clearly false. And this too is a distinction that tends to get blurred.

On Monday, the ABC’s Mediawatch program took WIN-TV Wollongong to task for running a story on a measles outbreak which included comment from – you guessed it – Meryl Dorey. In a response to a viewer complaint, WIN said that the story was “[accurate, fair and balanced and presented the views of the medical practitioners and of the choice groups.](#)” But this implies an equal right to be heard on a matter in which only one of the two parties has the relevant expertise. Again, if this was about policy responses to science, this would be reasonable. But the so-called “debate” here is about the science itself, and the “choice groups” simply don’t have a claim on air time if that’s where the disagreement is supposed to lie.

Mediawatch host Jonathan Holmes was considerably more blunt: “[there’s evidence, and there’s bulldust,](#)” and it’s not part of a reporter’s job to give bulldust equal time with serious expertise.

The response from anti-vaccination voices was predictable. On the Mediawatch site, Ms. Dorey accused the ABC of “openly calling for censorship of a scientific debate.” This response confuses not having your views taken seriously with not being allowed to hold or express those views at all – or to borrow a phrase from Andrew Brown, it “[confuses losing an argument with losing the right to argue.](#)” Again, two senses of “entitlement” to an opinion are being conflated here.

So next time you hear someone declare they’re entitled to their opinion, ask them why they think that. Chances are, if nothing else, you’ll end up having a more enjoyable conversation that way.”



From **The Conversation**. Republish our articles for free, online or in print, under Creative Commons licensing. [No, You're Not Entitled To Your Own Opinion](#) by Patrick Stokes



CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: LINKS TO ADDITIONAL GREAT RESOURCES

6.1: STEPHEN COLBERT, FROM THE COLBERT REPORT

6.2: URSULA LEGUIN

6.3: KWAME ANTHONY APPIAH, FROM TEDTALKS

6.4: ANNA QUINDLEN, FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES

6.5: PETER SINGER, FROM TEDTALKS

6.6: CAROL GILLIGAN

6.7: PEGGY ORENSTEIN

6.8: ASHEY JUDD FOR TEDTALKS

6.9: PAUL BLOOM, FOR NEW YORK TIMES

6.10: ELIE WIESEL, INTERVIEW WITH BILL MOYERS

6.1: Stephen Colbert, from The Colbert Report

How Do We Know What Is True?



About Stephen Colbert

Aristotle was one of our earliest advocates for Virtues in human behavior. He believed that a virtuous person would make good choices in life, and thus have a moral and ethical approach to action. Honesty, courage, generosity, kindness—these are all virtues.

One virtue that most people claim that they hold dear is honesty—telling the truth. We may debate a little about questions like, “Do you like my new haircut?” and how one might answer that when the haircut is....interesting. But all in all, most of us hold fast that honesty is important—we should all tell the truth.

Our American culture is going through a period where it is pretty hard to know when anyone is telling the truth. The concept of Fake News is not as new as one might think, however. We have had bias, fabrication, exaggeration and outright lying in popular culture for a very long time. Lyndon Johnson lied to the American public about the Vietnam War. Richard Nixon proclaimed that he was not a crook, until it became quite clear that he was. Ads in the 1920s promised that smoking cigarettes would benefit breathing, even when it was becoming more and more obvious that smoking might kill a person.

Still, the vast amounts of both advertising and news, of social argument and social division is increasingly accessible and visible today through 24 hour TV, social media, phone notifications, and much more. We are bombarded with detail, data, and stories all day. How do we deal with it all? How do we know what the Truth is?

People who do comedy for a living are becoming prophetic in our world. Comedians have always pointed out the idiosyncrasies in human lives. But our political comedians are being a set of voices that, increasingly, point out ethical and philosophical realities to all of us. They have become the Court Jesters—poking holes in power.

Example

“The Word-Truthiness” Stephen Colbert for *The Colbert Report*, October 2005

Truthiness

Contributions and Attributions

This page is licensed under a CC BY-NC-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Jody Ondich. Page content has been edited and updated to conform to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform; a detailed versioning history of the edits to source content is available upon request.

6.2: Ursula LeGuin



Ursula LeGuin, 1929-2018 CE, was a well known and much loved fantasy author. She wrote many books that took on tricky topics, such as gender definitions in *The Left Hand of Darkness*, or slavery and conquest in *The Word for World is Forest*, or politics and economy in *The Dispossessed*. Some of her most loved work, however, is found in her Earthsea books, a set of youth fantasy fiction about another world, full of islands and boats and dragons and mystery. She uses the symbols of fantasy to address big issues in human living, such as how we learn, what the meaning of death really is, and the big question of how religion is used. In 2003, she was made a Grandmaster of Science Fiction, one of only a few women writers to take the top honor in the genre.

LeGuin spoke, often, about the use of symbols and mythology and fantasy. Check out this whole speech! Why Are Americans Afraid of Dragons? Excerpts from this speech, delivered first in 1974 to the Northwest Library Association, are offered here.

She opens the speech telling a story about looking for the book, “The Hobbit” by JRR Tolkein in a small local library. She was told that this form of literature was “escapism” and not considered good for children, so it was kept in the adult section of the library.

She goes on to describe the reality that fantasy, science fiction, and even just plain ordinary fiction is often poo-pooed by the American adult, even when most adults will at least consider allowing children to read these things.

“In wondering why Americans are afraid of dragons, I began to realize that a great many Americans are not only anti-fantasy, but altogether anti-fiction. We tend, as a people, to look upon all works of the imagination either as suspect, or as contemptible.

“My wife reads novels. I haven’t got the time.”

“I used to read that science fiction stuff when I was a teenager, but of course I don’t now.”

“Fairy stories are for kids. I live in the real world.”

Then follows an entire reflection on why Americans in general, and American men in particular, are not taught to like and trust and use their imaginations. Somehow, imagination is considered suspect or childish or even harmful!

Where literature is concerned, in the old, truly Puritan days, the only permitted reading was the Bible. Nowadays, with our secular Puritanism, the man who refuses to read novels because it’s unmanly to do so, or because they aren’t true, will most likely end up watching bloody detective thrillers on the television, or reading hack Westerns or sports stories, or going in for pornography, from Playboy on down. It is his starved imagination, craving nourishment, that forces him to do so. But he can rationalize such entertainment by saying that it is realistic – after all, sex exists, and there are criminals, and there are baseball players, and there used to be cowboys – and also by saying that it is virile, by which he means that it doesn’t interest most women.

What, then, are the uses of the imagination?

She continues her reflections commenting that Americans seem to actually be afraid of little green men, dragons, fairies and elves. Americans scoff at this kind of thing, make fun of it, and certainly, by and large, do not engage with it. And her real point in response to all of this?

Key Takeaways

LeGuin: “For fantasy is true, of course. It isn’t factual, but it is true. Children know that. Adults know it too, and that is precisely why many of them are afraid of fantasy. They know that its truth challenges, even threatens, all that is false, all that is phony, unnecessary, and trivial in the life they have let themselves be forced into living. They are afraid of dragons, because they are afraid of freedom.”

6.3: Kwame Anthony Appiah, from TedTalks

Is Religion Good or Bad?



About [Kwame Anthony Appiah](#)

In our world, religion is a source of much debate. Because we are much more mobile world, religion is not nearly as local, not nearly as confined to place of origin, not nearly as isolate as it once was. Buddhism is fond, not just in China or eastern Asia, but all over the world. Islam is no longer a middle eastern and African tradition. Hindu style worship and yoga is being taught in Maine and Minnesota and New Mexico.

And the younger generations are much more eclectic about choosing their spiritual traditions. Many, in fact, choose no religion at all. For a little more data, check out the Pew Research Center's Religion and Public Life site.

This article will show some movement in American affiliation: [America's Changing Religious Landscape](#)

So how important is religion these days? Does it matter? Is it part of human life?

The Speech

Kwame Anthony Appiah, May 2014 for *TedTalks*

[Is Religion Good or Bad?](#)

6.4: Anna Quindlen, from the New York Times

Who Decides Our Morals?



About [Anna Quindlen](#)

Is the individual opinion the most important thing? Should we have censorship? When does censorship matter? This decades old story of a photographic art exhibit causing an uproar is still fresh and relevant almost 30 years later. We continue to ask what the boundaries are in what is made public for us to see and experience, what crosses the line between art and obscenity, what we may be forced to see, and what we choose not to see, but allow others to see if they choose.

We have movie ratings, warnings about mature content on TV programs, protection of free speech, and we have obscenity laws, public decency expectations and school dress codes.

Who decides what the boundaries are? Is it religion? Is it “majority rules”? Or do we allow individuals to decide, and just say that anything goes—you can do something, and we won’t stop you. We might not participate, but we won’t interfere. How do we decide?

Example

“Public and Private; Dirty Pictures” op ed column by Anna Quindlen in the *New York Times*, April 1990

[Dirty Pictures?](#)

6.5: Peter Singer, from TedTalks

Are Humans Altruistic?



About Peter Singer

Altruism is a tricky concept in some ways.

Definition of altruism

1 : unselfish regard for or devotion to the welfare of others

- charitable acts motivated purely by altruism

2 : behavior by an animal that is not beneficial to or may be harmful to itself but that benefits others of its species

Many people would claim to be altruistic—that they help others, give generously, do things that might be a sacrifice of their own well-being, in order to benefit someone else. But this discussion has been going on for centuries. The question of whether humans are fundamentally selfish, whether it is even good to sacrifice—these are old conversations.

In this newer take on the issue, Peter Singer is not only affirming altruism, but saying that all of us should live in such a way that we only keep a limited and fairly small portion of what we earn in order to benefit the rest of humanity. We should choose altruism and make our life's work aiding others.

This gets into questions of social welfare, of ownership, and back again to that old, old question of whether humans are capable of this kind of giving. Singer says that we are, and more importantly, we should be altruistic in a very specific way. Check out this style of Utilitarianism in action.

The Speech

Peter Singer, Feb 2013 for *TedTalks*

Effective Altruism

6.6: Carol Gilligan

A Different Voice



Life of Carol Gilligan from the *Jewish Women's Archives*, [Carol Gilligan](#)

When Carol Gilligan was a graduate student, she began to realize that too much research was happening where the voices and experiences of women was not being studied, regarded, or considered. One study in particular only used male subjects in its attempt to look at human ethical and moral development. As she did her own research, something that might be obvious to some, but was seldom articulated, became clear to her.

Women make many of their choices in ways that attempt to protect and preserve relationships that they consider important. In Gilligan's studies it became clear that there were strong morals and principles in women's lives, as in the lives of men, but there were also strong emotional connections that were considered vital to the ethical decision making process of women. This emphasis on relationships was a bit different than men's usual emphasis on principles and rules. It was a different kind of voice.

The concept of women's voices and experiences needing to be heard is becoming much more central in our world in the 21st century. There are movements, marches, even laws that are changing our regard for and treatment of women. This movement for women's rights and voices has been happening for centuries, obviously, as women gained power in being able to own property, pick their own life partners, gained the ability to vote and run for office, changed what they could wear and the jobs that they could hold.

So this concept of a Different Voice is illuminating, in that it offers a study, through many interviews, of women's intentions, motivations and goals.

[The Speech](#)

A Different Voice—hearing from Carol Gilligan from **Makers**, a PBS and AOL initiative.

Why a Difference Voice?

[Contributions and Attributions](#)

This page is licensed under a [CC BY-NC-SA](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Jody Ondich](#). Page content has been edited and updated to conform to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform; a detailed versioning history of the edits to source content is available upon request.

6.7: Peggy Orenstein



Peggy Orenstein, 1961–present, is the author of the *New York Times* bestsellers *Girls & Sex*, *Cinderella Ate My Daughter* and *Waiting for Daisy*, a memoir. In addition to her bestselling books, Orenstein writes for *New York Times Magazine*, comments for NPR and was recognized by the *Columbia Journalism Review* as among its “40 women who changed the media business in the past 40 years”.

The Speech

What young women believe about their own sexual pleasure

“Why do girls feel empowered to engage in sexual activity but not to enjoy it? For three years, author Peggy Orenstein interviewed girls ages 15 to 20 about their attitudes toward and experiences of sex. She discusses the pleasure that’s largely missing from their sexual encounters and calls on us to close the “orgasm gap” by talking candidly with our girls from an early age about sex, bodies, pleasure and intimacy.” from the Ted Talk description of Orenstein’s speech

From her groundbreaking book, *Schoolgirls*, to her latest, *Girls & Sex*, author Peggy Orenstein interviewed young women across the country, mapping the terrain of adolescent female sexuality and gender expectations. Her interviews reveal an uncomfortable truth: although women may display self-confidence in public society, their knowledge of their own sexuality has plummeted, resulting in a “psychological clitoridectomy.”

Contributions and Attributions

This page is licensed under a [CC BY-NC-SA license](#) and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Jody Ondich](#). Page content has been edited and updated to conform to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform; a detailed versioning history of the edits to source content is available upon request.

6.8: Ashey Judd for TedTalks

Sex Versus Sexual Assault: #MeToo



About [Ashley Judd](#)

Humans have had this odd attitude towards sex over the centuries. It varies from culture to culture, but the general tagline over the centuries was, “Sex is dirty, save it for someone you love”. So humans wrestle with behavior around sex and how to have intimacy that is good, that is fulfilling, that is mutual.

The experiences have often been much more troubling and traumatic for women in this regard. From periods where women were commodities, property to be sold for benefit to their male relatives, to periods where women were either considered virtuous or vile (Honest woman or slut), to current times when women are considered whiny by some men when they ask for equality in sexual encounters—sex seems to baffle humanity. We like it. We fear it. We do it, sometimes when we choose, and sometimes when we have to, and sometimes sex becomes abuse and violence and terrorism.

The #MeToo movement has a lot to say about respecting and listening to women’s experiences. This movement reaffirms that all people are philosophers. Do we have actresses in a book of philosophy? Of course—they have a platform in their visibility, and have universal stories to tell that perhaps help people listen.

[The Speech](#)

“The Conversation Around Sexual Assault” Ashey Judd, October 2016, for *TedTalks*

[Ashley Judd on Online Approaches to Women](#)

6.9: Paul Bloom, for New York Times

The Root of All Cruelty



About [Paul Bloom](#)

Are humans fundamentally good? Fundamentally bad? This is the ancient question that all philosophers have considered. Science is trying to help us explore this, as we continue to ask, “How could people participate in...” and then give examples of slavery, the Holocaust, genocide, torture in prisons, terrorism, etc. Why do people do this kind of thing? What happened in Abu Graib? How did so many Germans close their eyes to the destruction of millions of humans in gas chamber? What caused a rampage in Rwanda, with thousands slaughtered?

As we research human behavior, not only do we learn about science, but we learn about more questions to address. Science and philosophy belong together. This way we learn more about What Is, so that we can ask about What Should Be.

[The Column](#)

“The Root of All Cruelty” by Paul Bloom, November 2017 for New York Times

[The Root of Cruelty](#)

6.10: Elie Wiesel, interview with Bill Moyers

Facing Hate



About [Elie Wiesel](#)

Are people cruel by nature? Are people good? Can we nurture goodness and control the cruelty? Genocide is not, unfortunately, a new behavior, and the WWII Holocaust is not the last time in human history that genocide has taken place. Ask the victims of Pol Pot in Cambodia, or the people of Rwanda, or the Rohingya in Myanmar.

So why does this happen? Elie Wiesel talks here about the concept of Hate. We often tell our small children not to say, “I hate you” to people. But when do we stop telling them that? When do we notice that we have allowed the words to come out of the mouth of a teen, or a young adult, and we are no longer shocked by it?

Example

This is a powerful interview of Elie Wiesel by Bill Moyers about the concept of Hate and what hate does in our world. They discuss the issues that continue to gnaw at humanity. Hate, as Wiesel says, is an ugly word.

Facing Hate

About [Bill Moyers](#)

 [creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0], via Wikimedia Commons

Contributions and Attributions

This page is licensed under a [CC BY-NC-SA](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Jody Ondich](#). Page content has been edited and updated to conform to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform; a detailed versioning history of the edits to source content is available upon request.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: LATE MODERN WISDOM 1750-1950 CE

- 7.1: AYN RAND
- 7.2: JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU
- 7.3: JEREMY BENTHAM
- 7.4: JOHN STUART MILL
- 7.5: IMMANUEL KANT
- 7.6: SØREN KIERKEGAARD
- 7.7: FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE
- 7.8: KARL MARX AND FRIEDRICH ENGELS
- 7.9: WILLIAM JAMES
- 7.10: BERTRAND RUSSELL--TWO ESSAYS

7.1: Ayn Rand



Ayn Rand, 1905 – 1982 CE, was a Russian-American novelist and philosopher. She is best known for her two novels, *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*, and for developing a philosophical system she called Objectivism. She was born and educated in Russia, and moved to the United States in 1926. She was first noticed by the media and the general public after the publication in 1943 of her novel, *The Fountainhead*. In 1957, Rand published her best-known work, the novel *Atlas Shrugged*. Rand insisted that reason be the only means of acquiring knowledge and she adamantly rejected any kind of adherence to or use of religion. She supported rational and ethical egoism and rejected any form of altruism.

You might want to hear about a couple of basic concepts right from Ayn Rand herself:

[Ayn Rand on Reason](#)

[Ayn Rand on the importance of Happiness](#)

Excerpts from various works

(From *The Virtue of Selfishness*. "The Objectivist Ethics") About Selfishness:

The Objectivist ethics proudly advocates and upholds *rational selfishness*— which means: the values required for man's survival *qua* man — which means: the values required for *human* survival — not the values produced by the desires, the emotions, the “aspirations,” the feelings, the whims or the needs of irrational brutes, who have never outgrown the primordial practice of human sacrifices, have never discovered an industrial society and can conceive of no self-interest but that of grabbing the loot of the moment.

The Objectivist ethics holds that *human* good does not require human sacrifices and cannot be achieved by the sacrifice of anyone to anyone. It holds that the *rational* interests of men do not clash — that there is no conflict of interests among men who do not desire the unearned, who do not make sacrifices nor accept them, who deal with one another as *traders*, giving value for value.

[Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Ayn Rand](#)

*“The provocative title of Ayn Rand’s *The Virtue of Selfishness* matches an equally provocative thesis about ethics. Traditional ethics has always been suspicious of self-interest, praising acts that are selfless in intent and calling amoral or immoral acts that are motivated by self-interest. A self-interested person, on the traditional view, will not consider the interests of others and so will slight or harm those interests in the pursuit of his own.*

Rand’s view is that the exact opposite is true: Self-interest, properly understood, is the standard of morality and selflessness is the deepest immorality.”

(From *Philosophy: Who Needs It. "Faith and Force: the Destroyers of the Modern World"*) About Altruism:

What is the moral code of altruism? The basic principle of altruism is that man has no right to exist for his own sake, that service to others is the only justification of his existence, and that self-sacrifice is his highest moral duty, virtue and value.

Do not confuse altruism with kindness, good will or respect for the rights of others. These are not primaries, but consequences, which, in fact, altruism makes impossible. The irreducible primary of altruism, the basic absolute, is *self-*

sacrifice — which means; self-immolation, self-abnegation, self-denial, self-destruction — which means: the *self* as a standard of evil, the *selfless* as a standard of the good.

Do not hide behind such superficialities as whether you should or should not give a dime to a beggar. That is not the issue. The issue is whether you *do* or do *not* have the right to exist *without* giving him that dime. The issue is whether you must keep buying your life, dime by dime, from any beggar who might choose to approach you. The issue is whether the need of others is the first mortgage on your life and the moral purpose of your existence. The issue is whether man is to be regarded as a sacrificial animal. Any man of self-esteem will answer: "No." Altruism says: "Yes."

Example

[Ayn Rand: How is This Still a Thing?](#)

Comedy can be an interesting way to approach big ideas. Ayn Rand has been very controversial in philosophy and ethics. Try watching a little John Oliver and his commentary about Ayn Rand and her ideas from this October 2014 clip before continuing on reading about Rand's ideas.



Testifying before Congress

[\(From Philosophy: Who Needs It, "Selfishness Without a Self"\) About Altruism:](#)

It is obvious why the morality of *altruism* is a tribal phenomenon. Prehistorical men were physically unable to survive without clinging to a tribe for leadership and protection against other tribes. The cause of altruism's perpetuation into civilized eras is not physical, but psycho-epistemological: the men of self-arrested, perceptual mentality are unable to survive without tribal leadership and "protection" against reality. The doctrine of self-sacrifice does not offend them: they have no sense of self or of personal value — they do not know what it is that they are asked to sacrifice — they have no firsthand inkling of such things as intellectual integrity, love of truth, personally chosen values, or a passionate dedication to an idea. When they hear injunctions against "selfishness," they believe that what they must renounce is the brute, mindless whim-worship of a tribal lone wolf. But their leaders — the theoreticians of altruism — know better. Immanuel Kant knew it; John Dewey knew it; B. F. Skinner knows it; John Rawls knows it. Observe that it is not the mindless brute, but reason, intelligence, ability, merit, self-confidence, self-esteem that they are out to destroy.

I swear, by my life and my love of it, that I will never live for the sake of another man, nor ask another man to live for mine. Ayn Rand

[\(From For the New Intellectual. "Galt's Speech"\) About the Self:](#) via Wikimedia Commons

The *self* you have betrayed is your mind; *self-esteem* is reliance on one's power to think. The ego you seek, that essential "you" which you cannot express or define, is not your emotions or inarticulate dreams, but your *intellect*, that judge of your supreme tribunal whom you've impeached in order to drift at the mercy of any stray shyster you describe as your "feeling."

The question isn't who is going to let me; it's who is going to stop me. Ayn Rand

[\(From For the New Intellectual. "Galt's Speech"\) About the Self:](#)



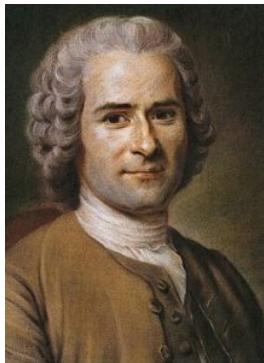
Who is John Galt?

My morality, the morality of reason, is contained in a single axiom: existence exists — and in a single choice: to live. The rest proceeds from these. To live, man must hold three things as the supreme and ruling values of his life: Reason — Purpose — Self-esteem. Reason, as his only tool of knowledge — Purpose, as his choice of the happiness which that tool must proceed to achieve — Self-esteem, as his inviolate certainty that his mind is competent to think and his person is worthy of happiness, which means: is worthy of living. These three values imply and require all of man's virtues, and all his virtues pertain to the relation of existence and consciousness: rationality, independence, integrity, honesty, justice, productiveness, pride.



7.2: Jean-Jacques Rousseau

THE SOCIAL CONTRACT & DISCOURSES



LONDON & TORONTO

PUBLISHED BY J. M. DENT & SONS

IN NEW YORK BY E. P. DUTTON & CO

1920

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1712 – 1778 CE, was a philosopher of the 18th century who mostly lived and was active in France. His political philosophy influenced western Europe, including aspects of the French Revolution and the development of modern political thought.

Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality* and *The Social Contract* are cornerstones in contemporary political thought.

The Social Contract outlines what ought to be in place for a legitimate and publicly supported political order. It is possibly the most influential work of political philosophy in the West. The treatise begins with the often heard opening lines, “**Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains. Those who think themselves the masters of others are indeed greater slaves than they.**”

Rousseau followed the work of Hobbes and claimed that the state of nature was a human existence that was without law or morality, which humans needed to leave behind in order to truly thrive and survive. As society developed, the human race was required to have institutions of law in order to protect themselves and to ensure that all people in a society or community kept their word to one another. According to Rousseau, by joining together through the concept of a social contract and giving up some of their inborn freedoms, individual people could both protect themselves and remain basically free to live as they chose. This is because obeying the general will of the people through the laws that are agreed upon by the community guarantees all individuals both physical safety and protection from tyranny because they are, as a whole, the authors of those accepted laws.

This column from the New York Times helps apply some of Rousseau’s ideas to modern living

—How Rousseau Predicted Trump

“No-one will dispute that the General Will is in each individual a pure act of the understanding, which reasons while the passions are silent on what a man may demand of his neighbour and on what his neighbour has a right to demand of him.”

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Excerpts from the book's Introduction by George Douglas Howard Cole, 1920

...Rousseau has suffered as much as any one from critics without a sense of history. He has been cried up and cried down by democrats and oppressors with an equal lack of understanding and imagination. His name, a hundred and fifty years after the publication of the *Social Contract*, is still a controversial watchword and a party cry. He is accepted as one of the greatest writers France has produced; but even now men are inclined, as political bias prompts them, to accept or reject his political doctrines as a whole, without sifting them or attempting to understand and discriminate. He is still revered or hated as the author who, above all others, inspired the French Revolution.



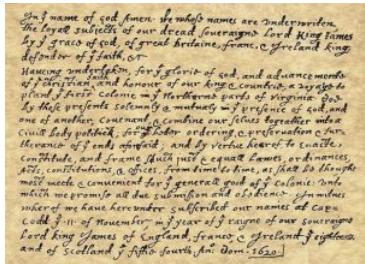
When he remarks that “the facts,” the actual history of political societies, “do not concern him,” he is not contemptuous of facts; he is merely asserting the sure principle that a fact can in no case give rise to a right. His desire is to establish society on a basis of pure right, so as at once to disprove his attack on society generally and to reinforce his criticism of existing societies.

Round this point centers the whole dispute about the methods proper to political theory. There are, broadly speaking, two schools of political theorists, if we set aside the psychologists. One school, by collecting facts, aims at reaching broad generalizations about what actually happens in human societies! the other tries to penetrate to the universal principles at the root of all human combination. For the latter purpose facts may be useful, but in themselves they can prove nothing. The question is not one of fact, but one of right.

The problem of political obligation is seen as including all other political problems, which fall into place in a system based upon it. How, Rousseau asks, can the will of the State help being for me a merely external will, imposing itself upon my own? How can the existence of the State be reconciled with human freedom? How can man, who is born free, rightly come to be everywhere in chains?

Wherever any form of government apart from the merest tyranny exists, reflection on the basis of the State cannot but lead to the notion that, in one sense or another, it is based on the consent, tacit or expressed, past or present, of its members. In this alone, the greater part of the Social Contract theory is already latent. Add the desire to find actual justification for a theory in facts, and, especially in an age possessed only of the haziest historical sense, this doctrine of consent will inevitably be given a historical setting. If in addition there is a tendency to regard society as something unnatural to humanity, the tendency will become irresistible. By writers of almost all schools, the State will be represented as having arisen, in some remote age, out of a compact or, in more legal phrase, contract between two or more parties. The only class that will be able to resist the doctrine is that which maintains the divine right of kings, and holds that all existing governments were imposed on the people by the direct interposition of God. All who are not prepared to maintain that will be partisans of some form or other of the Social Contract theory.

The second view, which may be called the Social Contract theory proper, regards society as originating in,



or based on, an agreement between the individuals composing it. It seems to be found first, rather vaguely, in Richard Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, from which Locke largely borrowed: and it reappears, in varying forms, in Milton's *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, in Hobbes's *Leviathan*, in Locke's *Treatises on Civil Government*, and in Rousseau. The best-known instance of its actual use is by the Pilgrim Fathers on the *Mayflower* in 1620, in whose declaration occurs the phrase, “We do solemnly and mutually, in the presence of God and of one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic.” The natural implication of this view would seem to be the corollary of complete popular Sovereignty which Rousseau draws. But before Rousseau's time it had been used to support views as diverse as those which rested on the first form. We saw that, in Grotius's great work, *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, it was already possible to doubt which of the two theories was being advocated. The first theory was, historically, a means of popular protest against royal aggression. As soon as popular government was taken into account, the act of

contract between people and government became in effect merely a contract between the individuals composing the society, and readily passed over into the second form.

Examples

The best-known instance of its (social contract) actual use is by the Pilgrim Fathers on the *Mayflower* in 1620, in whose declaration occurs the phrase, “We do solemnly and mutually, in the presence of God and of one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic.”

We thus come at last to the General Will, the most disputed, and certainly the most fundamental, of all Rousseau’s political concepts. No critic of the *Social Contract* has found it easy to say either what precisely its author meant by it, or what is its final value for political philosophy. The difficulty is increased because Rousseau himself sometimes halts in the sense which he assigns to it, and even seems to suggest by it two different ideas. Of its broad meaning, however, there can be no doubt. The effect of the Social Contract is the creation of a new individual. When it has taken place, “at once, in place of the individual personality of each contracting party, the act of association creates a moral and collective body, composed of as many members as the assembly contains voters, and receiving from the act its unity, its common identity (*moi commun*), its life and its will” (Book I, chap. vi).

It has often been held that Rousseau cannot really have inspired the French Revolution because this view is totally inconsistent with the “rights of man,” which the revolutionaries so fervently proclaimed. If every right is alienated in the Social Contract, what sense can there be in talking of “natural rights” afterwards? This, however, is to misrepresent Rousseau’s position. The rights of man as they are preached by the modern individualist, are not the rights of which Rousseau and the revolutionaries were thinking. We have seen that the theory of the *Social Contract* is founded on human freedom: this freedom carries with it, in Rousseau’s view, the guarantee of its own permanence; it is inalienable and indestructible. When, therefore, government becomes despotic, it has no more right over its subjects than the master has over his slave (Book I, chap. iv); the question is then purely one of might. In such cases, appeal may be made either to the terms of the Social Contract, or, putting the same idea another way, to the “natural right” of human freedom. This natural right is in no sense inconsistent with the complete alienation supposed in the Contract; for the Contract itself reposes on it and guarantees its maintenance. The Sovereign must, therefore, treat all its members alike; but, so long as it does this, it remains omnipotent. If it leaves the general for the particular, and treats one man better than another, it ceases to be Sovereign; but equality is already presupposed in the terms of the Contract.

Key Takeaway

The term “general” will means, in Rousseau, not so much “will held by several persons,” as will having a general (universal) object. This is often misunderstood; but the mistake matters the less, because the General Will must, in fact, be both.



Key Points from Rousseau:

(Book I, chap. vi).

The effect of the Social Contract is the creation of a new individual. When it has taken place, “at once, in place of the individual personality of each contracting party, the act of association creates a moral and collective body, composed of as many members as the assembly contains voters, and receiving from the act its unity, its common identity (*moi commun*), its life and its will”

(Book I, chap. viii),

Here he is speaking of the change brought about by the establishment of a society.



"The passage from the state of nature to the civil state produces a very remarkable change in man, by substituting justice for instinct in his conduct, and giving his actions the morality they had hitherto lacked.... What man loses by the social contract is his natural liberty and an unlimited right to everything he tries to get and succeeds in getting; what he gains is civil liberty ... which is limited by the general will.... We might, over and above all this, add to what man acquires in the civil state *moral liberty, which alone makes him truly master of himself; for the mere impulse of appetite is slavery, while obedience to a law which we prescribe to ourselves is liberty.*"

(Book II, chap. iii)

It is possible for a citizen, when an issue is presented to him or her, to vote not for the good of the State, but for his or her own good.

"There is often," he says, "a great deal of difference between the *will of all* and the *general will*; the latter takes account only of the common interest, while the former takes private interest into account, and is no more than a sum of particular wills. The agreement of all interests is formed by opposition to that of each"

(Book II, chap. iii)

He claims that ignorance often creates problems in the General Will of people as a whole.

"The general will is always right and tends to the public advantage; but it does not follow that the deliberations of the people are always equally correct. Our will is always for our own good, but we do not always see what that is: the people is never corrupted, but it is often deceived, and on such occasions only does it seem to will what is bad"

(Book IV, chap. ii)

This is the passage expressing that humans can only approximate Social Contract.

"When in the popular assembly a law is proposed, what the people is asked is not exactly whether it accepts or rejects the proposal, but whether it is in conformity with the general will, which is its will.... When, therefore, the opinion that is contrary to my own prevails, this proves neither more nor less than that I was mistaken, and that what I *thought* to be the general will was not so."



The Project Gutenberg eBook, The Social Contract & Discourses, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Translated by George Douglas Howard Cole. This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org

Title: The Social Contract & Discourses

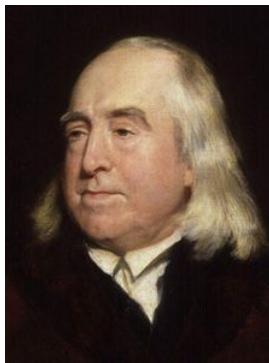
Author: Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Release Date: July 19, 2014 [eBook #46333]

Language: English

7.3: Jeremy Bentham

An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation



Jeremy Bentham, 1748 -1832 CE, was an English philosopher, jurist, and social reformer regarded as the founder of modern utilitarianism. Bentham defined as the foundation of his philosophy the principle that “it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong”. He advocated, long before it was common, for individual and economic freedoms, equal rights for women in property, voting and divorce, and the decriminalizing of homosexual acts. He also called for the abolition of slavery, of the death penalty, and of physical punishment, including that of children. He has also become known as an early advocate of animal rights.

Some good basic information about Bentham's ideas in the development of Utilitarianism is found here in:

[Utilitarianism](#)

[Chapter I. Excerpts](#)

[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 subjection, 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*^[1] recognizes 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 which 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 principle of utility is meant that principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency which 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. 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.

The interest of the community is one of the most general expressions that can occur in the phraseology of morals: no wonder that the meaning of it is often lost. When it has a meaning, it is this. The community is a fictitious *body*, composed of the individual persons who are considered as constituting as it were its *members*. **The interest of the community then is, what? — the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it.** It is in vain to talk of the interest of the community, without understanding what is the interest of the individual. A thing is said to promote the interest, or to be *for* the interest, of an individual, when it tends to add to the sum total of his pleasures: or, what comes to the same thing, to diminish the sum total of his pains.

A measure of government (which is but a particular kind of action, performed by a particular person or persons) may be said to be conformable to or dictated by the principle of utility, when in like manner the tendency which it has to augment the happiness of the community is greater than any which it has to diminish it.

You can check out an interesting link to the Bentham Project in England. [Bentham Project](#) If you want to know more about Jeremy Bentham from University College London, which houses the Bentham Project, watch

[Bentham: Man and Myth](#)

[The Hedonic Calculus: How to determine what to do in any situation](#)

The Hedonic Calculus weighs up the pain and pleasure created by the available moral actions to find the best moral and ethical decision. It considers the following seven factors:

1. Intensity: *How powerful is the action?*
2. Duration: *How long does the pleasure or pain last?*
3. Certainty/Uncertainty: *How likely is it to result in pleasure or pain?*
4. Propinquity/Remoteness: *How near is it? Immediate? Thousands of miles away?*
5. Fecundity: *What is the chance it has of being followed by sensations of the same kind: that is pleasure if it be pleasure or pain if it be pain?*
6. Purity: *What is the chance it has of being followed by sensations of the opposite kind: that is pain if it be pleasure or pleasure if it be pain?*
7. Extent: *How many people does it affect?*



The first edition of this work was printed in the year 1780.

The work was first published in 1789.

This web edition published by [eBooks@Adelaide](#).

Last updated Wednesday, December 17, 2014 at 10:44.

To the best of our knowledge, **the text** of this work is in the “**Public Domain**” in Australia. HOWEVER, copyright law varies in other countries, and the work may still be under copyright in the country from which you are accessing this website. It is your responsibility to check the applicable copyright laws in your country before downloading this work.

eBooks@Adelaide

The University of Adelaide Library

University of Adelaide

South Australia 5005

-
1. Note by the Author, July 1822 — 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. ↪

Contributions and Attributions

This page is licensed under a [CC BY-NC-SA](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Jody Ondich](#). Page content has been edited and updated to conform to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform; a detailed versioning history of the edits to source content is available upon request.

7.4: John Stuart Mill

UTILITARIANISM



REPRINTED FROM 'FRASER'S MAGAZINE'

SEVENTH EDITION

LONDON

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1879

John Stuart Mill, 1806 – 1873 CE, was a British philosopher, political economist and civil servant. An important and influential thinker, he contributed widely to political philosophy. Mill was a proponent of utilitarianism, an ethical theory developed by his predecessor Jeremy Bentham.

You may get a feel for how Utilitarianism is applied by listening to this Ted Talk from modern philosopher Peter Singer^[1]

[Ethics, Utilitarianism & Effective Altruism](#)

You should also watch this short BBC clip about Mill's ideas called:

[The Harm Principle: how to live your life the way you want](#)

Excerpts from Chapter 2: 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 Epicurus to Bentham, 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.

Key Takeaway

"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."

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 grovelling; 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. 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, &c., 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.

JOHN STUART MILL
UTILITARIANISM
GREATEST
JUSTIFIED
HAPPINESS
UTILITARIAN
RESULTS
OUTCOME
GOOD
ENDS
CONSEQUENTIALISM

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.

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.

Exercises

Let's think a bit about that Greatest Happiness Principle. This article gives us a start: [President Club Dinner reveals flaws in how we think about ethics](#)

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? 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.

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 tranquillity 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 recognise 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.

Key Takeaway

"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."

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 neighbour 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. If the impugners of the utilitarian morality represented it to their own minds in this its true character, I know not what recommendation possessed by any other morality they could possibly affirm to be wanting to it: what more beautiful or more exalted developments of human nature any other ethical system can be supposed to foster, or what springs of action, not accessible to the utilitarian, such systems rely on for giving effect to their mandates.



The Project Gutenberg EBook of Utilitarianism, by John Stuart Mill This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.net

Title: Utilitarianism

Author: John Stuart Mill

Release Date: February 22, 2004 [EBook #11224]

Language: English

1. Ira W. DeCamp Professor of Bioethics, University Center for Human Values, Princeton University, 1999-2004, part-time, 2005- Laureate Professor, University of Melbourne, Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics, part-time, 2005-2012, School of Historical and Philosophical Studies, part-time, 2013- ↪



7.5: Immanuel Kant

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE METAPHYSIC OF MORALS



TRANSLATED BY

T. K. ABBOTT

Introductory note from this translation: "Immanuel Kant was born in Konigsberg, East Prussia, April 22, 1724, the son of a saddler of Scottish descent. The family was pietist, and the future philosopher entered the university of his native city in 1740, with a view to studying theology. He developed, however, a many-sided interest in learning, and his earlier publications were in the field of speculative physics. After the close of his period of study at the university he became a private tutor; then In 1755, privat-docent; and in 1770, professor. **Of the enormous importance of Kant in the history of philosophy, no idea can be given here.** The important document which follows was published in 1785, and forms the basis of the moral system on which he erected the whole structure of belief in God, Freedom, and Immortality."

Kant is most commonly known for his mandate that there is a single moral obligation, which he called the "Categorical Imperative". This approach to ethics is taken from the concept of duty. Categorical imperatives are principles that are good in and of themselves; they must be obeyed by everyone in all situations and circumstances, with no exceptions, if our behavior is to observe the moral law. He held up, for example, the statement that one should never lie, in any circumstance. The maxim, then, was held to be true because one could test this. Would you want everyone to be able to lie? If so, go ahead and lie. But reality says that then we could never trust anything that anyone said. So, instead, we state that no one should lie, because we can then trust what people say. We are willing for all people to act like this—not lying. This same approach would go for anything! And these maxims then become absolute. No exceptions, by anyone, for any reason.

This is, of course, tricky. Do you tell the Nazis who ask that you have people hidden in your attic, or do you lie? Kant says that if the Nazis ask, specifically, whether you have people hidden in your attic, that you must tell the truth. Most of us have some issues here with that!

A little help getting clear about the direction of Kant's work can be found at:

[Kant and the Categorical Imperative](#)

FIRST SECTION

TRANSITION FROM THE COMMON RATIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF MORALITY TO THE PHILOSOPHICAL

...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.

I omit here all actions which are already recognized as inconsistent with duty, although they may be useful for this or



that purpose, for with these the question whether they are done from duty cannot arise at all, since they even conflict with it.

I also set aside those actions which really conform to duty, but to which men have no direct inclination, performing them because they are impelled thereto by some other inclination. For in this case we can readily distinguish whether the action which agrees with duty is done from duty, or from a selfish view. It is much harder to make this distinction when the action accords with duty, and the subject has besides a direct inclination to it. For example, it is always a matter of duty that a dealer should not overcharge an inexperienced purchaser, and wherever there is much commerce the prudent tradesman does not overcharge, but keeps a fixed price for everyone, so that a child buys of him as well as any other. Men are thus honestly served; but this is not enough to make us believe that the tradesman has so acted from duty and from principles of honesty: his own advantage required it; it is out of the question in this case to suppose that he might besides have a direct inclination in favor of the buyers, so that, as it were, from love he should give no advantage to one over another. Accordingly the action was done neither from duty nor from direct inclination, but merely with a selfish view.

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 often 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



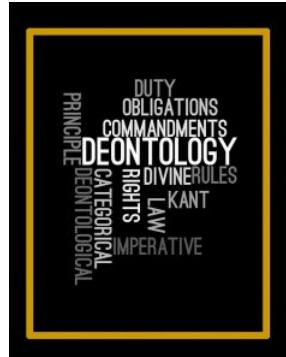
To be beneficent when we can is a duty; and besides this, there are many minds so sympathetically constituted that, without any other motive of vanity or self-interest, they find a pleasure in spreading joy around them and can take delight in the satisfaction of others so far as it is their own work. 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 [only] 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.

The second (The first proposition was that to have moral worth an action must be done from duty.) 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 principle, which is formal, and its a posteriori spring, which is material, as between two roads, and as it must be determined by something, it follows 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 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 [Footnote: A MAXIM is the subjective principle of volition. The objective principle (i. e.



that which would also serve subjectively as a practical principle to all rational beings if reason had full power over the faculty of desire) is the practical LAW.] that I should follow this law even to the thwarting of all my inclinations.

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.\

Exercise

Kant's Axe talks about the example of the man with an axe coming to your front door and asking for your best friend in a fit of rage. What would you do?

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. (It might be here objected to me that I take refuge behind the word RESPECT in an obscure feeling, instead of giving a distinct solution of the question by a concept of the reason. But although respect is a feeling, it is not a feeling RECEIVED through influence, but is SELF-WROUGHT by a rational concept, and, therefore, is specifically distinct from all feelings of the former kind, which may be referred either to inclination or fear, What I recognize immediately as a law for me, I recognize with respect. This merely signifies the consciousness that my will is SUBORDINATE to a law, without the intervention of other influences on my sense.

The immediate determination of the will by the law, and the consciousness of this is called RESPECT, so that this is regarded as an EFFECT of the law on the subject, and not as the CAUSE of it. Respect is properly the conception of a worth which thwarts my self-love. Accordingly it is something which is considered neither as an object of inclination nor of fear, although it has something analogous to both. The OBJECT of respect is the LAW only, and that, the law which we impose on OURSELVES, and yet recognize as necessary in itself. As a law, we are subjected to it without consulting self-love; as imposed by us on ourselves, it is a result of our will. In the former aspect it has an analogy to fear, in the latter to inclination. Respect for a person is properly only respect for the law (of honesty, &c.), of which he gives us an example. Since we also look on the improvement of our talents as a duty, we consider that we see in a person of talents, as it were, the EXAMPLE OF A LAW (viz. to become like him in this by exercise), and this constitutes our respect. All so-called moral INTEREST consists simply in RESPECT for the law.)

Key Takeaway

"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."

Immanuel Kant

This statement is considered 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 often 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.

I do not, therefore, need any far-reaching penetration to discern what I have to do in order that my will may be morally good. Inexperienced in the course of the world, incapable of being prepared for all its contingencies, I only ask myself: Canst thou also will that thy maxim should be a universal law? If not, then it must be rejected, and that not because of a disadvantage accruing from it to myself or even to others, but because it cannot enter as a principle into a possible universal legislation, and reason extorts from me immediate respect for such legislation. I do not indeed as yet discern on what this respect is based (this the philosopher may inquire), but at least I understand this, that it is an estimation of the worth which far outweighs all worth of what is recommended by inclination, and that the necessity of acting from pure respect for the practical law is what constitutes duty, to which every other motive must give place, because it is the condition of a will being good in itself, and the worth of such a will is above everything.

Thus, then, without quitting the moral knowledge of common human reason, we have arrived at its principle. And although, no doubt, common men do not conceive it in such an abstract and universal form, yet they always have it really before their eyes, and use it as the standard of their decision. Here it would be easy to show how, with this compass in hand, men are well able to distinguish, in every case that occurs, what is good, what bad, conformable to duty or inconsistent with it, if, without in the least teaching them anything new, we only, like Socrates, direct their attention to the principle they themselves employ; and that therefore we do not need science and philosophy to know what we should do to be honest and good, yea, even wise and virtuous. Indeed we might well have conjectured beforehand that the knowledge of what every man is bound to do, and therefore also to know, would be within the reach of every man, even the commonest.

What would you—and Kant—say about this: Capital Punishment: Can Government be Trusted?

Here we cannot forbear admiration when we see how great an advantage the practical judgment has over the theoretical in the common understanding of men. In the latter, if common reason ventures to depart from the laws of experience and from the perceptions of the senses it falls into mere inconceivabilities and self-contradictions, at least into chaos of uncertainty, obscurity, and instability. But in the practical sphere it is just when the common understanding excludes all sensible springs from practical laws that its power of judgment begins to show itself to advantage. It then becomes even subtle, whether it be that it chicanes with its own conscience or with other claims respecting what is to be called right, or whether it desires for its own instruction to determine honestly the worth of actions; and, in the latter case, it may even have as good a hope of hitting the mark as any philosopher whatever can promise himself. Nay, it is almost more sure of doing so, because the philosopher cannot have any other principle, while he may easily perplex his judgment by a multitude of considerations foreign to the matter, and so turn aside from the right way.

Would it not therefore be wiser in moral concerns to acquiesce in the judgment of common reason or at most only to call in philosophy for the purpose of rendering the system of morals more complete and intelligible, and its rules more convenient for use (especially for disputation), but not so as to draw off the common understanding from its happy simplicity, or to bring it by means of philosophy into a new path of inquiry and instruction?



The Project Gutenberg EBook of Literary and Philosophical Essays, by Various

Copyright laws are changing all over the world. Be sure to check the copyright laws for your country before downloading or redistributing this or any other Project Gutenberg eBook.

The Project Gutenberg EBook of Literary and Philosophical Essays

Title: Literary and Philosophical Essays

Author: Various

Release Date: May, 2004 [EBook #5637]

Edition: 10

Language: English

7.6: Søren Kierkegaard

Excerpts from Various Works



Søren Aabye Kierkegaard, 1813 – 1855 CE, was a Danish philosopher, theologian, poet, and social critic who is considered to be the first existentialist philosopher in history. Kierkegaard's work focused mostly on Christian ethics, the institution of the Church, and the differences between logic and the attempt to find factual, objective proofs of Christianity in contrast to recognizing the individual's subjective relationship to God. Much of his work deals with defining or having Christian love. His work explored emotions of individuals when faced with life choices.

"But in relation to God, there are no secret instructions for a human being any more than there are any backstairs. Even the most eminent genius who comes to give a report had best come in fear and trembling, for God is not hard pressed for geniuses. He can create a few legion of them if needed."

by Søren Kierkegaard, from *Fear and Trembling* published in 1843 under the pseudonym *Johannes de silentio* (*John of the Silence*)

Because the English translations of Kierkegaard are not in the public domain as yet, we can only quote portions of his work in English.

Start with two radio broadcasts that help explain Søren Kierkegaard. One is called “Fear and Trembling in Copenhagen – In Search of Søren Kierkegaard” recorded by the BBC in consultation with Nigel Warburton.

[BBC Program about Soren Kierkegaard](#)

And the other is called “Kierkegaard 200” and is broadcast through The Philosopher’s Zone, with guests Dr. Patrick Stokes of Deakin University in Australia, Dr. Hubert Dreyfus, late of UC Berkely, and Dr. Tim Reynor.

[Kierkegaard 200](#)



One of Kierkegaard's works, "*Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Fragments*" is famous for its general statement, **Subjectivity is Truth**. It was an attack on deterministic philosophy. What Kierkegaard is saying, generally, is that truth is not just bound to the discovery of objective facts. Real truth is based on how humans connect to those facts. In ethics, action is what is measured and seen and thus considered important, and so to Kierkegaard, truth is to be found in subjectivity of actions rather than the objectivity of facts alone. A fact is not enough. What one does with that fact really matters.

Kierkegaard is especially well known for his disagreement with the work of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, a German 18th-19th century philosopher, and for his dislike of both Hegel's insistence on Logic and Hegel's further claim that he had devised a system of thought that could explain the whole of reality. He considered that claim—that he had a handle on reality—a form of arrogance.

In a journal entry made in 1844, Kierkegaard wrote:

"If Hegel had written the whole of his logic and then said, in the preface or some other place, that it was merely an experiment in thought in which he had even begged the question in many places, then he would certainly have been the greatest thinker who had ever lived. As it is, he is merely comic."

Kierkegaard attempted to deny Hegel's insistence on logic within the realm of religion by suggesting that many doctrines of Christianity – including the doctrine of Incarnation, a God who is also human – cannot be explained with fact and rational thought. **Kierkegaard insisted that faith has truth that facts may not be able to explain.** Here he is encouraging the searching minds of the young.

"Let a doubting youth, but an existing doubter with youth's lovable, boundless confidence in a hero of scientific scholarship, venture to find in Hegelian positivity the truth, the truth of existence—he will write a dreadful epigram on Hegel. Do not misunderstand me. I do not mean that every youth is capable of overcoming Hegel, far from it. If a young person is conceited and foolish enough to try that, his attack is inane. No, the youth must never think of wanting to attack him; he must rather be willing to submit unconditionally to Hegel with feminine devotedness, but nevertheless with sufficient strength also to stick to his question—then he is a satirist without suspecting it. The youth is an existing doubter; continually suspended in doubt, he grasps for the truth—so that he can exist in it. Consequently, he is negative, and Hegel's philosophy is, of course, positive—no wonder he puts his trust in it. But for an existing person pure thinking is a chimera when the truth is supposed to be the truth in which to exist.

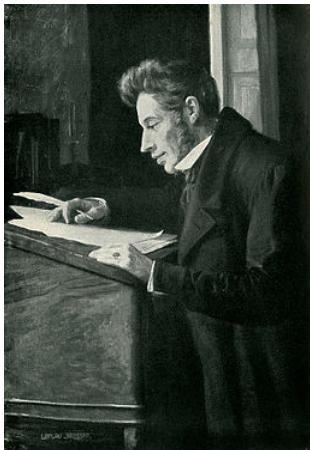
Having to exist with the help of the guidance of pure thinking is like having to travel in Denmark with a small map of Europe on which Denmark is no larger than a steel pen-point, indeed, even more impossible. The youth's admiration, his enthusiasm, and his limitless confidence in Hegel are precisely the satire on Hegel. This would have been discerned long ago if pure thinking had not maintained itself with the aid of a reputation that impresses people, so that they dare not say anything except that it is superb, that they have understood it—although in a certain sense that it is indeed

impossible, since no one can be led by this philosophy to understand himself, which is certainly an absolute condition for all other understanding.

Socrates has rather ironically said that he did not know for sure whether he was a human being or something else, but in the confessional a Hegelian can say with all solemnity: I do not know whether I am a human being—but I have understood the system.

I prefer to say: I know that I am a human being, and I know that I have not understood the system. And when I have said that very directly, I shall add that if any of our Hegelians want to take me into hand and assist me to an understanding of the system, nothing will stand in the way from my side. In order that I can learn all the more, I shall try hard to be as obtuse as possible, so as not to have, if possible, a single presupposition except my ignorance. And in order to be sure of learning something, I shall try hard to be as indifferent as possible to all charges of being unscientific and unscholarly. **Existing, if this is to be understood as just any sort of existing, cannot be done without passion.”**

Soren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, Hong p. 310-311



This concept of “**Existing, if this is to be understood as just any sort of existing, cannot be done without passion”** is critical to understand Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard attempts to use the story of Abraham to show that **there is a goal higher than that of ethics and that faith cannot be explained by Hegelian ethics**. His work can be read as a challenge to the Hegelian notion that a human being’s ultimate purpose is to fulfill ethical demands. He is more concerned about the inner search and fight for faith than the outer world of action and ethical behavior.

“Let us speak further about the wish and thereby about sufferings. Discussion of sufferings can always be beneficial if it addresses not only the self-willfulness of the sorrow but, if possible, addresses the sorrowing person for his upbuilding. It is a legitimate and sympathetic act to dwell properly on the suffering, lest the suffering person become impatient over our superficial discussion in which he does not recognize his suffering, lest he for that reason impatiently thrust aside consolation and be strengthened in double-mindedness. It certainly is one thing to go out into life with the wish when what is wished becomes the deed and the task; it is something else to go out into life away from the wish.

Abraham had to leave his ancestral home an emigrate to an alien nation, where nothing reminded him of what he loved – indeed, sometimes it is no doubt a consolation that nothing calls to mind what one wishes to forget, but it is a bitter consolation for the person who is full of longing. Thus a person can also have a wish that for him contains everything, so that in the hour of the separation, **when the pilgrimage begins, it is as if he were emigrating to a foreign country where nothing but the contrast reminds him, by the loss, of what he wished; it can seem to him as if he were emigrating to a foreign country even if he remains at home perhaps in the same locality** – by losing the wish just as among strangers, so that to take leave of the wish seems to him harder and more crucial than to take leave of his senses.

|

Apart from this wish, even if he still does not move from the spot, his life’s troublesome way is perhaps spent in useless sufferings, for we are speaking of those who suffer essentially, not of those who have the consolation that their sufferings are for the benefit of a good cause, for the benefit of others. It was bound to be thus – the journey to the foreign country was not long; in one moment he was there, there in that strange country where the suffering ones



meet, but not those who have ceased to grieve, not those whose tears eternity cannot wipe away, for as an old devotional book so simply and movingly says, “How can God dry your tears in the next world if you have not wept?” Perhaps someone else comes in a different way, but to the same place.”

Søren Kierkegaard, *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits*, Hong 1993 p. 102-103

Kierkegaard would argue that a divine command from God transcends ethics. This means that God does not create human morality, that it is up to individuals to create morals and values. A religious person must be prepared for a command from God that would take precedence over all moral and even rational obligations. Kierkegaard called this event a **teleological suspension of the ethical**. Abraham, in the story, chose to obey God unconditionally and take his son, Isaac, up onto the mountain to sacrifice Isaac to God at God’s command, and was rewarded for this obedience and trust with his son’s life, given an alternative sacrifice and earned the title of *Father of Faith*. Abraham transcended ethics and leaped into faith.

But there is no good *logical* argument one can make to claim that morality ought to be or can be suspended in any given circumstance, or even ever. The choice to obey God unconditionally is a true existential ‘either/or’ decision faced by every individual. Either one chooses to live in faith (the religious stage) or to live ethically (the ethical stage). He clearly advocates for choosing the Religious Stage of living as the ultimate goal.



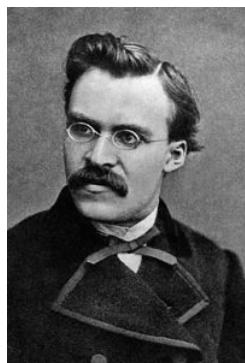
Kierkegaard, Søren . *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*. Translated by Edna H Hong and Howard V Hong, Princeton University Press, 1992.

Kierkegaard, Søren. *Fear and Trembling*. Edited and translated by Howard V and Edna H Hong, Princeton University Press, 1983

Kierkegaard, Søren. *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits*. Translated by Edna H Hong and Howard V Hong, Princeton University Press, 1990.

7.7: Friedrich Nietzsche

BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL



Translated by Helen Zimmern

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, 1844 –1900 CE, was a German philosopher, cultural critic, Latin and Greek scholar whose work has had a strong influence on Western philosophy. He began his career as a classical philologist before turning to philosophy. He became the youngest person ever to hold the Chair of Classical Philology at the University of Basel in 1869 at the age of 24. He resigned in 1879 due to health problems, and he completed much of his writing after that. In 1889, at age 44, he suffered a collapse and afterwards, a complete loss of his mental health. He lived his remaining years in the care of his mother until her death in 1897, and then with his sister Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche.

Nietzsche died of complications from syphilis in 1900. After his death his sister took control of her brother's work. She rewrote Nietzsche's unpublished writings to fit her own stridently German nationalist ideology while trying to contradict or muddy Nietzsche's stated opinions, which opposed antisemitism and nationalism. Through her reworked editions, Nietzsche's work became associated with fascism and the Nazi ideals. 20th century scholars fought against this interpretation of his work and corrected editions of his writings were published.

Most of us only run into Nietzsche when studying the Holocaust (it's all his sister's fault) or through Hollywood. So trying starting here:

Thus Didn't Speke Zarathustra

Excerpt from CHAPTER IX. WHAT IS NOBLE?



In a tour through the many finer and coarser moralities which have hitherto prevailed or still prevail on the earth, I found certain traits recurring regularly together, and connected with one another, until finally two primary types revealed themselves to me, and a radical distinction was brought to light.

There is MASTER-MORALITY and SLAVE-MORALITY,—I would at once add, however, that in all higher and mixed civilizations, there are also attempts at the reconciliation of the two moralities, but one finds still oftener the confusion and mutual misunderstanding of them, indeed sometimes their close juxtaposition—even in the same man, within one soul. The distinctions of moral values have either originated in a ruling caste, pleasantly conscious of being different from the ruled—or among the ruled

class, the slaves and dependents of all sorts. In the first case, when it is the rulers who determine the conception “good,” it is the exalted, proud disposition which is regarded as the distinguishing feature, and that which determines the order of rank.

The noble type of man separates from himself the beings in whom the opposite of this exalted, proud disposition displays itself he despises them. Let it at once be noted that in this first kind of morality the antithesis “good” and “bad” means practically the same as “noble” and “despicable”—the antithesis “good” and “EVIL” is of a different origin. The cowardly, the timid, the insignificant, and those thinking merely of narrow utility are despised; moreover, also, the distrustful, with their constrained glances, the self-abasing, the dog-like kind of men who let themselves be abused, the mendicant flatterers, and above all the liars: —it is a fundamental belief of all aristocrats that the common people are untruthful. “We truthful ones”—the nobility in ancient Greece called themselves. It is obvious that everywhere the designations of moral value were at first applied to MEN; and were only derivatively and at a later period applied to ACTIONS; it is a gross mistake, therefore, when historians of morals start with questions like, “Why have sympathetic actions been praised?”

The noble type of man regards HIMSELF as a determiner of values; he does not require to be approved of; he passes the



judgment: “What is injurious to me is injurious in itself;” he knows that it is he himself only who confers honor on things; he is a CREATOR OF VALUES. He honors whatever he recognizes in himself: such morality equals self-glorification. In the foreground there is the feeling of plenitude, of power, which seeks to overflow, the happiness of high tension, the consciousness of a wealth which would fain give and bestow:—the noble man also helps the unfortunate, but not—or scarcely—out of pity, but rather from an impulse generated by the super-abundance of power. The noble man honors in himself the powerful one, him also who has power over himself, who knows how to speak and how to keep silence, who takes pleasure in subjecting himself to severity and hardness, and has reverence for all that is severe and hard. “Wotan placed a hard heart in my breast,” says an old Scandinavian Saga: it is thus rightly expressed from the soul of a proud Viking. Such a type of man is even proud of not being made for sympathy; the hero of the Saga therefore adds warningly: “He who has not a hard heart when young, will never have one.” The noble and brave who think thus are the furthest removed from the morality which sees precisely in sympathy, or in acting for the good of others, or in DESINTERESSEMENT, the characteristic of the moral; faith in oneself, pride in oneself, a radical enmity and irony towards “selflessness,” belong as definitely to noble morality, as do a careless scorn and precaution in presence of sympathy and the “warm heart.”

—It is the powerful who KNOW how to honor, it is their art, their domain for invention. The profound reverence for age and for tradition—all law rests on this double reverence,—the belief and prejudice in favor of ancestors and unfavorable to newcomers, is typical in the morality of the powerful; and if, reversely, men of “modern ideas” believe almost instinctively in “progress” and the “future,” and are more and more lacking in respect for old age, the ignoble origin of these “ideas” has complacently betrayed itself thereby. A morality of the ruling class, however, is more especially foreign and irritating to present-day taste in the sternness of its principle that one has duties only to one’s equals; that one may act towards beings of a lower rank, towards all that is foreign, just as seems good to one, or “as the heart desires,” and in any case “beyond good and evil”: it is here that sympathy and similar sentiments can have a place. The ability and obligation to exercise prolonged gratitude and prolonged revenge—both only within the circle of equals,—artfulness in retaliation, RAFFINEMENT of the idea in friendship, a certain necessity to have enemies (as outlets for the emotions of envy, quarrelsomeness, arrogance—in fact, in order to be a good FRIEND): all these are typical characteristics of the noble morality, which, as has been pointed out, is not the morality of “modern ideas,” and is therefore at present difficult to realize, and also to unearth and disclose.

—THE NOBLE SOUL HAS REVERENCE FOR ITSELF.—Friedrich Nietzsche

—It is otherwise with the second type of morality, SLAVE-MORALITY. Supposing that the abused, the oppressed, the suffering, the unemancipated, the weary, and those uncertain of themselves should moralize, what will be the common element in

their moral estimates? Probably a pessimistic suspicion with regard to the entire situation of man will find expression, perhaps a condemnation of man, together with his situation.

The slave has an unfavorable eye for the virtues of the powerful; he has a skepticism and distrust, a REFINEMENT of distrust of everything “good” that is there honored—he would fain persuade himself that the very happiness there is not genuine. On the other hand, THOSE qualities which serve to alleviate the existence of sufferers are brought into prominence and flooded with light; it is here that sympathy, the kind, helping hand, the warm heart, patience, diligence, humility, and friendliness attain to honor; for here these are the most useful qualities, and almost the only means of supporting the burden of existence.

Slave-morality is essentially the morality of utility. Here is the seat of the origin of the famous antithesis “good” and “evil”:—power and dangerousness are assumed to reside in the evil, a certain dreadfulness, subtlety, and strength, which do not admit of being despised. According to slave-morality, therefore, the “evil” man arouses fear; according to master-morality, it is precisely the “good” man who arouses fear and seeks to arouse it, while the bad man is regarded as the despicable being. The contrast attains its maximum when, in accordance with the logical consequences of slave-morality, a shade of depreciation—it may be slight and well-intentioned—at last attaches itself to the “good” man of this morality; because, according to the servile mode of thought, the good man must in any case be the SAFE man: he is good-natured, easily deceived, perhaps a little stupid, un bonhomme.

Key Takeaway

Everywhere that slave-morality gains the ascendancy, language shows a tendency to approximate the significations of the words “good” and “stupid.”—A last fundamental difference: the desire for FREEDOM, the instinct for happiness and the refinements of the feeling of liberty belong as necessarily to slave-morals and morality, as artifice and enthusiasm in reverence and devotion are the regular symptoms of an aristocratic mode of thinking and estimating.—**Hence we can understand without further detail why love AS A PASSION—it is our European specialty—must absolutely be of noble origin;** as is well known, its invention is due to the Provencal poet-cavaliers, those brilliant, ingenious men of the “gai saber,” to whom Europe owes so much, and almost owes itself.

Everywhere that slave-morality gains the ascendancy, language shows a tendency to approximate the significations of the words “good” and “stupid.”—A last fundamental difference: the desire for FREEDOM, the instinct for happiness and the refinements of the feeling of liberty belong as necessarily to slave-morals and morality, as artifice and enthusiasm in reverence and devotion are the regular symptoms of an aristocratic mode of thinking and estimating.—Hence we can understand without further detail why love AS A PASSION—it is our European specialty—must absolutely be of noble origin; as is well known, its invention is due to the Provencal poet-cavaliers, those brilliant, ingenious men of the “gai saber,” to whom Europe owes so much, and almost owes itself.

...At the risk of displeasing innocent ears, I submit that egoism belongs to the essence of a noble soul, I mean the unalterable belief that to a being such as “we,” other beings must naturally be in subjection, and have to sacrifice themselves. The noble soul accepts the fact of his egoism without question, and also without consciousness of harshness, constraint, or arbitrariness therein, but rather as something that may have its basis in the primary law of things:—if he sought a designation for it he would say: “It is justice itself.”



He acknowledges under certain circumstances, which made him hesitate at first, that there are other equally privileged ones; as soon as he has settled this question of rank, he moves among those equals and equally privileged ones with the same assurance, as regards modesty and delicate respect, which he enjoys in intercourse with himself—in accordance with an innate heavenly mechanism which all the stars understand. It is an ADDITIONAL instance of his egoism, this artfulness and self-limitation in intercourse with his equals—every star is a similar egoist; he honors HIMSELF in them, and in the rights which he concedes to them, he has no doubt that the exchange of honors and rights, as the ESSENCE of all intercourse, belongs

also to the natural condition of things. The noble soul gives as he takes, prompted by the passionate and sensitive instinct of requital, which is at the root of his nature. The notion of “favor” has, INTER PARES, neither significance nor good repute; there may be a sublime way of letting gifts as it were light upon one from above, and of drinking them thirstily like dew-drops; but for those arts and displays the noble soul has no aptitude. His egoism hinders him here: in general, he looks “aloft” unwillingly—he looks either FORWARD, horizontally and deliberately, or downwards—HE KNOWS THAT HE IS ON A HEIGHT.

...What is noble? What does the word “noble” still mean for us nowadays? How does the noble man betray himself, how is he recognized under this heavy overcast sky of the commencing plebeianism, by which everything is rendered opaque and leaden?—It is not his actions which establish his claim—actions are always ambiguous, always inscrutable; neither is it his “works.” One finds nowadays among artists and scholars plenty of those who betray by their works that a profound longing for nobleness impels them; but this very NEED of nobleness is radically different from the needs of the noble soul itself, and is in fact the eloquent and dangerous sign of the lack thereof.

It is not the works, but the BELIEF which is here decisive and determines the order of rank—to employ once more an old religious formula with a new and deeper meaning—it is some fundamental certainty which a noble soul has about itself, something which is not to be sought, is not to be found, and perhaps, also, is not to be lost.—**THE NOBLE SOUL HAS REVERENCE FOR ITSELF.**—



The Project Gutenberg EBook of Beyond Good and Evil, by Friedrich Nietzsche

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org

Title: Beyond Good and Evil

Author: Friedrich Nietzsche

Translator: Helen Zimmern

Release Date: December 7, 2009 [EBook #4363]

Last Updated: February 4, 2013

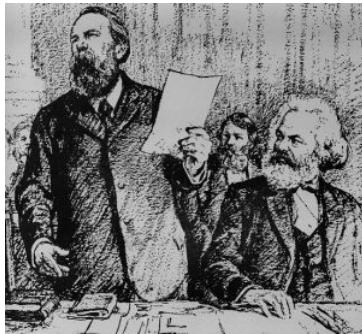
Language: English

Contributions and Attributions

This page is licensed under a [CC BY-NC-SA](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Jody Ondich. Page content has been edited and updated to conform to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform; a detailed versioning history of the edits to source content is available upon request.

7.8: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

The Communist Manifesto



Friedrich Engels, 1820 –1895 CE, was a German philosopher, social scientist and journalist. **Karl Marx**, 1818 –1883 CE, was a German philosopher, economist, historian, political theorist, and revolutionary socialist. Born to a middle-class family, Marx studied law and philosophy. Due to his political publications Marx became stateless and lived in exile in London, where he continued to develop his thought in collaboration with German thinker Friedrich Engels. Marx and Engels founded Marxist theory and in 1845 published *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, based on personal observations and research in Manchester, England. In 1848 the co-authored *The Communist Manifesto*. Later, Engels supported Marx financially to do research and write *Das Kapital*. With Marx's death in 1883, Engels edited the second and third volumes of the work. Additionally, Engels organised Marx's notes on the *Theories of Surplus Value*, which he later published as the "fourth volume" of *Das Capital*.

You have a nice chance to listen to any or all of this material being read, if you prefer!

This audio reading of The Communist Manifesto is read by Jon Ingram

Contents

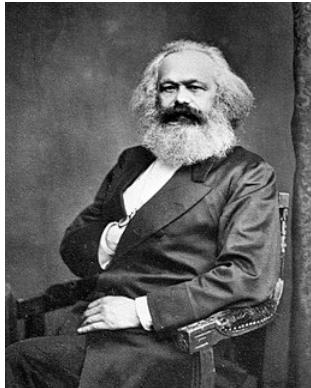
- Section 1: Bourgeois and Proletarians – 00:39:48 Read by: Jon Ingram
 - [23905-01.mp3](#)
 - [23905-01.ogg](#)
 - [23905-01.m4b](#)
 - [23905-01.spx](#)
- Section 2: Proletarians and Communists – 00:27:24 Read by: Jon Ingram
 - [23905-02.mp3](#)
 - [23905-02.ogg](#)
 - [23905-02.m4b](#)
 - [23905-02.spx](#)
- Section 3: Socialist and Communist Literature – 00:29:41 Read by: Jon Ingram
 - [23905-03.mp3](#)
 - [23905-03.ogg](#)
 - [23905-03.m4b](#)
 - [23905-03.spx](#)

Exercises

Most of us don't really understand the concepts in Marxism. We hear it, in the West, as a dirty word! So take a little time to watch/listen to this BBC documentary on [Masters of Money](#)

Chapter I. Bourgeois and Proletarians

"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.



Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome we have patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs; in almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradations.

The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinct feature: it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other — Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burghers of the earliest towns. From these burgesses the first elements of the bourgeoisie were developed.

Exercise

What, exactly, do these two men really mean by “the bourgeoisie”? Here is a nice, simple definition:

What is the Bourgeoisie?

The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie. The East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonisation of America, trade with the colonies, the increase in the means of exchange and in commodities generally, gave to commerce, to navigation, to industry, an impulse never before known, and thereby, to the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society, a rapid development. The feudal system of industry, in which industrial production was monopolised by closed guilds, now no longer sufficed for the growing wants of the new markets. The manufacturing system took its place. The guild-masters were pushed on one side by the manufacturing middle class; division of labour between the different corporate guilds vanished in the face of division of labour in each single workshop.

Meantime the markets kept ever growing, the demand ever rising. Even manufacturer no longer sufficed. Thereupon, steam and machinery revolutionised industrial production. The place of manufacture was taken by the giant, Modern Industry; the place of the industrial middle class by industrial millionaires, the leaders of the whole industrial armies, the modern bourgeois. Modern industry has established the world market, for which the discovery of America paved the way. This market has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, to communication by land. This development has, in its turn, reacted on the extension of industry; and in proportion as industry, commerce, navigation, railways extended, in the same proportion the bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital, and pushed into the background every class handed down from the Middle Ages. We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange.

Exercise

It might be useful for you to listen to this one Ted Talk conversation about defining Capitalism, which is important to understand when reading Marx and Engels:



Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class. An oppressed class under the sway of the feudal nobility, an armed and self-governing association in the medieval commune(4): here independent urban republic (as in Italy and Germany); there taxable “third estate” of the monarchy (as in France); afterwards, in the period of manufacturing proper, serving either the semi-feudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, cornerstone of the great monarchies in general, the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part.



The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his “natural superiors”, and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous “cash payment”. It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom — Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage labourers. The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation. The bourgeoisie has disclosed how it came to pass that the brutal display of vigour in the Middle Ages, which reactionaries so much admire, found its fitting complement in the most slothful indolence. It has been the first to show what man’s activity can bring about. It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals; it has conducted expeditions that put in the shade all former Exodus of nations and crusades.



The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production,

and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the entire surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connexions everywhere. The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of Reactionists, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilised nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature.

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of



communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilisation. The cheap prices of commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilisation into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.

The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of the towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life. Just as it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilised ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois, the East on the West.

The bourgeoisie keeps more and more doing away with the scattered state of the population, of the means of production, and of property. It has agglomerated population, centralised the means of production, and has concentrated property in a few hands. The necessary consequence of this was political centralisation. Independent, or but loosely connected provinces, with separate interests, laws, governments, and systems of taxation, became lumped together into one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class-interest, one frontier, and one customs-tariff.

The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalisation of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground — what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour?

We see then: the means of production and of exchange, on whose foundation the bourgeoisie built itself up, were generated in feudal society. At a certain stage in the development of these means of production and of exchange, the conditions under which feudal society produced and exchanged, the feudal organisation of agriculture and manufacturing industry, in one word, the feudal relations of property became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces; they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder; they were burst asunder. Into their place stepped free competition, accompanied by a social and political constitution adapted in it, and the economic and political sway of the bourgeois class.

A similar movement is going on before our own eyes. Modern bourgeois society, with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule. It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put the existence of the entire bourgeois society on its trial, each time more threateningly. In these crises, a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In these crises, there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity — the epidemic of over-production. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation, had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed; and why? Because there is too much civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce. The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary, they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters, they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property. The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented.

The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself. But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons — the modern working class — the proletarians. In proportion as the bourgeoisie, i.e., capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed — a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital. These labourers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market.

Key Takeaway

What, exactly, is the Proletariat?

Definition of proletariat

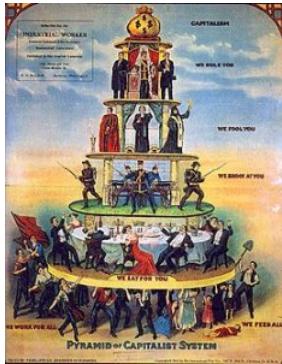
1 : the laboring class; especially : the class of industrial workers who lack their own means of production and hence sell their labor to live

2 : the lowest social or economic class of a community

Owing to the extensive use of machinery, and to the division of labour, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him. Hence, the cost of production of a workman is restricted, almost entirely, to the means of subsistence that he requires for maintenance, and for the propagation of his race. But the price of a commodity, and therefore also of labour, is equal to its cost of production.



In proportion, therefore, as the repulsiveness of the work increases, the wage decreases. Nay more, in proportion as the use of machinery and division of labour increases, in the same proportion the burden of toil also increases, whether by prolongation of the working hours, by the increase of the work exacted in a given time or by increased speed of machinery, etc.



Modern Industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist.

Masses of labourers, crowded into the factory, are organised like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants. Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the overseer, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is.

The less the skill and exertion of strength implied in manual labour, in other words, the more modern industry becomes developed, the more is the labour of men superseded by that of women. Differences of age and sex have no longer any distinctive social validity for the working class. All are instruments of labour, more or less expensive to use, according to their age and sex. No sooner is the exploitation of the labourer by the manufacturer, so far, at an end, that he receives his wages in cash, than he is set upon by the other portions of the bourgeoisie, the landlord, the shopkeeper, the pawnbroker, etc. The lower strata of the middle class — the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants — all these sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which Modern Industry is carried on, and is swamped in the competition with the large capitalists, partly because their specialised skill is rendered worthless by new methods of production. Thus the proletariat is recruited from all classes of the population.

The proletariat goes through various stages of development. With its birth begins its struggle with the bourgeoisie. At first the contest is carried on by individual labourers, then by the workpeople of a factory, then by the operative of one trade, in one locality, against the individual bourgeois who directly exploits them. They direct their attacks not against the bourgeois conditions of production, but against the instruments of production themselves; they destroy imported wares that compete with their labour, they smash to pieces machinery, they set factories ablaze, they seek to restore by force the vanished status of the workman of the Middle Ages.



At this stage, the labourers still form an incoherent mass scattered over the whole country,

and broken up by their mutual competition. If anywhere they unite to form more compact bodies, this is not yet the consequence of their own active union, but of the union of the bourgeoisie, which class, in order to attain its own political ends, is compelled to set the whole proletariat in motion, and is moreover yet, for a time, able to do so. At this stage, therefore, the proletarians do not fight their enemies, but the enemies of their enemies, the remnants of absolute monarchy, the landowners, the non-industrial bourgeois, the petty bourgeois. Thus, the whole historical movement is concentrated in the hands of the bourgeoisie; every victory so obtained is a victory for the bourgeoisie.

But with the development of industry, the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more. The various interests and conditions of life within the ranks of the proletariat are more and more equalised, in proportion as machinery obliterates all distinctions of labour, and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level. The growing competition among the bourgeois, and the resulting commercial crises, make the wages of the workers ever more fluctuating. The increasing improvement of machinery, ever more rapidly developing, makes their livelihood more and more precarious; the collisions between individual workmen and individual bourgeois take more and more the character of collisions between two classes. Thereupon, the workers begin to form combinations (Trades' Unions) against the bourgeois; they club together in order to keep up the rate of wages; they found permanent associations in order to make provision beforehand for these occasional revolts. Here and there, the contest breaks out into riots.

Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever expanding union of the workers. This union is helped on by the improved means of communication that are created by modern industry, and that place the workers of different localities in contact with one another. It was just this contact that was needed to centralise the numerous local struggles, all of the same character, into one national struggle between classes. But every class struggle is a political struggle. And that union, to attain which the burghers of the Middle Ages, with their miserable highways, required centuries, the modern proletarian, thanks to railways, achieve in a few years.

This organisation of the proletarians into a class, and, consequently into a political party, is continually being upset



again **by the competition between the workers themselves.** But it ever rises up again, stronger, firmer, mightier. It compels legislative recognition of particular interests of the workers, by taking advantage of the divisions among the bourgeoisie itself. Thus, the ten-hours' bill in England was carried. Altogether collisions between the classes of the old society further, in many ways, the course of development of the proletariat. The bourgeoisie finds itself involved in a constant battle. At first with the aristocracy; later on, with those portions of the bourgeoisie itself, whose interests have become antagonistic to the progress of industry; at all time with the bourgeoisie of foreign countries. In all these battles, it sees itself compelled to appeal to the proletariat, to ask for help, and thus, to drag it into the political arena. The bourgeoisie itself, therefore, supplies the proletariat with its own elements of political and general education, in other words, it furnishes the proletariat with weapons for fighting the bourgeoisie. Further, as we have already seen, entire sections of the ruling class are, by the advance of industry, precipitated into the proletariat, or are at least threatened in their conditions of existence. These also supply the proletariat with fresh elements of enlightenment and progress.

Finally, in times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour, the progress of dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact within the whole range of old society, assumes such a violent, glaring character, that a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands. Just as, therefore, at an earlier period, a section of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie, so now a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole.

Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product. The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance, they are revolutionary, they are only so in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat; they thus defend not their present, but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat. The "dangerous class", [lumpenproletariat] the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of the

old society, may, here and there, be swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution; its conditions of life, however, prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue.

In the condition of the proletariat, those of old society at large are already virtually swamped. The proletarian is without property; his relation to his wife and children has no longer anything in common with the bourgeois family relations; modern industry labour, modern subjection to capital, the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has stripped him of every trace of national character. Law, morality, religion, are to him so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests. All the preceding classes that got the upper hand sought to fortify their already acquired status by subjecting society at large to their conditions of appropriation. The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation. They have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property.

Exercise

You might find it helpful to listen to : [Karl Marx and Conflict Theory](#)

All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air. Though not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle. The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie. In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society, up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat.

Hitherto, every form of society has been based, as we have already seen, on the antagonism of oppressing and oppressed classes. But in order to oppress a class, certain conditions must be assured to it under which it can, at least, continue its slavish existence. The serf, in the period of serfdom, raised himself to membership in the commune, just as the petty bourgeois, under the yoke of the feudal absolutism, managed to develop into a bourgeois. The modern labourer, on the contrary, instead of rising with the process of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth. And here it becomes evident, that the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society, and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an over-riding law. It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him. Society can no longer live under this bourgeoisie, in other words, its existence is no longer compatible with society.

The essential conditions for the existence and for the sway of the bourgeois class is the formation and augmentation of capital; the condition for capital is wage-labour. Wage-labour rests exclusively on competition between the labourers. The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by the revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.

Example

Here is an interview with historian Gareth Stedman Jones^[1] :

[Karl Marx Still Matters: what the modern left can learn from the philosopher](#)



Written: Late 1847;

First Published: February 1848;



Source: Marx/Engels Selected Works, Vol. One,

Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969, pp. 98-137;

Translated: Samuel Moore in cooperation with Frederick Engels, 1888;

Transcription/Markup: Zodiac and Brian Baggins;

Proofed: and corrected against 1888 English Edition by Andy Blunden 2004;

Copyright: Marx/Engels Internet Archive (marxists.org) 1987, 2000.

Permission is granted to copy and/or distribute this document under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License](#).



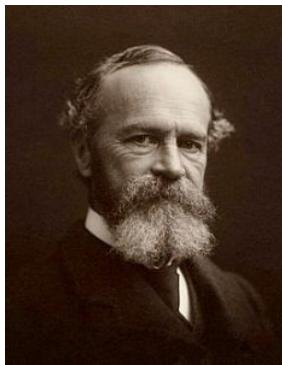
-
1. Fellow of the British Academy (born 17 December 1942) is a British academic and historian. He is Professor of the History of Ideas at Queen Mary, University of London. [←](#)



7.9: William James

PRAGMATISM

A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking



William James 1842 – 1910 CE, American philosopher and psychologist, and the first professor in America to offer a psychology class. James is believed by some to be one of the most influential philosophers that the United States has ever produced, while others have labeled him the “Father of American psychology”. James is associated with the philosophical school known as pragmatism.

The lectures that follow were delivered at the Lowell Institute in Boston in November and December, 1906, and in January, 1907, at Columbia University, in New York. We have excerpts here.

Lecture I. — The Present Dilemma in Philosophy

In the preface to that admirable collection of essays of his called ‘Heretics,’ Mr. Chesterton writes these words:

“There are some people—and I am one of them—who think that the most practical and important thing about a man is still his view of the universe. We think that for a landlady considering a lodger, it is important to know his income, but still more important to know his philosophy. We think that for a general about to fight an enemy, it is important to know the enemy’s numbers, but still more important to know the enemy’s philosophy. We think the question is not whether the theory of the cosmos affects matters, but whether, in the long run, anything else affects them.”

I think with Mr. Chesterton in this matter. I know that you, ladies and gentlemen, have a philosophy, each and all of you, and that the most interesting and important thing about you is the way in which it determines the perspective in your several worlds. You know the same of me. And yet I confess to a certain tremor at the audacity of the enterprise which I am about to begin.

For the philosophy which is so important in each of us is not a technical matter; it is our more or less dumb sense of what life honestly and deeply means.

It is only partly got from books; it is our individual way of just seeing and feeling the total push and pressure of the cosmos. I have no right to assume that many of you are students of the cosmos in the class-room sense, yet here I stand desirous of interesting you in a philosophy which to no small extent has to be technically treated. I wish to fill you with sympathy with a contemporaneous tendency in which I profoundly believe, and yet I have to talk like a professor to you who are not students.

Whatever universe a professor believes in must at any rate be a universe that lends itself to lengthy discourse. A universe definable in two sentences is something for which the professorial intellect has no use. No faith in anything of that cheap kind! I have heard friends and colleagues try to popularize philosophy in this very hall, but they soon grew dry, and then technical, and the results were only partially encouraging. So my enterprise is a bold one. The founder of pragmatism himself recently gave a course of lectures at the Lowell Institute with that very word in its title-flashes of brilliant light relieved against Cimmerian darkness! None of us, I fancy, understood ALL that he said—yet here I stand, making a very similar venture.

Example

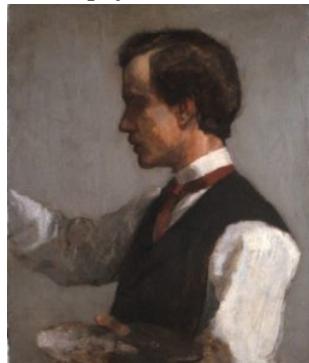
The obligations of belief—we have the responsibilities of our ideas and this is called Epistemology. CK Clifford and William James had some arguments about this:

Anti-Vaxxers, Conspiracy Theories & Epistemic Responsibility

I risk it because the very lectures I speak of DREW—they brought good audiences. There is, it must be confessed, a curious fascination in hearing deep things talked about, even though neither we nor the disputants understand them. We get the problematic thrill, we feel the presence of the vastness. Let a controversy begin in a smoking-room anywhere, about free-will or God's omniscience, or good and evil, and see how everyone in the place pricks up his ears. Philosophy's results concern us all most vitally, and philosophy's queerest arguments tickle agreeably our sense of subtlety and ingenuity.

Believing in philosophy myself devoutly, and believing also that a kind of new dawn is breaking upon us philosophers, I feel impelled, per *fas aut nefas*, to try to impart to you some news of the situation.

Philosophy is at once the most sublime and the most trivial of human pursuits. It works in the minutest



crannies and it opens out the widest vistas. It 'bakes no bread,' as has been said, but it can inspire our souls with courage; and repugnant as its manners, its doubting and challenging, its quibbling and dialectics, often are to common people, no one of us can get along without the far-flashing beams of light it sends over the world's perspectives. These illuminations at least, and the contrast-effects of darkness and mystery that accompany them, give to what it says an interest that is much more than professional.

The history of philosophy is to a great extent that of a certain clash of human temperaments. Undignified as such a treatment may seem to some of my colleagues, I shall have to take account of this clash and explain a good many of the divergencies of philosophers by it. Of whatever temperament a professional philosopher is, he tries when philosophizing to sink the fact of his temperament. Temperament is no conventionally recognized reason, so he urges impersonal reasons only for his conclusions. Yet his temperament really gives him a stronger bias than any of his more strictly objective premises. It loads the evidence for him one way or the other, making for a more sentimental or a more hard-hearted view of the universe, just as this fact or that principle would. He trusts his temperament. Wanting a universe that suits it, he believes in any representation of the universe that does suit it. He feels men of opposite temper to be out of key with the world's character, and in his heart considers them incompetent and 'not in it,' in the philosophic business, even tho they may far excel him in dialectical ability.

Yet in the forum he can make no claim, on the bare ground of his temperament, to superior discernment or authority. There arises thus a certain insincerity in our philosophic discussions: the potenteest of all our premises is never mentioned. I am sure it would contribute to clearness if in these lectures we should break this rule and mention it, and I accordingly feel free to do so.

Of course I am talking here of very positively marked men, men of radical idiosyncracy, who have set their stamp and likeness on philosophy and figure in its history. Plato, Locke, Hegel, Spencer, are such temperamental thinkers. Most of us have, of course, no very definite intellectual temperament, we are a mixture of opposite ingredients, each one present very moderately. We hardly know our own preferences in abstract matters; some of us are easily talked out of them, and end by following the fashion or taking up with the beliefs of the most impressive philosopher in our neighborhood, whoever he may be.



But the one thing that has COUNTED so far in philosophy is that a man should see things, see them straight in his own peculiar way, and be dissatisfied with any opposite way of seeing them. There is no reason to suppose that this strong temperamental vision is from now onward to count no longer in the history of man's beliefs.

Now the particular difference of temperament that I have in mind in making these remarks is one that has counted in literature, art, government and manners as well as in philosophy. In manners we find formalists and free-and-easy persons. In government, authoritarians and anarchists. In literature, purists or academicals, and realists. In art, classics and romantics. You recognize these contrasts as familiar; well, in philosophy we have a very similar contrast expressed in the pair of terms 'rationalist' and 'empiricist,' 'empiricist' meaning your lover of facts in all their crude variety, 'rationalist' meaning your devotee to abstract and eternal principles. No one can live an hour without both facts and principles, so it is a difference rather of emphasis; yet it breeds antipathies of the most pungent character between those who lay the emphasis differently; and we shall find it extraordinarily convenient to express a certain contrast in men's ways of taking their universe, by talking of the 'empiricist' and of the 'rationalist' temper. These terms make the contrast simple and massive.

More simple and massive than are usually the men of whom the terms are predicated. For every sort of permutation and combination is possible in human nature; and if I now proceed to define more fully what I have in mind when I speak of rationalists and empiricists, by adding to each of those titles some secondary qualifying characteristics, I beg you to regard my conduct as to a certain extent arbitrary. I select types of combination that nature offers very frequently, but by no means uniformly, and I select them solely for their convenience in helping me to my ulterior purpose of characterizing pragmatism. Historically we find the terms 'intellectualism' and 'sensationalism' used as synonyms of 'rationalism' and 'empiricism.' Well, nature seems to combine most frequently with intellectualism an idealistic and optimistic tendency. Empiricists on the other hand are not uncommonly materialistic, and their optimism is apt to be decidedly conditional and tremulous. Rationalism is always monistic. It starts from wholes and universals, and makes much of the unity of things. Empiricism starts from the parts, and makes of the whole a collection—is not averse therefore to calling itself pluralistic. Rationalism usually considers itself more religious than empiricism, but there is much to say about this claim, so I merely mention it. It is a true claim when the individual rationalist is what is called a man of feeling, and when the individual empiricist prides himself on being hard-headed. In that case the rationalist will usually also be in favor of what is called free-will, and the empiricist will be a fatalist—I use the terms most popularly current. The rationalist finally will be of dogmatic temper in his affirmations, while the empiricist may be more sceptical and open to discussion.

Key Takeaways

THE TENDER-MINDED

Rationalistic (going by 'principles'), Intellectualistic, Idealistic, Optimistic, Religious, Free-willist, Monistic, Dogmatical.

THE TOUGH-MINDED

Empiricist (going by 'facts'), Sensationalistic, Materialistic, Pessimistic, Irreligious, Fatalistic, Pluralistic, Sceptical.

Pray postpone for a moment the question whether the two contrasted mixtures which I have written down are each inwardly coherent and self-consistent or not—I shall very soon have a good deal to say on that point. It suffices for our immediate purpose that tender-minded and tough-minded people, characterized as I have written them down, do both exist.

Each of you probably knows some well-marked example of each type, and you know what each example thinks of the example on the other side of the line. They have a low opinion of each other. Their antagonism, whenever as individuals their temperaments have been intense, has formed in all ages a part of the philosophic atmosphere of the time. It forms a part of the philosophic atmosphere to-day. The tough think of the tender as sentimentalists and soft-heads. The tender feel the tough to be

unrefined, callous, or brutal. Their mutual reaction is very much like that that takes place when Bostonian tourists mingle with a population like that of Cripple Creek. Each type believes the other to be inferior to itself; but disdain in the one case is mingled with amusement, in the other it has a dash of fear.

Now, as I have already insisted, few of us are tender-foot Bostonians pure and simple, and few are typical Rocky Mountain toughs, in philosophy. Most of us have a hankering for the good things on both sides of the line. Facts are good, of course—give us lots of facts. Principles are good—give us plenty of principles. The world is indubitably one if you look at it in one way, but as indubitably is it many, if you look at it in another. It is both one and many—let us adopt a sort of pluralistic monism. Everything of course is necessarily determined, and yet of course our wills are free: a sort of free-will determinism is the true philosophy. The evil of the parts is undeniable; but the whole can't be evil: so practical pessimism may be combined with metaphysical optimism. And so forth—your ordinary philosophic layman never being a radical, never straightening out his system, but living vaguely in one plausible compartment of it or another to suit the temptations of successive hours.

But some of us are more than mere laymen in philosophy. We are worthy of the name of amateur athletes, and are vexed by too much inconsistency and vacillation in our creed. We cannot preserve a good intellectual conscience so long as we keep mixing incompatibles from opposite sides of the line.

And now I come to the first positively important point which I wish to make. Never were as many men of a decidedly empiricist proclivity in existence as there are at the present day. Our children, one may say, are almost born scientific. But our esteem for facts has not neutralized in us all religiousness.

It is itself almost religious. Our scientific temper is devout. Now take a man of this type, and let him be also a philosophic amateur, unwilling to mix a hodge-podge system after the fashion of a common layman, and what does he find his situation to be, in this blessed year of our Lord 1906? He wants facts; he wants science; but he also wants a religion. And being an amateur and not an independent originator in philosophy he naturally looks for guidance to the experts and professionals whom he finds already in the field. A very large number of you here present, possibly a majority of you, are amateurs of just this sort.

Now what kinds of philosophy do you find actually offered to meet your need? You find an empirical philosophy that is not religious enough, and a religious philosophy that is not empirical enough for your purpose. If you look to the quarter where facts are most considered you find the whole tough-minded program in operation, and the ‘conflict between science and religion’ in full blast. Either it is that Rocky Mountain tough of a Haeckel with his materialistic monism, his ether-god and his jest at your God as a ‘gaseous vertebrate’; or it is Spencer treating the world’s history as a redistribution of matter and motion solely, and bowing religion politely out at the front door:—she may indeed continue to exist, but she must never show her face inside the temple. For a hundred and fifty years past the progress of science has seemed to mean the enlargement of the material universe and the diminution of man’s importance. The result is what one may call the growth of naturalistic or positivistic feeling. Man is no law-giver to nature, he is an absorber. She it is who stands firm; he it is who must accommodate himself. Let him record truth, inhuman tho it be, and submit to it! The romantic spontaneity and courage are gone, the vision is materialistic and depressing. Ideals appear as inert by-products of physiology; what is higher is explained by what is lower and treated forever as a case of ‘nothing but’—nothing but something else of a quite inferior sort. You get, in short, a materialistic universe, in which only the tough-minded find themselves congenially at home.

If now, on the other hand, you turn to the religious quarter for consolation, and take counsel of the tender-minded philosophies, what do you find?

Religious philosophy in our day and generation is, among us English-reading people, of two main types. One of these is more radical and aggressive, the other has more the air of fighting a slow retreat.

... if you are the lovers of facts I have supposed you to be, you find the trail of the serpent of rationalism, of intellectualism, over everything that lies on that side of the line. What you want is a philosophy that will not only exercise your powers of intellectual abstraction, but that will make some positive connection with this actual world of finite human lives.

You want a system that will combine both things, the scientific loyalty to facts and willingness to take account of them, the spirit of adaptation and accommodation, in short, but also the old confidence in human values and the resultant spontaneity, whether of the religious or of the romantic type.

It is at this point that my own solution begins to appear. I offer the oddly-named thing pragmatism as a philosophy that can satisfy both kinds of demand. It can remain religious like the rationalisms, but at the same time, like the empiricisms, it can preserve the richest intimacy with facts.



The Project Gutenberg EBook of Pragmatism, by William James

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org

Title: Pragmatism A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking

Author: William James

Release Date: February, 2004 [EBook #5116] This file was first posted on May 1, 2002

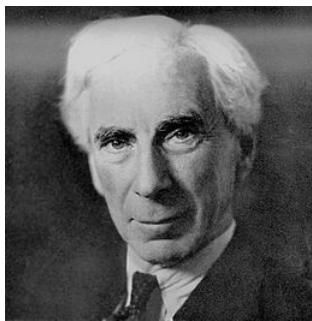
Last Updated: July 2, 2013

Language: English

Contributions and Attributions

This page is licensed under a [CC BY-NC-SA](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Jody Ondich. Page content has been edited and updated to conform to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform; a detailed versioning history of the edits to source content is available upon request.

7.10: Bertrand Russell--two essays



Bertrand Arthur William Russell, 3rd Earl Russell, 1872 – 1970 CE, was a British philosopher, writer, social critic and political activist. In the early 20th century, Russell led the British “revolt against idealism”. He is considered one of the founders of analytic philosophy. Russell was an anti-war activist and went to prison for his pacifism during World War I. He did conclude that the war against Adolf Hitler was a necessary “lesser of two evils” He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1950 “in recognition of his varied and significant writings in which he champions humanitarian ideals and freedom of thought.”

In “Reflections on My Eightieth Birthday” (“Postscript” in his *Autobiography*), Russell wrote: “I have lived in the pursuit of a vision, both personal and social.

Personal: to care for what is noble, for what is beautiful, for what is gentle; to allow moments of insight to give wisdom at more mundane times.

Social: to see in imagination the society that is to be created, where individuals grow freely, and where hate and greed and envy die because there is nothing to nourish them. These things I believe, and the world, for all its horrors, has left me unshaken”.

You might find it interesting to see the two things that he believed he would like to say to a future generation. It takes less than 2 minutes, but in 1959, this is what Bertrand Russell had to say:

[Message to Future Generations](#)

[From Bertrand Russell's: The Problems of Philosophy: Chapter XV: The Value of Philosophy](#)

[Example](#)

This is a short interview with Woodrow Wyatt in 1960, when Russell was 87 years old.

[Mankind's Future and Philosophy](#)

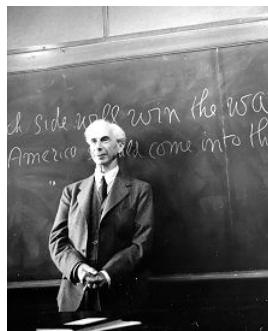


“Apart from its utility in showing unsuspected possibilities, philosophy has a value—perhaps its chief value—through the greatness of the objects which it contemplates, and the freedom from narrow and personal aims resulting from this contemplation.

The life of the instinctive man is shut up within the circle of his private interests: family and friends may be included, but the outer world is not regarded except as it may help or hinder what comes within the circle of instinctive wishes. In such a life there is something feverish and confined, in comparison with which the philosophic life is calm and free. The private world of instinctive interests is a small one, set in the midst of a great and powerful world which must, sooner or later, lay our private world in ruins.

Unless we can so enlarge our interests as to include the whole outer world, we remain like a garrison in a beleaguered fortress, knowing that the enemy prevents escape and that ultimate surrender is inevitable. In such a life there is no peace, but a constant strife between the insistence of desire and the powerlessness of will. In one way or another, if our life is to be great and free, we must escape this prison and this strife.

One way of escape is by philosophic contemplation. Philosophic contemplation does not, in its widest survey, divide the universe into two hostile camps—friends and foes, helpful and hostile, good and bad—it views the whole impartially. Philosophic contemplation, when it is unalloyed, does not aim at proving that the rest of the universe is akin to man. All acquisition of knowledge is an enlargement of the Self, but this enlargement is best attained when it is not directly sought. It is obtained when the desire for knowledge is alone operative, by a study which does not wish in advance that its objects should have this or that character, but adapts the Self to the characters which it finds in its objects. This enlargement of Self is not obtained when, taking the Self as it is, we try to show that the world is so similar to this Self that knowledge of it is possible without any admission of what seems alien. The desire to prove this is a form of self-assertion and, like all self-assertion, it is an obstacle to the growth of Self which it desires, and of which the Self knows that it is capable. Self-assertion, in philosophic speculation as elsewhere, views the world as a means to its own ends; thus it makes the world of less account than Self, and the Self sets bounds to the greatness of its goods. In contemplation, on the contrary, we start from the not-Self, and through its greatness the boundaries of Self are enlarged; through the infinity of the universe the mind which contemplates it achieves some share in infinity.



For this reason greatness of soul is not fostered by those philosophies which assimilate the universe to Man.

Knowledge is a form of union of Self and not-Self; like all union, it is impaired by dominion, and therefore by any attempt to force the universe into conformity with what we find in ourselves. There is a widespread philosophical tendency towards the view which tells us that Man is the measure of all things, that truth is man-made, that space and time and the world of universals are properties of the mind, and that, if there be anything not created by the mind, it is unknowable and of no account for us. This view, if our previous discussions were correct, is untrue; but in addition to being untrue, it has the effect of robbing philosophic contemplation of all that gives it value, since it fetters contemplation to Self. What it calls knowledge is not a union with the not-Self, but a set of prejudices, habits, and desires, making an impenetrable veil between us and the world beyond. The man who finds pleasure in such a theory of knowledge is like the man who never leaves the domestic circle for fear his word might not be law.

The true philosophic contemplation, on the contrary, finds its satisfaction in every enlargement of the not-Self, in everything that magnifies the objects contemplated, and thereby the subject contemplating. Everything, in contemplation, that is personal or private, everything that depends upon habit, self-interest, or desire, distorts the object, and hence impairs the union which the intellect seeks. By thus making a barrier between subject and object, such personal and private things become a prison to the intellect. The free intellect will see as God might see, without a here and now, without hopes and fears, without the trammels of customary beliefs and traditional prejudices, calmly, dispassionately, in the sole and exclusive desire of knowledge—knowledge as impersonal, as purely contemplative, as it is possible for man to attain. Hence also the free intellect will value more the abstract and universal knowledge into which the accidents of private history do not enter, than the knowledge brought by the senses, and dependent, as such knowledge must be, upon an exclusive and personal point of view and a body whose sense organs distort as much as they reveal.

The mind which has become accustomed to the freedom and impartiality of philosophic contemplation will preserve something of the same freedom and impartiality in the world of action and emotion. It will view its purposes and desires as parts of

the whole, with the absence of insistence that results from seeing them as infinitesimal fragments in a world of which all the rest is unaffected by any one man's deeds. The impartiality which, in contemplation, is the unalloyed desire for truth, is the very same quality of mind which, in action, is justice, and in emotion is that universal love which can be given to all, and not only to those who are judged useful or admirable. Thus contemplation enlarges not only the objects of our thoughts, but also the objects of our actions and our affections: it makes us citizens of the universe, not only of one walled city at war with all the rest. In this citizenship of the universe consists man's true freedom, and his liberation from the thrall of narrow hopes and fears.

Key Takeaway

The whole problem with the world is that fools and fanatics are always so certain of themselves, but wiser people so full of doubts.

Bertrand Russell

Thus, to sum up our discussion of the value of philosophy; Philosophy is to be studied, not for the sake of any definite answers to its questions, since no definite answers can, as a rule, be known to be true, but rather for the sake of the questions themselves; because these questions enlarge our conception of what is possible, enrich our intellectual imagination and diminish the dogmatic assurance which closes the mind against speculation; but above all because, through the greatness of the universe which philosophy contemplates, the mind also is rendered great, and becomes capable of that union with the universe which constitutes its highest good.



Ex Libris
C. K. OGDEN
CONWAY MEMORIAL LECTURE

FREE THOUGHT AND OFFICIAL PROPAGANDA

DELIVERED AT SOUTH PLACE INSTITUTE ON
MARCH 24, 1922

BY
The Hon. BERTRAND RUSSELL,
M.A., F.R.S.

(Professor Graham Wallas in the Chair)

WATTS & CO.,
JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, E.C.4
1922

Moncure Conway, in whose honor we are assembled to-day, devoted his life to two great objects: freedom of thought and freedom of the individual.

"In regard to both these objects, something has been gained since his time, but something also has been lost. New dangers, somewhat different in form from those of past ages, threaten both kinds of freedom, and unless a vigorous and vigilant public opinion can be aroused in defense of them, there will be much less of both a hundred years hence than there is now. My purpose in this address is to emphasize the new dangers and to consider how they can be met.

Let us begin by trying to be clear as to what we mean by "free thought." This expression has two senses.

In its narrower sense it means thought which does not accept the dogmas of traditional religion. In this sense a man is a "free thinker" if he is not a Christian or a Mussulman or a Buddhist or a Shintoist or a member of any of the other bodies of men

who accept some inherited orthodoxy. In Christian countries a man is called a “free thinker” if he does not decidedly believe in God, though this would not suffice to make a man a “free thinker” in a Buddhist country.

I do not wish to minimize the importance of free thought in this sense. I am myself a dissenter from all known religions, and I hope that every kind of religious belief will die out. I do not believe that, on the balance, religious belief has been a force for good. Although I am prepared to admit that in certain times and places it has had some good effects, I regard it as belonging to the infancy of human reason, and to a stage of development which we are now outgrowing.

But there is also a wider sense of “free thought,” which I regard as of still greater importance. Indeed, the harm done by traditional religions seems chiefly traceable to the fact that they have prevented free thought in this wider sense. The wider sense is not so easy to define as the narrower, and it will be well to spend some little time in trying to arrive at its essence.

When we speak of anything as “free,” our meaning is not definite unless we can say what it is free *from*. Whatever or whoever is “free” is not subject to some external compulsion, and to be precise we ought to say what this kind of compulsion is. **Thus thought is “free” when it is free from certain kinds of outward control which are often present.** Some of these kinds of control which must be absent if thought is to be “free” are obvious, but others are more subtle and elusive.

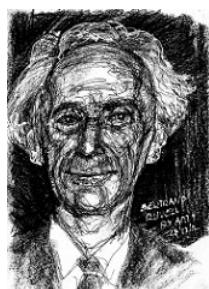
To begin with the most obvious. Thought is not “free” when legal penalties are incurred by the holding or not holding of certain opinions, or by giving expression to one’s belief or lack of belief on certain matters. Very few countries in the world have as yet even this elementary kind of freedom.

In England, under the Blasphemy Laws, it is illegal to express disbelief in the Christian religion, though in practice the law is not set in motion against the well-to-do. It is also illegal to teach what Christ taught on the subject of non-resistance. Therefore, whoever wishes to avoid becoming a criminal must profess to agree with Christ’s teaching, but must avoid saying what that teaching was.

In America no one can enter the country without first solemnly declaring that he disbelieves in anarchism and polygamy; and, once inside, he must also disbelieve in communism.

In Japan it is illegal to express disbelief in the divinity of the Mikado. It will thus be seen that a voyage round the world is a perilous adventure.

A Mohammedan, a Tolstoyan, a Bolshevik, or a Christian cannot undertake it without at some point becoming a criminal, or holding his tongue about what he considers important truths. This, of course, applies only to steerage passengers; saloon passengers are allowed to believe whatever they please, provided they avoid offensive obtrusiveness.



It is clear that the most elementary condition, if thought is to be free, is the absence of legal penalties for the expression of opinions. No great country has yet reached to this level, although most of them think they have. The opinions which are still persecuted strike the majority as so monstrous and immoral that the general principle of toleration cannot be held to apply to them. But this is exactly the same view as that which made possible the tortures of the Inquisition. There was a time when Protestantism seemed as wicked as Bolshevism seems now. Please do not infer from this remark that I am either a Protestant or a Bolshevik.

Legal penalties are, however, in the modern world, the least of the obstacles to freedom of thoughts. The two great obstacles are economic penalties and distortion of evidence. It is clear that thought is not free if the profession of certain opinions makes it impossible to earn a living. It is clear also that thought is not free if all the arguments on one side of a controversy are perpetually presented as attractively as possible, while the arguments on the other side can only be discovered by diligent search. Both these obstacles exist in every large country known to me, except China, which is the last refuge of freedom. It is these obstacles with which I shall be concerned—their present magnitude, the likelihood of their increase, and the possibility of their diminution.

We may say that thought is free when it is exposed to free competition among beliefs—i.e., when all beliefs are able to state their case, and no legal or pecuniary advantages or disadvantages attach to beliefs. This is an ideal which, for various reasons, can

never be fully attained. But it is possible to approach very much nearer to it than we do at present.



Three incidents in my own life will serve to show how, in modern England, the scales are weighted in favor of Christianity. My reason for mentioning them is that many people do not at all realize the disadvantages to which avowed Agnosticism still exposes people.

- **The first incident belongs to a very early stage in my life.** My father was a Freethinker, but died when I was only three years old. Wishing me to be brought up without superstition, he appointed two Freethinkers as my guardians. The Courts, however, set aside his will, and had me educated in the Christian faith. I am afraid the result was disappointing, but that was not the fault of the law. If he had directed that I should be educated as a Christadelphian or a Muggletonian or a Seventh-Day Adventist, the Courts would not have dreamed of objecting. A parent has a right to ordain that any imaginable superstition shall be instilled into his children after his death, but has not the right to say that they shall be kept free from superstition if possible.
- **The second incident occurred in the year 1910.** I had at that time a desire to stand for Parliament as a Liberal, and the Whips recommended me to a certain constituency. I addressed the Liberal Association, who expressed themselves favorably, and my adoption seemed certain. But, on being questioned by a small inner caucus, I admitted that I was an Agnostic. They asked whether the fact would come out, and I said it probably would. They asked whether I should be willing to go to church occasionally, and I replied that I should not. Consequently, they selected another candidate, who was duly elected, has been in Parliament ever since, and is a member of the present Government.
- **The third incident occurred immediately afterwards.** I was invited by Trinity College, Cambridge, to become a lecturer, but not a Fellow. The difference is not pecuniary; it is that a Fellow has a voice in the government of the College, and cannot be dispossessed during the term of his Fellowship except for grave immorality. The chief reason for not offering me a Fellowship was that the clerical party did not wish to add to the anti-clerical vote. The result was that they were able to dismiss me in 1916, when they disliked my views on the War. If I had been dependent on my lectureship, I should have starved.

These three incidents illustrate different kinds of disadvantages attaching to avowed freethinking even in modern England. Any other avowed Freethinker could supply similar incidents from his personal experience, often of a far more serious character. The net result is that people who are not well-to-do dare not be frank about their religious beliefs.

It is not, of course, only or even chiefly in regard to religion that there is lack of freedom. Belief in communism or free love handicaps a man much more than Agnosticism. Not only is it a disadvantage to hold those views, but it is very much more difficult to obtain publicity for the arguments in their favor. On the other hand, in Russia the advantages and disadvantages are exactly reversed: comfort and power are achieved by professing Atheism, communism, and free love, and no opportunity exists for propaganda against these opinions. The result is that in Russia one set of fanatics feels absolute certainty about one set of doubtful propositions, while in the rest of the world another set of fanatics feels equal certainty about a diametrically opposite set of equally doubtful propositions. From such a situation war, bitterness, and persecution inevitably result on both sides.

Example

Russell was an atheist. He has specific reasons for this. Listen to it in his own words:

[Bertrand Russell on Religion](#)

William James used to preach the “will to believe.” For my part, I should wish to preach the “will to doubt.” None of our beliefs are quite true; all have at least a penumbra of vagueness and error. The methods of increasing the degree of truth in our beliefs are well known; they consist in hearing all sides, trying to ascertain all the relevant facts, controlling our own bias by

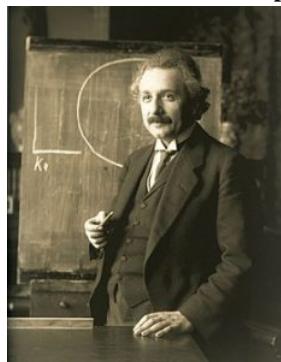
discussion with people who have the opposite bias, and cultivating a readiness to discard any hypothesis which has proved inadequate. These methods are practiced in science, and have built up the body of scientific knowledge.

Every man of science whose outlook is truly scientific is ready to admit that what passes for scientific knowledge at the moment is sure to require correction with the progress of discovery; nevertheless, it is near enough to the truth to serve for most practical purposes, though not for all. In science, where alone something approximating to genuine knowledge is to be found, men's attitude is tentative and full of doubt.

In religion and politics, on the contrary, though there is as yet nothing approaching scientific knowledge, everybody considers it *de rigueur* to have a dogmatic opinion, to be backed up by inflicting starvation, prison, and war, and to be carefully guarded from argumentative competition with any different opinion. If only men could be brought into a tentatively agnostic frame of mind about these matters, nine-tenths of the evils of the modern world would be cured. War would become impossible, because each side would realize that both sides must be in the wrong. Persecution would cease. Education would aim at expanding the mind, not at narrowing it. Men would be chosen for jobs on account of fitness to do the work, not because they flattered the irrational dogmas of those in power. Thus rational doubt alone, if it could be generated, would suffice to introduce the millennium.

We have had in recent years a brilliant example of the scientific temper of mind in the theory of relativity and its reception by the world. Einstein, a German-Swiss-Jew pacifist, was appointed to a research professorship by the German Government in the early days of the War; his predictions were verified by an English expedition which observed the eclipse of 1919, very soon after the Armistice. His theory upsets the whole theoretical framework of traditional physics; it is almost as damaging to orthodox dynamics as Darwin was to *Genesis*. Yet physicists everywhere have shown complete readiness to accept his theory as soon as it appeared that the evidence was in its favor. But none of them, least of all Einstein himself, would claim that he has said the last word. He has not built a monument of infallible dogma to stand for all time. There are difficulties he cannot solve; his doctrines will have to be modified in their turn as they have modified Newton's. This critical un-dogmatic receptiveness is the true attitude of science.

What would have happened if Einstein had advanced something equally new in the sphere of religion or



politics? English people would have found elements of Prussianism in his theory; anti-Semites would have regarded it as a Zionist plot; nationalists in all countries would have found it tainted with lily-livered pacifism, and proclaimed it a mere dodge for escaping military service. All the old-fashioned professors would have approached Scotland Yard to get the importation of his writings prohibited. Teachers favorable to him would have been dismissed. He, meantime, would have captured the Government of some backward country, where it would have become illegal to teach anything except his doctrine, which would have grown into a mysterious dogma not understood by anybody. Ultimately the truth or falsehood of his doctrine would be decided on the battlefield, without the collection of any fresh evidence for or against it. This method is the logical outcome of William James's will to believe.

What is wanted is not the will to believe, but the wish to find out, which is its exact opposite.

If it is admitted that a condition of rational doubt would be desirable, it becomes important to inquire how it comes about that there is so much irrational certainty in the world. A great deal of this is due to the inherent irrationality and credulity of average human nature. But this seed of intellectual original sin is nourished and fostered by other agencies, among which **three play the chief part—namely, education, propaganda, and economic pressure.**

Let us consider these in turn.

- (1) **Education.**—Elementary education, in all advanced countries, is in the hands of the State. Some of the things taught are known to be false by the officials who prescribe them, and many others are known to be false, or at any rate very doubtful, by every unprejudiced person. **Take, for example, the teaching of history.** Each nation aims only at self-glorification in the school text-books of history. When a man writes his autobiography he is expected to show a certain modesty; but when a nation writes

its autobiography there is no limit to its boasting and vainglory. When I was young, school books taught that the French were wicked and the Germans virtuous; now they teach the opposite. In neither case is there the slightest regard for truth. German school books, dealing with the battle of Waterloo, represent Wellington as all but defeated when Blücher saved the situation; English books represent Blücher as having made very little difference. The writers of both the German and the English books know that they are not telling the truth. American school books used to be violently anti-British; since the War they have become equally pro-British, without aiming at truth in either case (see *The Freeman*, Feb. 15, 1922, p. 532). Both before and since, one of the chief purposes of education in the United States has been to turn the motley collection of immigrant children into "good Americans." Apparently it has not occurred to any one that a "good American," like a "good German" or a "good Japanese," must be, *pro tanto*, a bad human being. **A "good American" is a man or woman imbued with the belief that America is the finest country on earth**, and ought always to be enthusiastically supported in any quarrel. It is just possible that these propositions are true; if so, a rational man will have no quarrel with them. But if they are true, they ought to be taught everywhere, not only in America. It is a suspicious circumstance that such propositions are never believed outside the particular country which they glorify. Meanwhile the whole machinery of the State, in all the different countries, is turned on to making defenseless children believe absurd propositions the effect of which is to make them willing to die in defense of sinister interests under the impression that they are fighting for truth and right. This is only one of countless ways in which education is designed, not to give true knowledge, but to make the people pliable to the will of their masters. Without an elaborate system of deceit in the elementary schools it would be impossible to preserve the camouflage of democracy. Before leaving the subject of education, I will take another example from America—not because America is any worse than other countries, but because it is the most modern, showing the dangers that are growing rather than those that are diminishing. In the State of New York a school cannot be established without a licence from the State, even if it is to be supported wholly by private funds. A recent law decrees that a licence shall not be granted to any school "where it shall appear that the instruction proposed to be given includes the teachings of the doctrine that organized Governments shall be overthrown by force, violence, or unlawful means." As the *New Republic* points out, there is no limitation to this or that organized Government. The law therefore would have made it illegal, during the War, to teach the doctrine that the Kaiser's Government should be overthrown by force; and, since then, the support of Kolchak or Denikin against the Soviet Government would have been illegal. Such consequences, of course, were not intended, and result only from bad draughtsmanship. **What was intended appears from another law passed at the same time**, applying to teachers in State schools.

This law provides that certificates permitting persons to teach in such schools shall be issued only to those who have "shown satisfactorily" that they are "loyal and obedient to the Government of this State and of the United States," and shall be refused to those who have advocated, no matter where or when, "a form of government other than the Government of this State or of the United States."

The committee which framed these laws, as quoted by the *New Republic*, laid it down that the teacher who "does not approve of the present social system.....must surrender his office," and that "no person who is not eager to combat the theories of social change should be entrusted with the task of fitting the young and old for the responsibilities of citizenship."

Thus, according to the law of the State of New York, Christ and George Washington were too degraded morally to be fit for the education of the young. If Christ were to go to New York and say, "Suffer the little children to come unto me," the President of the New York School Board would reply: "Sir, I see no evidence that you are eager to combat theories of social change. Indeed, I have heard it said that you advocate what you call the *kingdom* of heaven, whereas this country, thank God, is a republic. It is clear that the Government of your kingdom of heaven would differ materially from that of New York State, therefore no children will be allowed access to you." If he failed to make this reply, he would not be doing his duty as a functionary entrusted with the administration of the law.

The effect of such laws is very serious. Let it be granted, for the sake of argument, that the government and the social system in the State of New York are the best that have ever existed on this planet; yet even then both would presumably be capable of improvement. Any person who admits this obvious proposition is by law incapable of teaching in a State school. Thus the law decrees that the teachers shall all be either hypocrites or fools.

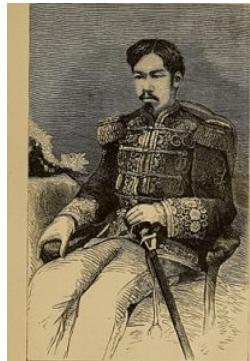
The growing danger exemplified by the New York law is that resulting from the monopoly of power in the hands of a single organization,  whether the State or a Trust or federation of Trusts. In the case of education, the power is in the hands of the State, which can prevent the young from hearing of any doctrine which it dislikes. I believe there are still some people who think that a democratic State is scarcely distinguishable from the people. This, however, is a delusion. The State is a collection of officials, different for different purposes, drawing comfortable incomes so long as the *status quo* is preserved. The only alteration they are likely to desire in the *status quo* is an increase of bureaucracy and of the power of bureaucrats. It is,

therefore, natural that they should take advantage of such opportunities as war excitement to acquire inquisitorial powers over their employees, involving the right to inflict starvation upon any subordinate who opposes them. In matters of the mind, such as education, this state of affairs is fatal. It puts an end to all possibility of progress or freedom or intellectual initiative. Yet it is the natural result of allowing the whole of elementary education to fall under the sway of a single organization.

Religious toleration, to a certain extent, has been won because people have ceased to consider religion so important as it was once thought to be. But in politics and economics, which have taken the place formerly occupied by religion, there is a growing tendency to persecution, which is not by any means confined to one party. The persecution of opinion in Russia is more severe than in any capitalist country. I met in Petrograd an eminent Russian poet, Alexander Block, who has since died as the result of privations. The Bolsheviks allowed him to teach aesthetics, but he complained that they insisted on his teaching the subject "from a Marxian point of view." He had been at a loss to discover how the theory of rhythmics was connected with Marxism, although, to avoid starvation, he had done his best to find out. Of course, it has been impossible in Russia ever since the Bolsheviks came into power to print anything critical of the dogmas upon which their regime is founded.

The examples of America and Russia illustrate the conclusion to which we seem to be driven—namely, that so long as men continue to have the present fanatical belief in the importance of politics free thought on political matters will be impossible, and there is only too much danger that the lack of freedom will spread to all other matters, as it has done in Russia. Only some degree of political skepticism can save us from this misfortune.

It must not be supposed that the officials in charge of education desire the young to become educated. On the contrary, their problem is to impart information without imparting intelligence. Education should have two objects: first, to give definite knowledge—reading and writing, languages and mathematics, and so on; secondly, to create those mental habits which will enable people to acquire knowledge and form sound judgments for themselves. The first of these we may call information, the second intelligence. The utility of information is admitted practically as well as theoretically; without a literate population a modern State is impossible. But the utility of intelligence is admitted only theoretically, not practically; it is not desired that ordinary people should think for themselves, because it is felt that people who think for themselves are awkward to manage and cause administrative difficulties. Only the guardians, in Plato's language, are to think; the rest are to obey, or to follow leaders like a herd of sheep. This doctrine, often unconsciously, has survived the introduction of political democracy, and has radically vitiated all national systems of education.



The country which has succeeded best in giving information without intelligence is the latest addition to modern civilization, Japan. Elementary education in Japan is said to be admirable from the point of view of instruction. But, in addition to instruction, it has another purpose, which is to teach worship of the Mikado—a far stronger creed now than before Japan became modernized. Thus the schools have been used simultaneously to confer knowledge and to promote superstition. Since we are not tempted to Mikado-worship, we see clearly what is absurd in Japanese teaching. Our own national superstitions strike us as natural and sensible, so that we do not take such a true view of them as we do of the superstitions of Nippon. But if a traveled Japanese were to maintain the thesis that our schools teach superstitions just as inimical to intelligence as belief in the divinity of the Mikado, I suspect that he would be able to make out a very good case.

For the present I am not in search of remedies, but am only concerned with diagnosis. We are faced with the paradoxical fact that education has become one of the chief obstacles to intelligence and freedom of thought. This is due primarily to the fact that the State claims a monopoly; but that is by no means the sole cause.

- (2) **Propaganda.**—Our system of education turns young people out of the schools able to read, but for the most part unable to weigh evidence or to form an independent opinion. They are then assailed, throughout the rest of their lives, by statements

designed to make them believe all sorts of absurd propositions, such as that Blank's pills cure all ills, that Spitzbergen is warm and fertile, and that Germans eat corpses. The art of propaganda, as practiced by modern politicians and governments, is derived from the art of advertisement. **The science of psychology owes a great deal to advertisers.** In former days most psychologists would probably have thought that a man could not convince many people of the excellence of his own wares by merely stating emphatically that they were excellent. Experience shows, however, that they were mistaken in this. If I were to stand up once in a public place and state that I am the most modest man alive, I should be laughed at; but if I could raise enough money to make the same statement on all the buses and on hoardings along all the principal railway lines, people would presently become convinced that I had an abnormal shrinking from publicity. If I were to go to a small shopkeeper and say: "Look at your competitor over the way, he is getting your business; don't you think it would be a good plan to leave your business and stand up in the middle of the road and try to shoot him before he shoots you?"—if I were to say this, any small shopkeeper would think me mad. But when the Government says it with emphasis and a brass band, the small shopkeepers become enthusiastic, and are quite surprised when they find afterwards that business has suffered.

Propaganda, conducted by the means which advertisers have found successful, is now one of the recognized methods of government in all advanced countries, and is especially the method by which democratic opinion is created.



There are two quite different evils about propaganda as now practiced. On the one hand, its appeal is generally to irrational causes of belief rather than to serious argument; on the other hand, it gives an unfair advantage to those who can obtain most publicity, whether through wealth or through power. For my part, I am inclined to think that too much fuss is sometimes made about the fact that propaganda appeals to emotion rather than reason. The line between emotion and reason is not so sharp as some people think. Moreover, a clever man could frame a sufficiently rational argument in favor of any position which has any chance of being adopted. There are always good arguments on both sides of any real issue.

Definite mis-statements of fact can be legitimately objected to, but they are by no means necessary. The mere words "Pear's Soap," which affirm nothing, cause people to buy that article. If, wherever these words appear, they were replaced by the words "The Labour Party," millions of people would be led to vote for the Labour Party, although the advertisements had claimed no merit for it whatever. But if both sides in a controversy were confined by law to statements which a committee of eminent logicians considered relevant and valid, the main evil of propaganda, as at present conducted, would remain.

Suppose, under such a law, two parties with an equally good case, one of whom had a million pounds to spend on propaganda, while the other had only a hundred thousand. It is obvious that the arguments in favor of the richer party would become more widely known than those in favor of the poorer party, and therefore the richer party would win. This situation is, of course, intensified when one party is the Government. In Russia the Government has an almost complete monopoly of propaganda, but that is not necessary. The advantages which it possesses over its opponents will generally be sufficient to give it the victory, unless it has an exceptionally bad case.

The objection to propaganda is not only its appeal to unreason, but still more the unfair advantage which it gives to the rich and powerful.

Equality of opportunity among opinions is essential if there is to be real freedom of thought; and equality of opportunity among opinions can only be secured by elaborate laws directed to that end, which there is no reason to expect to see enacted. The cure is not to be sought primarily in such laws, but in better education and a more skeptical public opinion. For the moment, however, I am not concerned to discuss cures.

- **(3) Economic pressure.**—I have already dealt with some aspects of this obstacle to freedom of thought, but I wish now to deal with it on more general lines, as a danger which is bound to increase unless very definite steps are taken to counteract it. **The supreme example of economic pressure applied against freedom of thought is Soviet Russia,** where, until the trade agreement, the Government could and did inflict starvation upon people whose opinions it disliked—for example, Kropotkin. But in this respect Russia is only somewhat ahead of other countries. In France, during the Dreyfus affair, any teacher would have lost his position if he had been in favor of Dreyfus at the start or against him at the end. In America at the present day I

doubt if a university professor, however eminent, could get employment if he were to criticize the Standard Oil Company, because all college presidents have received or hope to receive benefactions from Mr. Rockefeller. Throughout America Socialists are marked men, and find it extremely difficult to obtain work unless they have great gifts. The tendency, which exists wherever industrialism is well developed, for trusts and monopolies to control all industry, leads to a diminution of the number of possible employers, so that it becomes easier and easier to keep secret black books by means of which any one not subservient to the great corporations can be starved. The growth of monopolies is introducing in America many of the evils associated with State Socialism as it has existed in Russia. From the standpoint of liberty, it makes no difference to a man whether his only possible employer is the State or a Trust. **In America, which is the most advanced country industrially**, and to a lesser extent in other countries which are approximating to the American condition, it is necessary for the average citizen, if he wishes to make a living, to avoid incurring the hostility of certain big men. And these big men have an outlook—religious, moral, and political—with which they expect their employees to agree, at least outwardly. **A man who openly dissents from Christianity**, or believes in a relaxation of the marriage laws, or objects to the power of the great corporations, finds America a very uncomfortable country, unless he happens to be an eminent writer. Exactly the same kind of restraints upon freedom of thought are bound to occur in every country where economic organization has been carried to the point of practical monopoly. Therefore the safeguarding of liberty in the world which is growing up is far more difficult than it was in the nineteenth century, when free competition was still a reality. Whoever cares about the freedom of the mind must face this situation fully and frankly, realizing the inapplicability of methods which answered well enough while industrialism was in its infancy.

There are two simple principles which, if they were adopted, would solve almost all social problems.

The first is that education should have for one of its aims to teach people only to believe propositions when there is some reason to think that they are true.

The second is that jobs should be given solely for fitness to do the work.

To take the second point first. The habit of considering a man's religious, moral, and political opinions before appointing him to a post or giving him a job is the modern form of persecution, and it is likely to become quite as efficient as the Inquisition ever was. The old liberties can be legally retained without being of the slightest use. If, in practice, certain opinions lead a man to starve, it is poor comfort to him to know that his opinions are not punishable by law. There is a certain public feeling against starving men for not belonging to the Church of England, or for holding slightly unorthodox opinions in politics. But there is hardly any feeling against the rejection of Atheists or Mormons, extreme communists, or men who advocate free love. Such men are thought to be wicked, and it is considered only natural to refuse to employ them. People have hardly yet waked up to the fact that this refusal, in a highly industrial State, amounts to a very rigorous form of persecution.

If this danger were adequately realized, it would be possible to rouse public opinion, and to secure that a man's beliefs should not be considered in appointing him to a post. The protection of minorities is vitally important; and even the most orthodox of us may find himself in a minority some day, so that we all have an interest in restraining the tyranny of majorities. Nothing except public opinion can solve this problem. Socialism would make it somewhat more acute, since it would eliminate the opportunities that now arise through exceptional employers. Every increase in the size of industrial undertakings makes it worse, since it diminishes the number of independent employers.

The battle must be fought exactly as the battle of religious toleration was fought. And as in that case, so in this, a decay in the intensity of belief is likely to prove the decisive factor. While men were convinced of the absolute truth of Catholicism or Protestantism, as the case might be, they were willing to persecute on account of them. While men are quite certain of their modern creeds, they will persecute on their behalf. Some element of doubt is essential to the practice, though not to the theory, of toleration.

And this brings me to my other point, which concerns the aims of education. If there is to be toleration in the world, one of the things taught in schools must be the habit of weighing evidence, and the practice of not giving full assent to propositions which there is no reason to believe true.



For example, the art of reading the newspapers should be taught. The schoolmaster should select some incident which happened a good many years ago, and roused political passions in its day. He should then read to the school children what was said by the newspapers on one side, what was said by those on the other, and some impartial account of what really happened. He should show how, from the biased account of either side, a practiced reader could infer what really happened, and he should make them understand that everything in newspapers is more or less untrue. The cynical skepticism which would result from this teaching would make the children in later life immune from those appeals to idealism by which decent people are induced to further the schemes of scoundrels.

History should be taught in the same way. Napoleon's campaigns of 1813 and 1814, for instance, might be studied in the *Moniteur*, leading up to the surprise which Parisians felt when they saw the Allies arriving under the walls of Paris after they had (according to the official bulletins) been beaten by Napoleon in every battle. In the more advanced classes, students should be encouraged to count the number of times that Lenin has been assassinated by Trotsky, in order to learn contempt for death. Finally, they should be given a school history approved by the Government, and asked to infer what a French school history would say about our wars with France. All this would be a far better training in citizenship than the trite moral maxims by which some people believe that civic duty can be inculcated.

It must, I think, be admitted that the evils of the world are due to moral defects quite as much as to lack of intelligence. But the human race has not hitherto discovered any method of eradicating moral defects; preaching and exhortation only add hypocrisy to the previous list of vices. Intelligence, on the contrary, is easily improved by methods known to every competent educator. Therefore, until some method of teaching virtue has been discovered, progress will have to be sought by improvement of intelligence rather than of morals. One of the chief obstacles to intelligence is credulity, and credulity could be enormously diminished by instruction as to the prevalent forms of mendacity. Credulity is a greater evil in the present day than it ever was before, because, owing to the growth of education, it is much easier than it used to be to spread misinformation, and, owing to democracy, the spread of misinformation is more important than in former times to the holders of power. Hence the increase in the circulation of newspapers.

If I am asked how the world is to be induced to adopt these two maxims—namely

- (1) that jobs should be given to people on account of their fitness to perform them;
- (2) that one aim of education should be to cure people of the habit of believing propositions for which there is no evidence—

I can only say that it must be done by generating an enlightened public opinion. And an enlightened public opinion can only be generated by the efforts of those who desire that it should exist. I do not believe that the economic changes advocated by Socialists will, of themselves, do anything towards curing the evils we have been considering. I think that, whatever happens in politics, the trend of economic development will make the preservation of mental freedom increasingly difficult, unless public opinion insists that the employer shall control nothing in the life of the employee except his work.

Freedom in education could easily be secured, if it were desired, by limiting the function of the State to inspection and payment, and confining inspection rigidly to the definite instruction. But that, as things stand, would leave education in the hands of the Churches, because, unfortunately, they are more anxious to teach their beliefs than Freethinkers are to teach their doubts. It would, however, give a free field, and would make it possible for a liberal education to be given if it were really desired. More than that ought not to be asked of the law.

My plea throughout this address has been for the spread of the scientific temper, which is an altogether different thing from the knowledge of scientific results. The scientific temper is capable of regenerating mankind and providing an issue for all our troubles. The results of science, in the form of mechanism, poison gas, and the yellow press, bid fair to lead to the total downfall of our civilization. It is a curious antithesis, which a Martian might contemplate with amused detachment. But for us it is a matter of life and death. Upon its issue depends the question whether our grandchildren are to live in a happier world, or are to exterminate each other by scientific methods, leaving perhaps to Negroes and Papuans the future destinies of mankind.

Key Takeaway

If you would like to hear a more thorough interview with Russell, you can find it here at:

[Face to Face Interview with the BBC](#)



Project Gutenberg's The Problems of Philosophy, by Bertrand Russell

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org

Title: The Problems of Philosophy

Author: Bertrand Russell

Release Date: May 2, 2009 [EBook #5827]

Last Updated: February 7, 2013 Language: English

Project Gutenberg's Free Thought and Official Propaganda, by Bertrand Russell

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org/license

Title: Free Thought and Official Propaganda

Author: Bertrand Russell

Release Date: February 16, 2014 [EBook #44932]

Language: English

Contributions and Attributions

This page is licensed under a [CC BY-NC-SA](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Jody Ondich. Page content has been edited and updated to conform to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform; a detailed versioning history of the edits to source content is available upon request.

Index

M

Machiavelli

[2.6: Machiavelli- excerpts from "The Prince"](#)

Glossary

Sample Word 1 | Sample
Definition 1